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Charles Knothe, Esq. – Board President

Shariese Moore, Executive Director

8/16/2023

Re: Child Sick Policy

Dear Head Start Parents,

Welcome to Wilmington Head Start and thank you for entrusting your child/children to our program. I wanted to discuss our sick policy with you during these trying times of dealing with Covid-19 and other illnesses. Our goal is to keep all our students and staff as safe as possible during this time and every school year.

If at any point during the school year, your child is showing any signs of illness, please take the necessary precautions to protect your child, other students, and our staff. It is important that you keep your sick child at home, so the others can remain healthy.

If your child is presenting with a fever, rash, conjunctivitis (pink eye), diarrhea, nasal discharge, or vomiting, please keep them home for at least 48 hours. Due to the safety of our students, families, and staff, we will require a DOCTOR'S note upon your child's return to our centers. This note must state what your child was treated for and that they are able to return to school.

Thank you for your cooperation as we work together to keep everyone safe and healthy. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (302) 691-3584 ext. 315.

Edward Isabell
Disabilities/Health Supervisor
Wilmington Head Start

INTRODUCTION

This Parent Handbook is designed to inform you about the everyday operations of Wilmington Head Start, Inc. (WHS). If you have any questions or need further clarification of this information, please contact your Center Manager.

What is Head Start

Head Start is a federally funded program that provides comprehensive early childhood services for economically disadvantaged families with children between the ages of 3 to 5 years old. Head Start has played a major role in focusing the attention of the country on the importance of early childhood development, specifically in the first five years of life. It has served as a model for many programs in the planning of child development and day care services, on the expansion of state and local activities for children and their families, and on the design of training programs for those who staff such programs.

The program provides an array of services: education, health, oral health, nutrition, mental health, bilingual translation/interpretation for English Language Learners, and family services. These services promote high quality learning opportunities to assist in the overall development of your child along with providing comprehensive services for your family. Studies have indicated that Head Start children score higher than comparable non-Head Start children do in preschool achievement tests that measure these abilities. The studies also show that Head Start children perform equal to or better than their peers do when they enter regular school, and there are fewer grade retention and special class placements. The Head Start outreach and training programs have helped provide low-income parents with the knowledge and resources they need to build a better life for their children. Direct engagement of parents in Head Start planning and policymaking have given families a greater role in the well-being of their children.

Mission Statement

"To empower families to become self-sufficient while providing comprehensive services to children and families."

Licensing

All WHS centers are licensed by the State of Delaware Office of Child Care Licensing and follow all state, local and Federal Head Start regulations. WHS participates in Delaware Stars.

Non-Discrimination Policy

WHS does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, color, and mental or physical disability, in determining which children are served. WHS welcomes the enrollment of children with disabilities, understands and adheres to the requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to make reasonable accommodations for such clients and implements appropriate accommodations. WHS refrains from all forms of religious instruction or worship.

Confidentiality

Head Start collects and maintains information about enrolled children and their families. All information that is obtained orally, in writing, or through observations is considered confidential.

Head Start staff has access to confidential information solely for the purpose of providing comprehensive services to children and families on a “need to know” basis. Head Start Program follows all release of information procedural safeguards outlined in the provisions of Federal and State Administrative Codes: Health Insurance Portability and Private Act, (HIPAA), 2003; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, (FERPA), 1974; Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, (IDEA), 2004; and Head Start Performance Standards 1302.41(b)(1), 1302.45 (a)(3) 1303.21(a)(b). If you need assistance obtaining Head Start Program records, please contact the Family Services Staff.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents and staff are partners in the program. We respect and value that you are your child’s first teacher. We welcome and invite parents to be informed and involved in their child’s Head Start experience. Parents are encouraged to:

- Visit their child's center anytime
- Discuss their child with staff
- Attend Parent Committee meetings
- Be elected to Policy Council
- Volunteer
- Attend any parent trainings or activities

Parent representation is required by Head Start at monthly parent meetings. Each center must have a parent representative on Policy Council that meets with the Executive Director once per month to govern the organization. Dinner and childcare are provided.

School Messenger System

WHS uses the School Messenger system to communicate with parents. Parents will need to give their authorization to receive text messages or emails under this system. Parents can give their approval to receive text messages by sending a text message to 68453 saying YES to authorize to receive the notifications. Parents need to contact their Family Service Advocate anytime their information changes.

Volunteering

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer in the child's classroom. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events.

Parents not interested in volunteering directly in the classroom may ask the teacher if there is a project, they could work on at home to support the classroom. Any person, including parents, who volunteer five (5) days or forty (40) hours, must be fingerprinted before they begin, as required by our licensing regulations. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom, or on field trips.

Dropping off and Picking up Children

The children must be escorted to their classroom by an adult and signed in each day. Children will not be accepted in the classroom before the center's designated start time. The staff must receive the child before they can be left in the building.

Children must be picked up by the close of school and will be released only to persons 16 years of age and older who are on the **Child Emergency Form** and have **valid picture identification**. No child will be released to any person showing obvious signs of drug or alcohol intoxication.

Any additions or removals of authorized names for release of children must be made by the parent/guardian who initially completed the information. **This must be done in person.**

Parents are strongly urged to keep information current. The **Child Emergency Form** is also used to determine who is authorized to receive a child at the bus stop, and only those individuals listed will be allowed to pick up the child. If a child is left at the center past pick-up time or brought back on the bus, the parents or any of the listed emergency contact people will be called and ask to come and pick up the child. They will be asked to pick them up within a half hour of the phone call. The first time this happens there will be a verbal warning, the second time a written warning will be given and the third time there will need to be a meeting to discuss the problem.

If there is no response at any of the provided numbers, messages will be left. **If there is no response to pick up the child within a half hour, the Wilmington Police Department and/or The Division of Family Services will be contacted.**

Parent Curriculum - Ready Rosie

All Head Start programs are required to provide an opportunity for parents to participate with a parent curriculum. Wilmington Head Start has chosen the Ready Rosie program as our parent curriculum. Ready Rosie is a research-based parenting curriculum that builds on parents' knowledge. It uses video and mobile technology to empower families and schools to work together to promote school readiness. Teachers will introduce Ready Rosie to the parents and share video information on a regular basis.

Home Visits/Parent-Teacher Conferences

Teachers are required to make two (2) visits to the home of each child. Home visits are valuable in building respectful and collaborative relationships with the family and provide an opportunity to share important information about the child.

There are also two (2) parent/teacher conferences each year that occur at your child's center. At the conferences, the teacher will discuss your child's progress and share samples of their work.

Family Visits

Wilmington Head Start, Inc. is a comprehensive program that works with the entire family. Family Service Advocates (FSAs) are required to have two (2) family visits for new and returning students. One (1) visit is required for students who are transitioning to kindergarten. At the family visit, the Family Service Advocate will discuss any goals the family may have, as well as the services and activities that the program provides.

Newsletters

Throughout the year a newsletter will be sent home with your child. The newsletter is our way of sharing information about your child's center. There are also helpful articles for the entire family. Please feel free to submit information to share with other families.

Backpacks

Backpacks come in handy for sending home the children's work as well as notices to families. **Please check your child's backpack every day** and feel free to send in information for your child's Teacher or Family Service Advocate via the backpack. WHS looks at the backpack as a means of communication between the home and school.

Holidays and Special Events

WHS does not participate in the celebration of holidays. We have children from many different cultures and religions in our program and must be sensitive to these differences. We provide educational activities for the children to help them learn about cultures and individual differences as well as to avoid stereotypes. We try to expose the children to cultural activities year-round, not just at holiday times.

Birthdays are a special time for children. At WHS we do not permit birthday parties with food and gifts brought in from outside, this is due to regulations that all foods must be prepared in our state approved kitchen. Each class is encouraged to develop its own way of acknowledging the children's special day. Check with your child's teacher to find out how it is done in their room.

We are aware that holiday times can be stressful for many families. If your family needs assistance during the holiday season or any time of the year, please feel free to discuss your need with your Family Service Advocate.

WHS recognizes that many families want to thank and honor our staff at special times during the year by giving them little gifts. As nice as this is, our regulations from the Federal government do not allow us to accept gifts. We are also concerned that families may feel obligated to give the staff gifts even if it would be a strain on their family.

Photographs

Please note that Wilmington Head Start will use photos for publicity. If you do not wish for your child to be photographed or included in advertisement or promotions, please make sure you communicate your preference with your FSA and your child's Teacher.

If you are on WHS property, please do not take photographs of staff or children other than your own without permission from WHS staff.

Parent Code of Conduct

WHS requires the parents of enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect, at all times. One of the goals of WHS is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of WHS, but is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters our centers.

Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents who intentionally provide or attempt to provide false eligibility information will no longer be considered eligible for the program and participation will be terminated. **Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on agency property thereafter.**

Swearing and Cursing

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on agency property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated.

Threatening of Employees, Children, Other Parents, or Any Other Persons Associated with WHS

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. All threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Physical or Verbal Punishment of Children at WHS

WHS does not support or condone corporal punishment of children. Such acts are not permitted in the child-care facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child.

Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Center Manager.

Child Abuse and Neglect

WHS is mandated by state law to report any known or suspected case of child abuse and/or neglect.

Smoking

For the health of all WHS employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited in the building. Smoking is permitted in the designated smoking area; please contact the Center Manager for that information.

Clothing

Parents are required to be dressed in appropriate clothing while at WHS or involved in any WHS sponsored events. Anything with suggestive or vulgar language is prohibited.

Firearms and weapons

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of firearm, ammunitions and/or weapon on agency property for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

EDUCATION

Educational Philosophy

We believe parents are their children's first and most important teachers. It is our goal for parents to partner with Head Start staff in their child's education. The philosophy of our program is that all children learn best when they are actively involved in an environment that provides them with opportunities to reach goals that are both challenging and achievable.

Young children learn by exploring their environment and from the people in it. Our classrooms are designed to accommodate children with

disabilities and those who are English Language Learners so that they can benefit fully from our program.

Each child is provided with opportunities to develop feelings of competence, positive self-esteem, and positive attitudes towards learning. The program fosters children's understanding of themselves and promotes appropriate interaction with others. Research shows that children are more likely to retain the information they learn in the context of an activity they enjoy or something that is meaningful to their everyday life. We all know that preschool-aged children love to play; therefore, play is the context through which children learn the most!

All of the play activities provided in our classrooms are planned intentionally with specific learning objectives in mind. Ask your child's teacher for more information about how children are learning through play in their classroom.

Curriculum

Wilmington Head Start, Inc. uses *The Creative Curriculum* as its primary curricular framework. *The Creative Curriculum* provides a guideline for implementing best practices in the classroom, building on a foundation of theory and research. These best practices consider five components of curriculum development and effective preschool teaching:

- How Children Develop and Learn
- What Children Learn
- The Learning Environment
- Caring and Teaching
- Partnering with Families

These five components, in conjunction with the Objectives for Development & Learning provided by the *Teaching Strategies GOLD* assessment system, guide teachers in facilitating children's development and learning.

Teaching teams follow the child development philosophy and practices set forth in *The Creative Curriculum* and use the curriculum's supportive materials to assist them with planning and individualizing the classroom experience for each child. *The Creative Curriculum* is aligned with the State of Delaware Early Learning Foundations, a framework that focuses on school readiness for Delaware children.

Assessment

Teaching Strategies GOLD is a system, developed by the creators of *The Creative Curriculum* to assess the development and learning of children from birth through age six. Wilmington Head Start uses this system to assess our children.

Teaching Strategies GOLD's Objectives for Development and Learning are the basis for assessment. They address all areas of development (social-emotional, physical, language and cognitive) as well as content learning in literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies and the arts. Two of the objectives address English language acquisition.

Teaching Strategies GOLD and Wilmington Head Start use a 4-step assessment cycle that promotes responsive teaching and an individualized experience for all children.

1. Data Collection – Teachers and teacher assistants observe the child in the classroom setting and record their observations as “anecdotal notes.”
2. Individualization – Teachers will use the data collected through observation to plan individual learning experiences for each child in their class.
3. Checkpoints – The program year at Wilmington Head Start is divided into three designated checkpoint periods (Fall, Winter and Spring). At the end of each checkpoint period, teachers will use their accumulated anecdotal notes to establish checkpoint levels for each child.

4. Analysis and Further Planning – Once checkpoint levels have been established, teaching teams will set up a meeting with each child's parents (parent/teacher conferences in the Fall and Spring, home visit in the Winter). This is an opportunity for parents and teachers to share information about the child's development and collaborate on goals for the child in the upcoming checkpoint period.

Transitions

For each child entering the program or transitioning to a new class, a transition meeting will take place when possible. At the beginning of the year, an open house will be held at each center for the parent and child to visit the classroom and meet the teaching staff.

During the school year, newly enrolled children or children changing classrooms will be given an opportunity to visit the classroom. The Family Service Advocate will arrange a visit for the parent and the child prior to the child's first day of school or in the new classroom.

Wilmington Head Start assists families with the kindergarten transition process. In early November, the Family Service Advocate will provide the parent with a kindergarten packet that includes information about the child's zone of attendance, the choice program, as well as charter schools. Parents will be provided with assistance with the kindergarten registration process as needed and be asked to share which school their child will attend for kindergarten.

Schedules and Routines

Teachers establish a daily schedule for their class and maintain this schedule consistently. Knowing the order of events throughout the day helps children to feel safe and secure in the classroom environment. Below are two examples of a daily schedule.

Though they may not exactly reflect what is currently happening in your child's classroom, all of the activities that are a part of the example schedules are happening in all Wilmington Head Start classrooms at some point throughout the day.

Sample Schedule Part Day Head Start Classroom:

- Arrival
- Breakfast Group Meetings/Circle Time Choice Time/Center time and Small Group/Individual activities (Center Time: Block, Dramatic Play, Toys and Games, Art, Library, Discovery, Sand and Water, Music and Movement, Cooking, Computers, and Outdoor Areas)
- Outdoor Time
- Lunch
- Departure

Sample Schedule Full Day Classroom:

- Arrival
- Breakfast
- Group Meetings/Circle Time
- Choice Time/Center Time and Small Group/Individualized Activities
- Outdoor Time
- Lunch
- Quiet Time
- Snack
- Choice Time/Center Time
- Departure

Field Trips

Parents will be notified in advance about all field trips and must sign a permission slip for their child to attend. If you are interested in chaperoning a field trip, contact your child's teacher. Siblings may not accompany parent volunteers on field trips due to insurance regulations.

Toys

Our classrooms are equipped with a variety of developmentally appropriate materials and activities for preschool children. That being said, personal toys are not allowed in Wilmington Head Start classrooms. If your child's teacher finds them in possession of a personal toy, she will hold it in a safe place until the conclusion of the program day.

Wilmington Head Start will not be responsible for personal toys that are lost or damaged in our classrooms.

Classroom & Center Safety

For the safety of our children, teachers and families, each center and classroom is equipped with security cameras that provide surveillance monitoring.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Wilmington Head Start, Inc. is dedicated to supporting the mental wellness of all our children, families and staff. This idea is reflected in our curriculum, screening process, and the positive guidance and mental health policies.

PATHS

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) is our curriculum that is also used by the Red Clay School District to help our children understand and manage their feelings.

Behavioral Screenings

Within 45 days of entering the program, families will need to complete a copy of the **Ages & Stages Questionnaire-Social Emotional**.

This questionnaire allows us to recognize which children are at risk for social or emotional difficulties, identify behaviors of concern to caregivers, and identify any need for further assessment.

Positive Behavior Support

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a school-wide behavior management system that has clear and consistent rules and procedures. It is based on the idea that children need to know what is expected of them, that they need to be directly taught the correct way to behave, and the correct behavior needs to be encouraged and acknowledged.

It encourages a positive climate in all locations and for all students. Expectations are established for how to behave in every location in the school, including the classroom, hall, playground, bathroom, at mealtime and on the bus. The expectations for Wilmington Head Start are:

Be Safe

Be Kind

Work Together

Appropriate behaviors are established, taught, modeled and acknowledged in a set way throughout the school. Students are “caught” engaging in the desired behavior and this behavior is regularly recognized and reinforced.

When problem behavior does occur, PBS has a clear set of definitions and processes for these situations so that the school environment becomes a calmer, more predictable, and more consistent place to be for the children.

Positive Behavior Policy

WHS staff is committed to provide a nurturing environment that fosters positive self-esteem and individual growth in the children. Positive guidance demonstrates respect for the child and is meant to help the child develop social and emotional competence. Guidance is when adults teach children to solve problems, rather than punish them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve.

Appropriate Positive Guidance Techniques that are used and encouraged at WHS:

- Removal from the activity/area in the classroom
- Positive reinforcement
- Problem solving with the child
- Routines
- Developing behavior plans
- Giving choices within limits
- Teaching children how to calm themselves
- Redirecting them to appropriate activities.

No child shall be subject to the following techniques while on the WHS premises, by any staff, volunteers, or their own family members:

- Physical punishment
- Verbal punishment
- Isolation
- Food as a punishment or reward
- Punishment for toileting accidents
- Threats to call the child’s parents (parents are only to be called to discuss behavior concerns, after Center Manager gives approval)
- Time-out

Under extreme circumstances, when a child is out of control and endangering others, a child may be sent home. This can only be done with the permission of the Center Manager or a Specialist.

In extreme cases of aggressive, oppositional, or out of control behavior, which could result in injury to the child or others, the parents will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the situation. If they do not attend without showing cause and rescheduling immediately, the child may not attend Head Start until the meeting is held.

Handle with Care Policy

At Wilmington Head Start Inc., we prioritize using gentle and effective strategies to manage challenging behaviors in our preschool setting. In doing so we carefully assess when to apply gentle and effective strategies to support children. In situations where a child is experiencing high levels of agitation or poses a risk to themselves or others, our staff will employ a Handle with Care behavioral management approach:

This process employs de-escalation methods and interventions for behavioral challenges.

- Our approach involves providing support and guidance during difficult moments with children to ensure safety and promote positive behavior.
- We may use a soothing embrace method, ensuring the child's safety and comfort. This method assists in comforting the child and fostering a nurturing atmosphere while preventing any unintended head or physical contact.

Throughout this process, it's essential to remain keenly aware of the physical interaction to avoid causing any discomfort to the child. By utilizing the Handle with Care approach, we strive to create a safe and supportive environment for all children in our preschool program.

Suspension and Expulsion Policy

WHS will not expel any child from our Head Start program due to that child's behavior. Temporary suspension of a child for persistent and challenging behaviors will be severely limited and implemented as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a serious safety threat that cannot be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications. This determination will not be made prior to:

- Engaging a mental health consultant (Health and Behavioral Support Specialist)
- Collaborating with the child's parents/caregivers
- Providing reasonable modifications
- Identifying and accessing community resources, specialists, and early intervention providers

If a temporary suspension is deemed necessary, WHS will support the child's return to full services as quickly as possible while ensuring child safety by continuing to engage with parents and the mental health consultant, continuing to utilize identified community resources, providing home visits, and making a determination for an IDEA referral. A written plan will be developed to document the action steps and supports needed to promote the child's successful return to full services.

If the child's behavior continues to present a serious safety threat to the child or the other children in the classroom, and all parties determine that the Head Start program is not the appropriate placement, we will comply with IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act, work with appropriate agencies, consultants, and the child's family to determine best placement and directly facilitate transition for the child to the most appropriate placement.

Mental Health

WHS is dedicated to supporting the mental wellness of all the children, families, and staff. If your child's teacher has a concern about your child's learning style or behavior, they will discuss it with you as well as make a referral to the Disabilities/Health Specialist or the Education Specialist for an observation. Together you and the staff will plan to address any concerns. If necessary, referrals to an outside agency will be made.

Parental permission is needed before any referrals can be made. Parents are also encouraged to discuss any concerns they have about their child with the Teacher or Family Service Advocate.

WHS works with the Delaware's B.E.S.T. for Young Children and Their Families, an Office of Prevention and Behavioral Health Services Program and a private Mental Health Consultant. With parent's permission, a consultant observes, meets with the parents and teachers, and develops a plan for any challenging behaviors that have been identified and follows along to make sure the plan is successful. There is no cost to the family for these services. The referral can be initiated by the family or the teacher.

DISABILITIES SERVICES

Children with Special Needs

WHS provides services to children with special needs. The children participate in all activities to the extent of their abilities. WHS works along with the school district to ensure that each special needs child has an Individual Education Program (IEP) and receives all the appropriate and necessary services. Any needed equipment is provided, as well as any training the staff may need to welcome the child into the classroom.

ASQ-SE2/ASQ-3 Screenings

One of the most important elements to your Head Start experience is the Ages and Stages (ASQ) Developmental Screening. Delaware's Department of Education's Office of Early Learning has endorsed this screening tool to be used in all early learning programs including Head Start, Delaware Stars and school district programs.

The Head Start Program requires that all enrolled children be screened in the areas of behavior; sensory (vision and hearing); and development within 45-days of entry into the program. All children are screened each year on ASQ-SE2 and ASQ-3. ASQ-SE2 is a behavioral screening tool. ASQ-3 screens for communication, gross and fine motor skills, problem solving, and personal social skills. Parents can complete the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE2 online or if assistance is needed, parents can visit the child's center to complete the screening.

If the screening results indicate the presence of significant abilities and/or needs, you will be contacted to review the situation and address the possibility of further assessment. Further assessment does not necessarily mean that a delay exists. Further assessment means that a more detailed

evaluation and/or examination may be necessary to determine if a problem does, in fact, exist.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Nutrition

As your child attends WHS, he/she will be receiving healthy meals which are approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.) Your

child will be served 2 meals per day (breakfast and lunch). The children who attend the full day program will also receive an afternoon snack.

The Head Start Performance Standards for Nutrition encourage healthy food choices. WHS does not serve any pork or fish products and we are a nut, pork and fish free program. Adjustments are made to our menus according to any food allergies the children may have. Please do not send any food to school with your child.

A child with food allergies is required by the Federal Regulations to have a Special Precautions form signed by their physician with specifics of the allergic reaction and what food can be substituted. If a rescue medication (Epi pen or Benadryl) is required, it must be at the center before the child can start in the program. Please note we will do everything possible to fulfill the requirements for your child to have a healthy meal. Your child will be experiencing new food items throughout the year, as we at Wilmington Head Start believing in diversity throughout the program along with making mealtime a happy, learning experience.

Please encourage your child to try new things at home. In the classroom we call them "try bites".

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

WHS participates in the Delaware Department of Education Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

Family Style Dining

WHS uses family style dining for both breakfast and lunch. The children set the table, pass and serve their food, and clean up their eating area and dishes after the meal is over. During mealtime, the education staff eats with the children providing guidance and discussion on the new foods being served and the manners of eating together.

Monthly Menus

Each month we post a copy of the menus on our website and a copy of the breakfast, lunch and snack menus, as applicable, will be sent home. Please look at them with your child and discuss what is going to be served. Parents are encouraged to participate in menu planning.

Health Services

WHS values the health of our families and children. Health education is incorporated into the curriculum, and proper health and hygiene procedures will be followed daily in our classrooms.

Periodically, WHS will provide education and training to families, staff, and interested community members on preventative health, oral health, and mental health topics and practices.

Health Policy

In an effort to maintain a healthy environment for all of our families and staff, we have established the below policy. Our policy includes:

- Exclusion of children and staff when infectious diseases or conditions exist
- Notification of families when your child may have been exposed to infectious diseases
- Good hygiene practices for toileting and eating
- Frequent hand washing
- Daily classroom cleaning
- Daily trash removal
- Annual health appraisal for all children

Parents can assist in the maintenance of a healthy school environment for all children by:

- Promptly reporting any infectious illness your family or child has contracted
- Reporting any injuries that have happened at home
- Informing staff of any changes in your child's health status or medical history

Health History

During the enrollment process, your child's Family Service Advocate asked you a series of questions to determine the present status of your child's health, as well as in the past. This information is used to better understand the needs of your child.

Physical Examinations/EPST/Immunizations and TB Screened

Your child must have a current physical, an up-to-date list of immunizations, and the results of tuberculosis and lead screening on file upon enrollment.

A current physical can be defined as within one year of the date on the physical. When taking your child to the doctor, please be sure to ask for a copy of the physical results or have the office staff fax over the results to your child's center.

Contact your child's Family Service Advocate to obtain the center's fax number. If your child fails to have an updated physical, he/she will be placed back on the waiting list.

Medical Records

Your child's physical and health history will remain on file at your child's center throughout the school year. It should be updated as necessary.

If, at the end of the school year, you would like to have copies of this record, please contact your child's Family Service Advocate. This information may be helpful when registering your child for kindergarten.

Screening

Throughout the year your child may undergo a variety of screenings. In order for your child to participate in the screening process, parents must sign a consent form giving WHS the permission to perform various screenings. This form was signed when completing your child's enrollment papers.

You will receive more information about this process prior to the screening. The following are screenings your child may receive:

- Vision
- Heights and weights
- Dental (including x-rays, cleaning, and fluoride treatment)

Medication Policy

- Prescription and over the counter medication will only be given in school if it cannot be given at home before or after school hours.
- Over the counter medication that is brought to the center must be in the original container. Documentation from a health care provider is necessary for all over the counter medications. No medications can be administered without a parent signature and a completed Authorization for Medication Form. If it is an ongoing medication, a new form needs to be signed each month. Completed copies of this form are to be placed in the child's cumulative file.

Exclusion of Children Due to Illness

A child who is not feeling well may cause other children and adults to become sick. It is important that parents keep their sick child at home, so the others can remain healthy. A child is to stay home from school when experiencing the following:

- **Behavior that leads you to think he/she is not well.** (For example, child cries more than usual; sleeps more than usual; has lost appetite)
- **Fever**-101 degrees or above (taken by mouth), until fever remains below 99 degrees without the use of medication for 24 hours
- **Vomiting and/or diarrhea** accompanied with abdominal pain until vomiting/diarrhea has not occurred for 24 hours
- **Red eyes** accompanied with yellow or white discharge until 24 hours after antibiotic has been initiated
- **Thick yellow or green nasal discharge** accompanied with a fever and/or behavior changes suggesting the child is ill until seen by a doctor or until medication has been initiated or symptoms are gone.
- **Persistent cough** that does not improve over a period of 4 days until written documentation is received from the child's physician stating the child is not contagious or symptoms are gone.
- **Unusual spots or a rash** accompanied by a fever or unusual behavior until a physician provides a note stating the child is not contagious or symptoms are gone.
- **Head Lice, scabies, or other infestation** until child receives treatment.
- **A diagnosis by a physician of any of the following diseases:**

Human coronavirus
Cold Sores
Diphtheria
Hepatitis
Impetigo
Measles
Meningitis
Mumps

COVID-19
Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
Ring Worm
Rubella
Strep Throat
Tuberculosis
Swine Flu (H1N1)

Emergency/Sick Child Pick Up

Should your child become ill at school, you will be notified to pick up your child. If we are unable to reach you, we will contact the emergency contact person you have designated. **We will not keep a sick child at school.**

In the event of a severe dental or medical emergency, **911** will be called. You will be notified immediately. Your child will be taken to the nearest hospital or dental clinic. A staff member will remain with your child, until a family member arrives.

Absence from School

WHS is required by Head Start Federal Regulations to maintain 85% average daily attendance. We strongly encourage regular attendance. If your child becomes sick or will be absent from school for an extended period of time, please contact your child's Family Service Advocate or Teacher. Persistent, unexplained absences can cause your child to be placed back on the waiting list.

Injury Outside of School

Please inform your child's Teacher or Bus Monitor when your child will be attending school with an injury. (Example: visible bruises, bumps, cuts, burn, etc.) You can inform them in person, by telephone, or through a note.

Diapering Policy

Wilmington Head Start, Inc. does not require children to be toilet trained before enrolling in into the program. Parents must provide diapers, pull-ups, wipes, and a change of clothes. Parents are asked to let their child's teacher know when they begin seeing toilet readiness cues at home and are thinking of beginning toilet training. Likewise, the teacher will let the parent know when the child begins showing readiness cues at school. The teacher and parent can then develop a plan to support the child with toilet training at both home and school. Your child will be changed at regular intervals throughout the day and as needed.

Extra Clothing

Because accidents do happen (toileting, spilled water, milk, etc.), we request that you send an extra set of clothing (shirt, pants, socks, and underwear) for your child to keep in the classroom. Before sending, please label each article of clothing with your child's name. Soiled or stained clothes will be sent home in a plastic bag. **Remember to send in new clothing. As a safety precaution, children are not allowed to wear open toed shoes (flip flops and sandals).**

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation will be provided to children in accordance with the bus routes and guidelines established by WHS. Persons dropping off children to

the bus or picking up children from the bus must be at least 16 years old and provide a picture ID to confirm their identity. Bus service is not provided to children in the Full Day program.

Door-to-door transportation is not provided unless special circumstances are arranged and approved by the Family and Community Partnership Specialist. Parents should have their children at their assigned bus stop 5-10 minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time.

Please allow at least 10 minutes for bus pick-up and drop-off due to traffic or weather conditions. Parents may not alternate bus stops.

Children will not be allowed to board the bus if eating or drinking. Also, any objects allowed in school must be placed in the child's backpack.

Please be advised that bus transportation is a courtesy provided by the program and is not a requirement. Parents, who are abusive to the driver and/or staff, will not have the courtesy of transportation being provided for their child. Also, any child that displays disruptive, abusive, or violent behavior will have bus transportation privileges reviewed for further action.

A Message for Parents about Pedestrian Safety

Here are some facts you should know:

- Preschool children are quick and often unaware of danger.
- Each year, many children are injured or killed when they suddenly dart into the path of a car.
- Most preschoolers are injured near their home or on their own street.
- Most crashes involving children happen between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.
- Most crashes involving children occur in fair and warm weather.
- Twice as many preschool boys are injured than preschool girls.

This is How You Can Prevent These Tragedies:

- Supervise children at all times.
- Children should not be allowed to cross the street alone.
- Teach them who can help them cross the street safely.

- Teach by explaining. Explain to your child the safe way to cross a street. Say: "When I cross a street, I always stop at the curb. I look for cars. I look left for any traffic coming and then I look right for traffic coming that way. Then I look left again. When it is clear, I cross the street and keep looking left and right."

Teach by example. When you cross a street with your child, always:

- Stop at the curb.
- Look LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT for traffic in all directions.
- Cross when it is clear.
- Keep looking for cars as you cross.

Encourage your child. As you both safely cross the street together, point out your child's safety behaviors. Use safe language and specific safety words. Practice what you always teach.

Procedures for Bus Riders

Please review the Procedures for Bus Riders prior to your child riding the bus for the first time.

Parents/Guardians must contact the school immediately if your child will not be attending school. Your child must be ready when the bus arrives. The bus driver will not wait if he/she does not see anyone at the bus stop. Your child must be taken to the bus door when the bus arrives for pick up.

Please be ready ten (10) minutes before and allow ten (10) minutes after the schedule bus time.

There must be an authorized person waiting at the bus stop when the bus arrives or your child will not be dropped off. The person receiving your child off the bus must be at the scheduled stop to receive your child. You must step forward to the bus steps to receive your child's hand from the bus monitor when the bus arrives at the bus stop. Monitors will not release a child's hand without a parent/guardian or authorized person approaching the monitor and receiving the child's hand.

Please make arrangements with the people you have designated to pick up your child in case of an emergency. Parents/guardians should inform all authorized persons that they are on the Emergency Release Form and therefore, authorized to pick up your child. It is the responsibility of the

parent or guardian to inform the authorized persons of the program's bus procedures.

If parents/guardians are unable to be at the bus stop, the bus driver/bus monitors may **ONLY** release the child to those people listed on the child's emergency form. **Persons not listed on the Emergency Release Form will not be permitted to pick up the child.** Authorized persons will be required to show photo identification until the driver and bus monitors are familiar with designated persons to pick up the child. Any additions or removals of authorized names for release of children must be made by the parent/guardian who initially completed the information. **This must be done in person.**

Parents/guardians should **NEVER** offer to take another child unless their name is on the Emergency Release Form.

Please contact your Wilmington Head Start, Inc. center immediately if problems occur with the bus service.

The following bus rules must be adhered to, or transportation privileges will be reviewed for further disciplinary action:

- Child must remain in their seat and safety vest until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- Child must keep their hands and feet to themselves.
- Child must listen to the Bus Driver and the Bus Monitors.

Emergency Closing and Inclement Weather Information

In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, parents will be notified of the closing on our Facebook page and on our website: www.wilmheadstart.org. Parents are encouraged to register to receive alerts via email or text from our School Messenger System. Please make sure that your Family Service Advocate has a current phone number.

Should the school need to close in the middle of the day, the school staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made.

Staff will notify the parents or emergency contact person at the time of the call of the pick-up location should the children need to be evacuated from the center. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.

Addendum

Licensing

All WHS centers are licensed by the State of Delaware Office of Child Care Licensing and follow all state, local and Federal Head Start regulations. In order to be licensed, a licensing specialist conducts an annual unannounced compliance review to verify that we are following the DELACARE: Regulations for Early Care and Education and School-Age Centers. If you would like to review these regulations, please speak with the Center Manager.

Dropping off and Picking up Children

Children will only be released to custodial parents unless previous arrangements have been made. Court documents detailing custody arrangements are to be provided. If a non-custodial parent who is not authorized to pick up your child attempts to do so, the custodial parent/guardian and the police will be contacted.

Emergency/Sick Child Pick Up

Accidents, Injuries, and Serious Incidents

- If your child becomes injured or involved in a physical altercation with another child, emergency action will be taken to protect your child from further harm, and you will be notified.
- If your child receives a serious injury, you will be notified immediately. Per licensing regulations, a serious injury includes any impact to a child's head. Therefore, if your child falls and bumps his head, lips, mouth, or face, you will be notified immediately.
- An accident/incident report will be completed and provided to you at time of pick -up. You will be asked to sign the report. A copy of this report will be kept in your child's file.
- You will be notified of less serious accidents/injuries before your child is released at the end of the day. Less serious injuries include bumps, scrapes, and scratches. An accident/incident report will be provided to you.

- If your child has a life-threatening injury or illness or a serious medical incident such as a seizure, allergic reaction, etc., you will be notified immediately after an ambulance is contacted and you will receive an incident report.
- You will be required to sign the report as proof that you were notified of the accident/injury/serious incident.

Communicable/Contagious Disease or Condition

Children with a reportable communicable disease will not be admitted to the center, unless your child's doctor provides documentation stating your child has been evaluated and presents no risk to himself/herself or others or the Division of Public Health (DPH) has advised us that your child presents no risk to others. If your child's doctor states your child may return, but DPH states that your child may not, we will follow DPH's instructions. If your child is exposed to a communicable/contagious disease or condition while at Head Start, you will be notified and given information on the symptoms of the disease or condition.

Medication Policy

- Prescription and over the counter medication will only be given in school if it cannot be given at home before or after school hours.
- There are staff members who are certified by the Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL) to administer medication on site at all times. OCCL considers anything other than soap and water to be medication.
- Before administering any medication, you must complete a Medication Administration Record (MAR) and include all of the required information listed on the form. If it is an ongoing medication, a new form needs to be signed each month. Completed copies of this form will be placed in the child's cumulative file.
- Medication must be in its original container and labeled with your child's name. When your child no longer needs the medication or the medication has expired, we will return the medication to you.
- Documentation from a health care provider is necessary for all over the counter medications.
- In order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, we will make reasonable accommodations for children with medical needs. If your child needs accommodations, please speak with the Center Manager to discuss your request.

Screen Time

Wilmington Head Start may incorporate limited screen time (TV, Video, Computer, I-Pad) into your child's curriculum. All activities are supervised by staff, age appropriate, educational, and limited to one hour or less per day, unless a special event occurs. At time of enrollment, you stated whether or not you would grant permission for screen time. Please speak with your Family Service Advocate if you would like to make a change regarding screen time permission.



SCHOOL CALENDAR 2023-2024

Wilmington Head Start, Inc.

SEPTEMBER 2023:	5 th School Starts for 4 Year Old & POC Children 6 th School Starts for 3-Year-Old Children 15 th In-Service	School Open School Open School Closed
OCTOBER 2023:	20 th In-Service	School Closed
NOVEMBER 2023:	22 nd In-Service 23 rd and 24 th Thanksgiving	School Closed School Closed
DECEMBER 2023:	21 st In-Service 22 nd to 29 th Winter Break	School Closed School Closed
JANUARY 2024:	1 st New Year 2 nd Children Return to School 12 th In-Service 15 th MLK Holiday	School Closed School Open School Closed School Closed
FEBRUARY 2024:	16 th In-Service 19 th President's Day	School Closed School Closed
MARCH 2024:	15 th In-Service 29 th Good Friday	School Closed School Closed
APRIL 2024:	1 st to 5 th Spring Break	School Closed
MAY 2024:	17 th End of Year Celebration 24 th Staff Appreciation 27 th Memorial Day	School Closed School Closed School Closed
JUNE 2024:	4 th Last Day for Part Year children 19 th Juneteenth	School Open School Closed
JULY 2024:	4 th & 5 th Independence Day	School Closed
AUGUST 2024:	12 th Last Day for Full Year Children (WE-7 & LAJ-9) 16 th Last Day for POC Children	School Open School Open

