



Little Panthers Preschool Student Handbook

2026-2027



The staff at Norfolk Public Schools would like to welcome you to our Little Panthers Preschool Program. Children, along with their parents, are the foundation of our program. We endeavor to create a partnership with parents that works on behalf of the child. We will accomplish this through parent-oriented programs as well as child-oriented activities. We know that we are not "home," but we plan on being the next best thing!

INTRODUCTION

Do you want your child to....
Develop the skills to become an avid reader?
Learn beginning math skills?
Improve speech and language skills?
Be creative?
Make decisions independently?
Develop physical coordination?
Get along well with others?
Be self-confident?
Enjoy learning?
Love school?

If you do, then our program at Little Panthers Preschool is perfect for your child because we share the same goals! For years parents have been asking, "What is my child actually learning in preschool? And what can I do at home to help?" This handbook describes what children are learning from the activities, learning environment, daily schedule, and from our conversations with them at school. Last, it suggests what you can do at home to help your child learn.

ORIENTATION PROCEDURES

Each family will have an orientation to the program (a home visit and open house) provided by the preschool teachers. During orientation the new family is introduced to the program goals, rules, and guidelines and will be introduced to the staff who will be working with them. The Handbook is explained, discussed, and signed by the parents.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Norfolk Public Schools utilizes research based early childhood curriculum throughout our classrooms. The philosophy behind our curriculum and assessment is that young children learn best by doing. Learning isn't just repeating what someone else says; it requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world we live in.

In their early years, children explore the world around them by using all of their senses (touching, tasting, listening, smelling, and looking). In using real materials such as blocks and trying out their ideas, children learn about sizes, shapes, and colors, and they notice relationships between things.



In time, they learn to use one object to stand for another. This is the beginning of symbolic thinking. For example, they might pretend a stick is an airplane or a block is a hamburger. These early symbols - the stick and the block- are similar in shape to the objects they represent.

Gradually children become more and more able to use abstract symbols like words to describe their thoughts and feelings. They learn to "read" pictures, which are symbols of real people, places, and things. This exciting development in symbolic thinking takes place during the early childhood years as children play.

Play provides the foundation for academic or "school" learning. It is the preparation children need before they learn highly abstract symbols such as letters (which are symbols for sounds) and numbers (which are symbols for number concepts). Play enables us to achieve the key goals of our early childhood curriculum.

Play is the work of young children.



Earlier is NOT Better

Many parents are concerned when their children aren't practicing letters and numbers. They feel that worksheets and homework will prepare their children for elementary school. We could give your children workbooks. We could make them memorize the alphabet. We could drill them. We could test them. But if we do, your children may lose something very important.

Children who are rushed into reading and writing too soon miss important steps in learning and may suffer later on because they lack the foundation they need for using language. Children who are taught to read before they are ready may be able to sound out and recognize words, but they may also have little understanding of what they are reading. If they haven't been given time to play, they won't have explored objects enough to know what words (like hard, harder, and hardest) mean. If they aren't allowed to string beads, button, dress up, cut, paste, pour, and draw they won't develop the fine motor skills they need for writing.

Because math involves more than memorizing facts (like $2+2=4$), because it involves logical thinking, children shouldn't be pushed into paper and pencil arithmetic too soon. To acquire the foundation for logical thinking, children need many opportunities to count objects, sort them into piles, and add some to a pile and take some away. It is by playing games like these that they will learn to truly understand addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication. Without these concrete experiences, children may give correct answers but probably won't understand what they are doing and why.

Worst of all is children rushed into academic subjects too soon. They may lose their enthusiasm for learning and lose their sense of themselves as learners. If children are told what to learn and memorize by the teacher, they may become more passive and dependent learners, and be less excited about learning something new. Children who are given plenty of time to play, however, learn to ask their own questions and figure out their own answers. They are responsible for their own learning. They see themselves as explorers, discoverers, problem solvers, and inventors.

THE GOAL OF OUR CURRICULUM

The most important goal of our early childhood curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic learners. This means encouraging children to be active and creative explorers who are not afraid to try out their ideas and to think their own thoughts. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. We're teaching them how to learn, not just in preschool and kindergarten, but all through their lives. We're allowing them to learn at their own pace and in the ways that are best for them. We're giving them good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of themselves, which will make a difference throughout their lives.

The activities we plan for children, the way we organize the environment, select toys and materials, plan the schedule, and talk with children are all designed to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and give your child a successful start in school.

WHAT CHILDREN LEARN AT HOME

Our curriculum works best when teachers and parents work together. Each of us has something valuable to contribute. We are trained in child development and early childhood education. We see how your child acts with other children and adults. We can assess what your child is learning and how he or she is progressing.

But only you have in-depth knowledge of your child. You know your child's interests, fears, joys, patterns, and past best.

You are most familiar with the world your child is trying to understand. You know about the relationships between the members of your family, and you have shared many of your child's experiences, from family events to trips to the doctor's office or the zoo.

This in-depth knowledge makes you central to your child's learning process and a very valuable resource for us as teachers. If you share with us what is happening to your child at home - the arrival of a new baby, the death of a pet, nightmares, temper tantrums, trips, separation or divorce - we can understand your child better. We can deal with both positive and difficult events through reassuring stories, imaginative dramatic play, and extra love and attention.

We also see you as your child's first and most important teacher. Your home is your child's first and continual learning environment. You decide your family's routines - when you get up, eat, play, do chores, visit friends, and go to bed. The way you talk with your children makes a tremendous difference in how they think, how they feel about themselves, and the kind of people they will become.

If we can work together-we can do some of the same things at school and at home-your child will be much better off. The more consistent we adults are, the more secure your child is likely to feel. And when children feel secure, they are more likely to explore, to experiment, and to learn.

DETAILS ABOUT OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

PROGRAM COSTS

Our Little Panthers Preschool program is provided to the families of Norfolk at no cost to ensure that we are providing a highly effective program to all children regardless of family income.

HOURS

Our Little Panthers Preschool program has one location at 2500 W. Norfolk Avenue.

3 Year Old Half Day Classes (3 by July 31st)

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Morning Class: 8:00-11:30 (doors open for drop-off at 7:50)

Afternoon Class: 12:15-3:45 (doors open for drop-off at 12:15)

4 Year Old Full Day Classes (4 by July 31st)

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

8:00-3:00 (doors open at 7:50)

PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT POLICY

The District's preschool program (Little Panthers Preschool) shall be operated in accordance with this policy.

The Superintendent or designee will develop and maintain eligibility guidelines for children to enroll in the District's preschool program.

If the Superintendent or designee determines that the preschool program is at capacity, then children will be admitted to the program in the following order of priority:

1. Resident three and four year old students with disabilities currently receiving IEP services
2. Resident students who are or will turn four prior to or on July 31st
3. Resident students who are or will turn three prior to or on July 31st
4. Resident Kindergarten age-eligible children who have had little or no preschool experience and/or other extreme extenuating circumstances. Little Panthers Preschool can serve children birth to mandatory Kindergarten Attendance Age (the year he/she turns 6-prior to January 1), but prioritizes children who have not yet met Kindergarten Entrance Age (the year he/she turns 5 before August 1st).

Little Panthers Preschool does not serve non-resident (option enrollment) students.

The Superintendent or designee shall have the authority to implement and interpret capacity and enrollment decisions to ensure the best interests of the District and its preschool program, and there shall be no appeal process to the Board of Education related to the Superintendent or designee's decision.

Enrollment Process

Enrollment for the preschool program will be conducted on an annual basis. Parents or legal guardians must complete and submit a preschool enrollment application form by the specified deadline. Applications will be reviewed, and enrollment decisions will be based on available space, eligibility criteria, and other factors deemed appropriate by District staff. Parents will be notified of their child's enrollment status within a reasonable timeframe after the application deadline.

Waitlist

In the event that the number of applicants exceeds the preschool program's capacity, a waitlist may be established. Priority on the waitlist may be given to eligible children based on the priorities listed in this policy. Parents will be notified if their child is placed on the waitlist and will receive updates regarding their status if openings become available.

Moving Out of District Boundaries

If your family moves outside of Norfolk Public Schools boundaries during the course of the school year, your child will be unenrolled from Little Panthers Preschool as Option Enrollment is not available for our district preschool program.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Little Panthers Preschool partners with Fits & Giggles Child Care to offer the Whee! After Three aftercare program. This program is held at LPP from 3:00-6:00 each school day. Enrollment for the program will be held in early August. If interested, please reach out to our office to get additional information.

MEAL PROGRAM

Breakfast and Lunch is offered to the full day classes.

Snack is offered to the half day classes.

At Little Panthers Preschool, we use mealtime as an extension of our learning. Children learn many skills while sitting at the meal table with their friends and teachers. We work on manners, turn-taking while speaking and listening, as well as flexibility in being willing to try new foods. Because of this, we would prefer that our students eat the family style meal that is offered through the school.

Breakfast:

Free Meal Eligibility-- Free

Reduced Meal Eligibility-- \$0.30/meal

Full Pay Eligibility-- \$2.05/meal

If your child will not be eating school breakfast, then he/she will need to eat breakfast at home but will still be expected to sit at the meal table with his/her class. Please do not send breakfast into the school with your child.

Lunch:

Free Meal Eligibility-- Free

Reduced Meal Eligibility-- \$0.40/meal

Full Pay Eligibility-- \$3.55/meal

If your child will not be eating school lunch, then he/she is allowed to bring a sack lunch if it meets the following guidelines:

- Please fill your child's lunch with healthy meal options (fruits, vegetables, sandwiches, water/milk/juice)
- No soda, candy, cookies, etc.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS AND CLOSING

The Preschool Program will follow the official school calendar of the Norfolk Public Schools. In most cases, if Norfolk Public Schools is having school, the Preschool Program will be operating. Likewise, if Norfolk Public Schools is NOT having school then the Preschool Program will be closed as well.

There will be some additional days that the Norfolk Public Schools Preschool will not be in session. Those days will be communicated to you via notes and the Norfolk Public Schools Preschool calendar.

Please listen to the local radio stations if there is inclement weather and the Norfolk Public Schools will not be in session. You also will receive an automated phone call should school be delayed or canceled. If there is a 10:00 a.m. late start due to inclement weather, the morning half day class will NOT have school.

GENERAL POLICIES

VOLUNTEERING IN THE CLASSROOM

We welcome parents to volunteer in their child's classrooms when possible, this can look many different ways based on what can fit in your schedule. Collecting a few items for an upcoming project, cutting out materials that children will be using for an upcoming project, or reading with a student in the book corner are all great ways to be a part of your child's education! If you are looking for ways to partner, just ask your child's teacher what you can do!

If you do plan to spend time in the classroom, NPS policy requires a background check to be completed by our Human Resources Office.

ILLNESS

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified immediately. It is preferred that there is a 24-hour wait time before the child returns to school if they are sent home with any of the following symptoms:

1. Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
2. Diarrhea or vomiting
3. Sore or discharging eyes or ears
4. Profuse nasal discharge
5. Unexplained skin rash or irritation
6. Evidence of contagious disease
7. Head lice

RETURN FROM ILLNESS

If your child has been ill for (5) consecutive days, a permit from your doctor or examination by the school nurse is required. Please check with the school before bringing your child back.

TOOTH BRUSHING

As a partner with Norfolk Head Start, Little Panthers Preschool is required to meet federal Head Start guidelines. One of those requirements is daily toothbrushing following either the breakfast or lunch meal for students in full day classrooms.

ADMINISTERING MEDICINE

Medications may be given at school with written authorization of one parent/legal guardian. This is true for both over-the-counter and prescription medicines. The medicine sheet must be signed each day that we are to give the medication. With all medication, over-the-counter and prescription, the doctor's orders for giving the medication must be present. All medications must be contained in the original bottle. These policies are part of our state regulations and must be followed.

OUTDOOR PLAY

We believe that any child who is well enough to come to school is also well enough to take part in all of the school activities. This includes outdoor play, except in a few isolated instances, so please dress your child appropriately for the weather. They should have coats, hats, and mittens/gloves during the winter. They will not be allowed to stay indoors if they do not have the appropriate attire as all staff needs to be out on the playground.

CLOTHING

Please send your child in comfortable, washable play clothes as we are very busy! Each child should always have a change of clothing available in their backpack in case of spills and accidents. All belongings should be marked with your child's name. In winter, please dress your child warmly for outside activities.

TOYS/JEWELRY/ITEMS FROM HOME

Toys, jewelry, and items from home are not encouraged, as they are often difficult to share and may get lost or broken. The school does not assume responsibility for items brought from home. If your child comes to school with one of these items, we will ask that they put the item in their backpack for the rest of the day.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is crucial! We are learning new skills everyday and it is hard for your child to catch up if they miss too much school. If your child will be absent or coming late, please notify the school before 8:00 a.m. This will help us plan accordingly for meals and activities. If your child misses 2 consecutive days without notification a staff member will call to determine the problem. If a parent cannot be reached, a well-child check may be called in to the local police to ensure the safety of your child and your family. If absences continue, your child's slot may be given to the next child on the waiting list.

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

Nebraska statutes require that all professionals working with children report concerns they may have about possible child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services or the Police Department. This information will be held in the strictest confidence, as is all information regarding children, families and staff at the school.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

The behavior policy of Little Panthers Preschool Program is to develop a positive relationship between the caregiver(s) and your child as an individual person. We also believe that by providing a warm and caring atmosphere in which to grow and learn, and an interesting and challenging program, discipline problems will be kept to a minimum.

At the initial home visit and all following Parent Teacher Conferences, our teachers will refer to the Pawsitive Panthers Expectations. These expectations are:

*At LPP, we are RESPECTFUL

We use listening ears and inside voices.

*At LPP, we are RESPONSIBLE

We use helping hands.

*At LPP, we are SAFE

We use walking feet and a calm body.

By using the same positive language at home, your child will be more likely to understand the importance of these skills.

Students who are struggling to comply with program behavior expectations may have to meet with the principal. If there is an ongoing concern, the principal and classroom teacher will have a meeting with the parent(s) to discuss next steps regarding student behavior.

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN SUPPORT

We believe that parental/guardian support in the school system is very important and starts when your child enters preschool. As a parent/guardian, you can do a lot to support your child's efforts and help your child grow to his or her full potential. Please take time to show an interest in what your child is learning in school and in the information they bring home. Your child will enjoy school more thoroughly if they know that you support them.

As a Little Panthers Pawsitive Parent, I will:

- Drive safely through the parking lot by following posted signs and staying alert.
- Staying off my phone to ensure all children are safe and I can give my child and their teacher my full attention at drop off and pick up.
- Communicate with the school about changes in phone number, address, family situation, and resources that would benefit my family.
- Follow the building wide expectation of being nut aware by not providing meals or snacks that contain nuts.
- Model the importance of school by having my child arrive at school on time ready to learn and grow.
- Read and talk with my child everyday.
- **Enjoy the ride of watching my child learn through play and exploration!**

SUPPLIES

There are no required supplies for preschool as all will be provided by our program. If you would like to contribute to the classroom, please talk with your child's teacher. Any donated supplies will be appreciated, but are not required. There will be papers that go home every day so please provide your child with a full size backpack.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

Due to the young age of our students and to ensure their safety, children cannot be dropped off outside the building or allowed to walk out and enter a vehicle that is waiting. Parents/Guardians must park their vehicle and walk students to the exterior door.

For drop off and pick up, we use four doors at Little Panthers Preschool. This allows for better parking and traffic flow and also allows our students to be greeted at the door and walked to their classrooms. Based on your child's classroom placement, they will enter a numbered door as follows:

Door 9 (east side of building) - Clausen, Behrens

Door 1 (south side of building) - Sobotka, Bettin, Drahota, Kotas

Door 3 (west side of building) - Todd, Luna

Door 4 (northwest side of building) - Marmolejo, Rehan

Your child's safety is our top priority. To ensure that your child is being dismissed with the correct adult, we use a ticket system at LPP. Each family will be provided two pick-up tickets that your family can share with the individuals that are approved to pick your child up from preschool. If you need additional tickets, please reach out to the office. These tickets will need to be shown by the approved transportation (including parents) every day at pick up.

Please keep us informed of any changes in your child's ride to or from school so we can ensure their safety. Even if the person is listed as an emergency contact, we will still require a proof of identification before your child is sent with them.

In the event of a district wide 10:00 late start, there will NOT be a morning session of 3 year old preschool. Full day sessions will begin at 10:00 a.m.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver unless the child is currently being served under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

BIRTHDAYS

If your child will be celebrating a birthday during the school year they are welcome to

bring treats. If you choose to send treats, please check with your child's teacher about the number of students in the classroom. All snacks brought in must be pre-packaged with ingredients listed and nut-free.

HAND WASHING

It is very important that you are helping your child practice proper hand washing at home. We will be practicing this at school throughout the day. Please help them master this skill by encouraging them to do it correctly at home.

CONTACTING US

Please feel free to contact us at 402-644-2501 if you have any questions or concerns. You can reach teachers before and after school or on Wednesdays. We are happy to return phone calls or meet with you after school. Please note that the mornings are usually a very busy time of the day which makes it difficult to have an extended conversation, so if you need the time and attention of the teacher, please feel free to ask for a scheduled meeting time.

Our primary tool for consistent communication between teachers and parents is ClassDoJo. This is an app that allows you to see pictures of your child learning and having fun at school, message your child's teacher with questions, and also receive information about upcoming events at school, so please be sure to sign up!

Thank you for your support of Norfolk Public Schools-Little Panthers
Preschool Program. If you ever have questions, or just want to stop in and visit
YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!



HARASSMENT POLICY (5401) for STUDENTS AND STAFF

Anti-discrimination, Anti-harassment, and Anti-retaliation

A. Elimination of Discrimination.

The Norfolk Public School District hereby gives this statement of compliance and intends to comply with all state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination. This school district intends to take any necessary measures to assure compliance with such laws against any prohibited form of discrimination.

The Norfolk Public School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, race, (including skin color, hair texture, and protective hairstyles) color, religion, military or veteran status, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, sexual orientation or gender identity, or other protected status in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Students: Director of Student Services—512 Philip Avenue, Norfolk, NE 68701 (402) 644- 2500

Employees and Others: Resources Director—512 Philip Avenue, Norfolk, NE 68701 (402) 644-2500

Complaints or concerns involving discrimination or needs for accommodation or access should be addressed to the appropriate Coordinator. For further information about anti-discrimination laws and regulations, or to file a complaint of discrimination with the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S.

Department of Education (OCR), please contact OCR at One Petticoat Lane, 1010 Walnut Street, 3rd Floor, Suite 320, Kansas City, Missouri 64106, (816) 268-0550 (voice), Fax (816) 268-0599, (800) 877-8339 (telecommunications device for the deaf), or ocr.kansascity@ed.gov.

B. Prohibited Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation of Employees, Students and

Others. 1. Purpose:

The Norfolk Public School District is committed to offering employment and educational opportunity to its employees and students in a climate free of discrimination. Accordingly, unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation of any kind by District employees, including, co-workers, non-employees (such as volunteers), third parties, and others is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Harassment is a form of discrimination and includes verbal, non-verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to a person's sex, disability, race, (including skin color, hair texture, and protective hairstyles) color, religion, military or veteran status, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, sexual orientation or gender identity, or other protected status that is sufficiently serious to deny, interfere with, or limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational or work program or activity, including, but not limited to:

- a. Conduct that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create an intimidating, hostile, or abusive educational or work environment, or
- b. Requiring an individual to endure the offensive conduct as a condition of continued employment or educational programs or activities, including the receipt of aids, benefits, and services.

Educational programs and activities include all academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs of the school, whether those programs take place in a school's facilities, on a school bus, at a class or training program sponsored by the school at another location, or elsewhere.

Discriminatory harassment because of a person's sex, disability, race, color, religion, military or veteran status, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, or other protected status, may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Name-calling,
- b. Teasing or taunting,
- c. Insults, slurs, or derogatory names or remarks,
- d. Demeaning jokes,
- e. Inappropriate gestures,
- f. Graffiti or inappropriate written or electronic material,
- g. Visual displays, such as cartoons, posters, or electronic images,
- h. Threats or intimidating or hostile conduct,
- i. Physical acts of aggression, assault, or violence, or
- j. Criminal offenses

The following examples are additional or more specific examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment:

- a. Unwelcome sexual advances or propositions,
- b. Requests or pressure for sexual favors,
- c. Comments about an individual's body, sexual activity, or sexual attractiveness,
- d. Physical contact or touching of a sexual nature, including touching intimate body parts and inappropriate patting, pinching, rubbing, or brushing against another's body,
- e. Physical sexual acts of aggression, assault, or violence, including criminal offenses (such as rape, sexual assault or battery, and sexually motivated stalking), against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent due to the victim's age, intellectual disability, or use of drugs or alcohol,
- f. Requiring sexual favors or contact in exchange for aids, benefits, or services, such as grades, awards, privileges, promotions, etc., or

g. Gender-based harassment; acts of verbal, nonverbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct based on sex or sex-stereotyping, but not involving conduct of a sexual nature.

If the District knows or reasonably should know about possible harassment, including violence, the District will conduct a prompt, adequate, reliable, thorough, and impartial investigation to determine whether unlawful harassment occurred (see section entitled "Grievance Procedures," below), and take appropriate interim measures, if necessary. If the District determines that unlawful harassment occurred, the District will take prompt and effective action to eliminate the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects, if appropriate. If harassment or violence that occurs off school property creates a hostile environment at school, the District will follow this policy and grievance procedure, within the scope of its authority.

All District employees are expected to take prompt and appropriate actions to report and prevent discrimination, harassment, and retaliation by others. Employees who witness or become aware of possible discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, must immediately report the conduct to his or her supervisor or the compliance coordinator designated to handle complaints of discrimination (designated compliance coordinator).

2. Anti-retaliation:

The District prohibits retaliation, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination against any person for opposing discrimination, including harassment, or for participating in the District's discrimination complaint process or making a complaint, testifying, assisting, or participating in any manner, in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing. Retaliation is a form of discrimination.

The District will take immediate steps to stop retaliation and prevent its recurrence against the alleged victim and any person associated with the alleged victim. These steps will include, but are not limited to, notifying students, employees, and others, that they are protected from retaliation, ensuring that they know how to report future complaints, and initiating follow-up contact with the complainant to determine if any additional acts of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation have occurred. If retaliation occurs, the District will take prompt and strong responsive action, including possible discipline, including expulsion or termination, if applicable.

3. Grievance (or Complaint) Procedures:

Employees or students should initially report all instances of discrimination, harassment or retaliation

to their immediate supervisor or teacher or to the compliance coordinator designated to handle complaints of discrimination (designated coordinator). If the employee or student is uncomfortable in presenting the problem to the supervisor or teacher, or if the supervisor or teacher is the problem, the employee or student may report the alleged discrimination, harassment or retaliation ("discrimination") to the designated coordinator, or in the case of students, to another staff person (such as a counselor or principal).

Other individuals may report alleged discrimination to the designated coordinator. If the designated coordinator is the person alleged to have committed the discriminatory act, then the complaint should be submitted to the Superintendent for assignment. A discrimination complaint form is attached to this grievance procedure and is available in the office of each District building, on the District's website, and from the designated coordinators.

Under no circumstances will a person filing a complaint or grievance involving discrimination be retaliated against for filing the complaint or grievance.

i. Level 1 (Investigation and Findings):

Once the District receives a grievance, complaint or report alleging discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, or becomes aware of possible discriminatory conduct, the District will conduct a prompt, adequate, reliable, thorough, and impartial investigation to determine whether unlawful harassment occurred. If necessary, the District will take immediate, interim action or measures to protect the alleged victim and prevent further potential discrimination, harassment, or retaliation during the pending investigation. The alleged victim will be notified of his or her options to avoid contact with the alleged harasser, such as changing a class or prohibiting the alleged harasser from having any contact with the alleged victim pending the result of the District's investigation. The District will minimize any burden on the alleged victim when taking interim measures to protect the alleged victim.

The District will promptly investigate all complaints of discrimination, even if an outside entity or law enforcement agency is investigating a complaint involving the same facts and allegations. The District will not wait for the conclusion or outcome of a criminal investigation or proceeding to begin an investigation required by this grievance procedure. If the allegation(s) involve possible criminal conduct, the District will notify the complainant of his or her right to file a criminal complaint, and District employees will not dissuade the complainant from filing a criminal complaint either during or after the District's investigation.

The District will aim to complete its investigation within ten (10) working days after receiving a complaint or report, unless extenuating circumstances exist as determined by the investigator. Extenuating circumstances may include the unavailability of witnesses due to illness or incapacitation, or additional time needed because of the complexity of the investigation, the need for outside experts to evaluate the evidence (such as forensic evidence), or multiple complainants or victims. If extenuating circumstances exist, the extended timeframe to complete the investigation will be determined by the investigator and in compliance with any legal requirements. Periodic status updates will be given to the parties, when appropriate.

The District's investigation will include, but is not limited to:

- a. Providing the parties with the opportunity to present witnesses and provide evidence.
- b. An evaluation of all relevant information and documentation relating to the alleged discriminatory conduct.
- c. For allegations involving harassment, some of the factors the District will consider include: 1) the nature of the conduct and whether the conduct was unwelcome, 2) the surrounding circumstances,

expectations, and relationships, 3) the degree to which the conduct affected one or more students' education, 4) the type, frequency, and duration of the conduct, 5) the identity of and relationship between the alleged harasser and the suspect or suspects of the harassment, 6) the number of individuals involved, 7) the age (and sex, if applicable) of the alleged harasser and the alleged victim(s) of the harassment, 8) the location of the incidents and the context in which they occurred, 9) the totality of the circumstances, and 10) other relevant evidence.

- d. A review of the evidence using a "preponderance of the evidence" standard (based on the evidence, is it more likely than not that discrimination, harassment, or retaliation occurred?)

The designated compliance coordinator (or designated investigator) will complete an investigative report, which will include:

- a. A summary of the facts,
- b. Findings regarding whether discrimination, harassment or other inappropriate conduct occurred, and
- c. If a finding is made that discrimination, harassment or other inappropriate conduct occurred, the recommended remedy or remedies necessary to eliminate discrimination, harassment or other inappropriate conduct.

If someone other than the designated compliance coordinator conducted the investigation, the compliance coordinator will review, approve, and sign the investigative report. The District will ensure that prompt, appropriate, and effective remedies are provided if a finding of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation is made. The District will maintain relevant documentation obtained during the investigation and documentation supportive of the findings and any subsequent determinations, including the investigative report, witness statements, interview summaries, and any transcripts or audio recordings, pertaining to the investigative and appeal proceedings.

The District may, when appropriate or when legally required, send concurrently to the parties written notification of the decision (findings and any remedy) regarding the complaint within one (1) **week** after the investigation is completed. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 11232g; 34 C.F.R. Part 99, permits the District to disclose relevant information to a student who was discriminated against or harassed.

ii. Level 2 (Appeal to the Superintendent):

If a party is not satisfied with the findings or remedies (or both) set forth in the decision, he or she may file an appeal in writing with the Superintendent within five (5) working days after receiving the decision. The Superintendent will review the appeal and the investigative documentation and decision, conduct additional investigation, if necessary, and issue a written determination about the appeal within ten (10) working days after receiving the appeal. The party who filed the appeal will be sent the Superintendent's determination at the time it is issued, and a copy will be sent to the designated compliance coordinator. [If the Superintendent is the subject of the complaint, the party will file the appeal directly with the Board.]

iii. Level 3 (Appeal to the Board):

If the party is not satisfied with the Superintendent's determination, he or she may file an appeal in writing with the Board of Education within five (5) working days after receiving the Superintendent's determination. The Board of Education will review the appeal, the Superintendent's determination, the investigative documentation and decision, and allow the party to address the Board or a Committee of the Board of Education ~~at a~~ to present his or her appeal. The Board or a Committee of the Board of Education may, in its discretion issue a written determination about the appeal. The Board or a Committee of the Board may, in the alternative, vote on the appeal and send the party the outcome of the vote. The party who filed the appeal will be sent the Board's determination. The Board's determination, and any actions taken, will be final on behalf of the District.

4. Confidentiality:

The identity of the complainant will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by state and federal law. The District will notify the complainant of the anti-retaliation provisions of applicable laws and that the District will take steps to prevent retaliation and will take prompt and strong responsive actions if retaliation occurs.

If a complainant requests confidentiality or asks that the complaint not be pursued, the District will take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the request for confidentiality or the request not to pursue an investigation, as long as doing so does not prevent the District from responding effectively to the harassment and preventing harassment of other students. If a complainant insists that his or her name or other identifiable information not be disclosed to the alleged perpetrator, the District will inform the complainant that its ability to respond may be limited. Even if the District cannot take disciplinary action against the alleged harasser, the District will pursue other steps to limit the effects of the alleged harassment and prevent its recurrence, if warranted.

5. Training:

The District will ensure that relevant District employees, including but not limited to officials, administrators, teachers, substitute teachers, counselors, nurses and other health personnel, coaches, assistant coaches, paraprofessionals, aides, bus drivers, and school law enforcement officers, are adequately trained so they understand and know how to identify acts of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and how to report it to appropriate District officials or employees.

6. Designated Compliance Coordinators: Designated compliance coordinators will be responsible for:

a. Coordinating efforts to comply with anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and anti-retaliation laws and regulations.

b. Coordinating and implementing training for students and employees pertaining to anti-discrimination, anti-harassment and anti-retaliation laws and regulations, including the training areas listed above.

c. Investigating complaints of discrimination (unless the coordinator designates other trained individuals to investigate).

d. Monitoring substantiated complaints or reports of discrimination, as needed (and with the assistance of other District employees, if necessary), to ensure discrimination or harassment does not recur, and that retaliation conduct does not occur or recur.

e. Overseeing discrimination complaints, including identifying and addressing any patterns or systemic problems, and reporting such patterns or systemic problems to the Superintendent and the Board of Education.

f. Communicating regularly with the District's law enforcement unit investigating cases and providing current information to them pertaining to anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and anti-retaliation standards and compliance requirements.

g. Reviewing all evidence in harassment or violence cases brought before the District's disciplinary committee or administrator to determine whether the complainants are entitled to a remedy under anti-discrimination laws and regulations that was not available in the disciplinary process.

h. Ensuring that investigations address whether other students or employees may have been subjected to discrimination, including harassment and retaliation.

i. Determining whether District employees with knowledge of allegations of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation, failed to carry out their duties in reporting the allegations to the designated compliance coordinator and responding to the allegations.

j. Recommending changes to this policy and grievance procedure.

k. Performing other duties as assigned. The designated compliance coordinators will not have other job responsibilities that may create a conflict of interest with their coordinator responsibilities.

7. Preventive Measures: The District will publish and widely distribute on an ongoing basis a notice of nondiscrimination (notice) in electronic and printed formats, including prominently displaying the notice on the District's website and posting the notice at each building in the District. The District also will designate an employee to coordinate compliance with antidiscrimination laws (see Designated Compliance Coordinator section, above, for further information on compliance coordinator), and widely publish and disseminate this grievance procedure, including prominently posting it on the District's website, at each building in the District, reprinting it in District publications, such as handbooks, and sending it electronically to members of the school community. The District will provide training to employees and students at the beginning of each academic year in the areas (B.6.a-g) identified in the Training section, above.

The District also may distribute specific harassment and violence materials (such as sexual violence), including a summary of the District's anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and anti-retaliation policy and grievance procedure, and a list of victim resources, during events such as school assemblies and back to school nights, if recent incidents or allegations warrant additional education to the school community.

Date of Adoption: September 14, 2015

Date of Reaffirmation: March 12, 2018

Date of Revision: July 9, 2018

Date of Revision: July 12, 2021

Date of Reaffirmation: February 14, 2022

Section 9 Student Privacy Protection Policy

It is the policy of Norfolk Public Schools to develop and implement policies which protect the privacy of students in accordance with applicable laws. The District's policies in this regard include the following:

Right of Parents to Inspect Surveys Funded or Administered by the United States Department of Education or Third Parties: Parents shall have the right to inspect, upon the parent's request, a survey created by and administered by either the United States Department of Education or a third party (a group or person other than the District) before the survey is administered or distributed by the school to the parent's child.

Protection of Student Privacy in Regard to Surveys of Matters Deemed to be Sensitive: The District will require, for any survey of students which contain one or more matters deemed to be sensitive (see section headed "Definition of Surveys of Matters Deemed to be Sensitive"), that suitable arrangements be made to protect student privacy (that is, the name or other identifying information about a particular student). For such surveys, the District will also follow the procedures set forth in the section entitled: "Notification of and Right to Opt-Out of Specific Events."

Right of Parents to Inspect Instructional Materials: Parents have the right to inspect, upon reasonable request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for their child. Reasonable requests for inspection of instructional materials shall be granted within a reasonable period of time after the request is received. Parents shall not have the right to access academic tests or academic assessments, as such are not within the meaning of the term "instructional materials" for purposes of this policy. The

procedures for making and granting a request to inspect instructional materials are as follows: the parent shall make the request, with reasonable specificity, directly to the building principal. The building principal, within five (5) school days, shall consult with the teacher or other educator responsible for the curriculum materials. In the event the request can be accommodated, the building principal shall make the materials available for inspection or review by the parent, at such reasonable times and place as will not interfere with the educator's intended use of the materials. In the event there is a question as to the nature of the curriculum materials requested or as to whether the materials are required to be provided, the building principal shall notify the parent of such concern, and assist the parent with forming a request which can reasonably be accommodated. If the parent does not formulate such a request, and continues to desire certain curriculum materials, the parent shall be asked to make their request to the Superintendent.

Rights of Parents to be Notified of and to Opt-Out of Certain Physical Examinations or Screenings. The general policy and practice of the District is to not administer physical examinations or screenings of students which require advance notice or parental opt-out rights under the applicable federal laws, for the reason that the physical examinations or screenings to be conducted by the District will usually fit into one of the following exceptions: (1) hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings; (2) physical examinations or screenings that are permitted or required by an applicable State law; and (3) surveys administered to students in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. For physical examinations or screenings which do not fit into the applicable exceptions, the District will follow the procedures set forth in the section entitled: "Notification of and Right to Opt-Out of Specific Events."

Protection of Student Privacy in Regard to Personal Information Collected from Students: The general policy and practice of the District is to not engage in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information. The District will make reasonable arrangements to protect student privacy to the extent possible in the event of any such collection, disclosure, or use of personal information. "Personal information" for purposes of this policy means individually identifiable information about a student including: a student or parent's first and last name, home address, telephone number, and social security number. The term "personal information," for purposes of this policy, does not include information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions. This exception includes the following examples: (i) college or postsecondary education recruitment, or military recruitment; (ii) book clubs, magazines, and programs providing access to low-cost literary products; (iii) curriculum and instructional materials used by elementary schools and secondary schools; (iv) tests and assessments used by elementary schools and secondary schools to provide cognitive, evaluative, diagnostic, clinical, aptitude, or achievement information about student, or to generate other statistically useful data for the purpose of securing such tests and assessments, and the subsequent analysis and public release of the aggregate data from such tests and assessments; (v) the sale by student of products or services to raise funds for school-related or education-related activities; (vi) student recognition programs.

Parental Access to Instruments used in the Collection of Personal Information: While the general practice of the District is to not engage in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information, parents shall have the right to inspect, upon reasonable request, any instrument which may be administered or distributed to a student for such purposes. Reasonable requests for inspection shall be granted within a reasonable period of time after the request is received. The procedures for making and granting such a request are as follows: the parent shall make the request, with reasonable specificity, directly to the building principal and shall identify the specific act and the school staff member or program responsible for the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information from students for the purpose of marketing that information. The building principal, within five (5) school days, shall consult with the school staff member or person responsible for the program which has been reported by the parent to be responsible for the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information from students. In the event such collection, disclosure, or use of personal information is occurring or there is a plan for such to occur, the building principal shall consult with the Superintendent for determination of whether the action shall be allowed to continue. If not, the instrument for the collection of personal information shall not be given to any students. If it is to be allowed, such instrument shall be provided to the requesting parent as soon as such instrument can be reasonably obtained.

Annual Parental Notification of Student Privacy Protection Policy: The District provides parents with reasonable notice of the adoption or continued use of this policy and other policies related to student privacy. Such notice shall be given to parents of students enrolled in the District at least annually, at the

beginning of the school year, and within a reasonable period of time after any substantive change in such policies.

Notification to Parents of Dates of and Right to Opt-Out of Specific Events: The District will directly notify the parents of the affected children, at least annually at the beginning of the school year, of the specific or approximate dates during the school year when any of the following activities are scheduled, or are expected to be scheduled:

The collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information. (Note: the general practice of the District is to not engage in the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the purpose of marketing or for selling that information).

Surveys of students involving one or more matters deemed to be sensitive in accordance with the law and this policy; and,

Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening that is required as a condition of attendance; administered by the school and scheduled by the school in advance; and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student or of other students. (Note: the general practice of the District is to not engage in physical examinations or screenings which require advance notice, for the reason that the physical examinations or screenings to be conducted by the District will usually fit into one of the following exceptions to the advance notice requirement and parental opt-out right: (1) hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings; (2) physical examinations or screenings that are permitted or required by an applicable State law, and (3) surveys administered to students in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

Parents shall be offered an opportunity in advance to opt their child out of participation in any of the above listed activities.

In the case of a student of an appropriate age (that is, a student who has reached the age of 18, or a legally emancipated student), the notice and opt-out right shall belong to the student.

Definition of Surveys of Matters Deemed to be Sensitive: Any survey containing one or more of the following matters shall be deemed to be "sensitive" for purposes of this policy:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's parent;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom the student has close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the students or the student's parents
8. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

Insurance

Under Nebraska law the District may not use school funds to provide general student accident or athletic insurance. The District requires that all student participants in athletic programs have injury and accident insurance and encourages all students who are in classes with risk of personal injury or accident to have insurance coverage. The District does not make recommendations nor handle the premiums or claims for any

insurance company, agent or carrier. Information about student insurance providers will be available in the school office or on school bulletin boards.

Professional Boundaries

The following professional boundaries rules are in place to protect both staff and students. Every student or parent who observes or suspects a staff member or student violating any of these rules should inform their Building Principal or Superintendent as soon as possible:

All employees are expected to observe and maintain professional boundaries between themselves and students. A violation of professional boundaries will be regarded as a form of misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

The following non-exclusive list of actions will be regarded as a violation of the professional boundaries that employees are expected to maintain with a student:

- Using e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging or social networking sites to discuss with a student a matter that does not pertain to school-related activities, such as the student's homework, class activity, school sport or club, or other school-sponsored activity. Electronic communications with students are to be sent simultaneously to multiple recipients, not to just one student, except where the communication is clearly school-related and inappropriate for persons other than the individual student to receive (for example, e-mailing a message about a student's grades)
- Engaging in social-networking friendships with a student on social networking sites. Material that employees post on social networks that is publicly available to those in the school community must reflect the professional image applicable to the employee's position and not impair the employee's capacity to maintain the respect of students and parents or impair the employee's ability to serve as a role model for children. Employees shall not friend or follow students on any social networking site.
- Engaging in sexual activity, a romantic relationship, or dating a student or a former student within one year of the student graduating or otherwise leaving the District.
- Making any sexual advance - verbal, written, or physical - towards a student.
- Showing sexually inappropriate materials or objects to a student.
- Discussing with a student sexual topics that are not related to a specific curriculum.
- Telling sexual jokes to a student.
- Invading a student's physical privacy (e.g., walking in on the student in a restroom).
- Hugging or other physical contact with a student that is initiated by the employee when the student does not seek or want this attention.
- Being overly "touchy" with a specific student.
- Allowing a specific student to get away with misconduct that is not tolerated from other students, except as appropriate for students with an IEP or 504 Plan.
- Discussing with the student the employee's problems that would normally be discussed with adults (e.g., marital problems).
- Giving a student a ride in the employee's personal vehicle without express permission of the student's parent or school administrator unless another adult is in the vehicle.
- Taking a student on an outing without obtaining prior express permission of the student's

parent or school administrator.

- Inviting a student to the employee's home without prior express permission of the student's parent and school administrator.
- Going to the student's home when the student's parent or a proper chaperone is not present.
- Giving gifts of a personal nature to a specific student.
- Discussing alcohol, tobacco or other illicit drugs in a non-instructional setting, such as describing a party that the employee attended.
- Discussing another student's or employee's personal matters when it is not appropriate outside of the instructional setting.
- "Grooming," which includes building trust with a student and individuals close to the student in an effort to gain access to and time alone with the student, with the ultimate goal of engaging in sexual contact or sexual penetration with the student, regardless of when in the student's life the sexual contact or sexual penetration would take place.

Appropriate exceptions are permitted to the foregoing for legitimate health or educational purposes and for reasons of family relationships between employees and their children who are students in the District. A staff member seeking an exception must receive advance approval from his or her administrator. If a staff member is unable to communicate with an administrator in advance (such as in the event of an emergency), the staff member must notify the administrator as soon as possible, but not later than 24 hours immediately following the event.

Any person who suspects a District employee of engaging in any prohibited conduct under this policy, including grooming, should contact the Superintendent as soon as practical.

An employee who violates this policy may face discipline, up to and including termination of employment, and may be referred to the appropriate certification or credentialing agencies for further discipline.

Little Panthers Preschool

Handbook Parent Signature Page



I acknowledge receiving the Little Panthers Preschool handbook and the information has been explained to me.

Child's Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____