



# ROE 12 Preschool For All

## Family Handbook

**ROE 12 PRESCHOOL FOR ALL FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Welcome	2
Mission Statement/Goals	3
Equity Statement/Definition of Family	4
Program Definition	5
Public Health Emergencies/COVID-19/Attendance	5
Toys/Items from Home	6
School Cancellations Due to Low Staffing	6
Social Distancing	6
Weather Policy	7
Pre-K Behavior Plan	7
Emergency Procedures	7
Health Screenings/Illness Policy	8
Mental Health Services/Medication	9
Head Lice	10
Transportation	10
Family Involvement	10
Supplies	11
Family Service Program	11
Meals and Snacks	11
Visitors	11
Clothing	12
Potty Training Policy	12
Communication/Bloomz App	12
Social Media	13
Special Days	13
Responsibilities	14
Remote Learning	14
Assessments	15
Dismissal	15
Non-Expulsion Policy	16

We are pleased to have you join the ROE #12 Pre-K Program. As we work together to create a new learning environment, we are reminded that parents are a child's first and most influential teacher, and we can achieve great things when we work together.

Our primary mission is to provide a nurturing, inviting, and engaging learning environment that allows each individual child to build healthy relationships with others and to develop skills appropriate for them as individuals. We will accomplish this by providing a stable and secure environment, providing positive discipline and guidance, and providing materials and opportunities that allow each child to be successful.

You are an important part of ROE #12's Pre-K Program. Our program is able to provide high quality classrooms because of the commitment and creativity of our employees, and because of the involvement and input of our families. Each day presents a new opportunity for deepening the bond, sparking the curiosity, and sharing the joy of learning with each child. It will not always be easy; providing quality, day-to-day care is hard work and we thank you for your commitment and dedication.

It is our goal to create an environment that recognizes each child's unique contribution, and where they feel appreciated and heard. After you read your handbook, please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns with me.

Together, let's continue to build up our children in a place of enchantment and learning. Let's work together to create an environment where all children's ideas and differences are welcomed and they can thrive and grow.

Sincerely,

**Julie Redman**  
Early Childhood Director

What we want for our children we should also want for their teachers; that schools be places of learning for both of them, and that such learning be suffused with excitement, engagement, passion, challenge, creativity, and joy.  
-Andy Hargreaves



## **Mission Statement**

*At ROE 12 Preschool for All we believe...*

- *In providing children with a safe, healthy learning environment.*
- *In maintaining a well-educated, certified staff.*
- *That parents and guardians are a child's first and most influential teachers, and are an important, involved part of our program.*
- *That school is an extension of home life, not a separate institution. We introduce new ideas and reinforce life lessons learned at home and in the community.*
- *In developmentally appropriate activities, research-based methods, and inclusive environments.*
- *That children have the right to express themselves artistically, verbally, and through print materials.*
- *In providing an environment in which children learn to form their own thoughts and opinions.*
- *That all children have talents and skills.*
- *In supporting children's curiosity and interests in order for them to gain knowledge.*
- *In embracing all people, regardless of nationality or race, culture, creed, gender identity, family structure, ability, or social and economic situation.*

***We believe in Preschool for ALL***

## **Goals**

Our Goals seek to be true to our philosophy and dedicated to our community's children and their families by:

- Providing an environment that respects, values, and supports families and students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, family structure, gender identity, ability, sexuality, or faith tradition.

- Providing environments that promote daily exploration, creativity, discovery, and successes in a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment.
- Supporting learning with research based curriculum and developmentally appropriate strategies that align with the Illinois Early Learning and Developmental Standards (IELDS)
- Addressing the whole child by focusing on each child's physical and cognitive development, and their social and emotional well being.
- Striving to partner, value, and support families of all types.
- Valuing staff for their vision, experience, and knowledge, and their commitment to children and families.
- Inspiring a lifelong love of learning in us all.

## **Equity**

We at ROE 12 believe that our classrooms must be a place of equity and inclusiveness. Our students and their families are valued as unique individuals. We respect all people, and work to dismantle systems that have traditionally excluded people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, and others. We recognize that this process is on-going and welcome families to share their experiences and help us to meet their needs. We strive to create a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive environment. These are difficult conversations, but are an important part of ensuring that our goals and mission are met.

## **What is a Family?**

ROE 12 Pre-K acknowledges and respects the fact that all families look different. A family could be a mom and a dad, or a mom or a dad, or it could be two moms or two dads. It could be a parent and a step parent, grandparents, aunts and uncles, foster parents, trusted adult friends, or anyone who has the opportunity to care and protect a child. Family structures sometimes stay the same, and sometimes change. It is not ROE 12's place to define a family; it is our mission to support families of all types, with understanding, acceptance, and equity.

## Our Program

- Our preschool program is offered to 3 and 4 year old children by a Preschool For All (PFA) Grant. It is a learning environment that has been carefully inspected and monitored by the Illinois State Board of Education.
- Research and recommendations are considered for the program and include:
  - Teachers who carry an Early Childhood Education Bachelor Degree and Educator's License.
  - Paraprofessionals who hold a Paraprofessional License
  - A Director who holds an Early Childhood Administration Bachelor's Degree and an Illinois Director Credential.
  - A commitment to play. Play builds the foundation upon which all other learning is built.
  - A research-based curriculum, aligned to state standards
- All ROE 12 personnel are DCFS mandated reporters and have a legal and ethical responsibility to report suspected abuse or neglect.

## Public Health Emergencies/COVID-19

As a public school program funded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), ROE 12 Pre-K is required to follow the guidelines set forth by ISBE, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and local, state, and federal governments.

As we learn more about COVID-19 and other contagious diseases, we may need to adjust our policies to reflect best practices.

We understand that young children learn by repetition and by mimicking modeled behavior. If staff and parents all wear face coverings when in public, and make it a normal part of their day, children will quickly adapt to wearing one. We do not expect perfection in wearing face coverings any more than we expect perfection in anything a child is learning. We are here to help the children learn how to effectively and safely wear a face covering, not to punish children for making mistakes.

## Attendance

Parents have the responsibility for their child's regular school attendance.

If a child is absent due to illness, staff are mandated to ask about potential exposure to or symptoms of COVID-19. Please know that this information is only used to ensure the health and safety of the other students and staff, as well as the community at large. Strict confidentiality will be maintained if the need arises to notify other parents of a potential COVID-19 exposure by a student.

Please make arriving on time a priority. Our arrival times are set to allow for social distancing. Parents arriving early or late may need to wait in their car with their child until we can ensure safe entry into the building.

### **Mandatory Class Quarantines**

Class quarantines, if necessary, will be implemented at the request of the local Health Department. We will follow their guidance to ensure the health of our students and staff. In the case of a class quarantine, families will be notified as quickly as possible.

### **Toys/Items from Home**

As per ISBE guidelines to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, students will not be allowed to bring toys, blankets, or any other item to school. If this policy changes at the state level, teachers will be allowed to make the decision to allow “show and tell” items.

Children are encouraged to leave beloved items (blankets, toys, etc) at home. This ensures the item will not be lost. Staff is not responsible for items children bring from home.

### **School Cancellations Due to Low Staffing**

The state of Illinois mandates that there is to be one qualified staff member per ten students. If a staff member has to be off of work due to illness or other reason, we employ certified substitutes. Unfortunately, on rare occasions, we are unable to find a qualified substitute. In the event that we cannot employ a qualified substitute, we will be forced to cancel school that day. We will make every effort to avoid this.

### **Social Distancing**

Staff will make every effort to maintain social distancing in the classrooms, in accordance with state mandates. Families are required to maintain social distancing

when picking up or dropping off children, and when in the presence of teachers, paraprofessionals, other students, or other families or visitors.

### **Inclimate Weather**

Children will spend time outdoors when the temperature is between 20-90 degrees, taking wind chill and heat indexes into account. Children learn so much by experiencing the sunshine, rain, and snow. Please make sure to dress your child for the weather each day. Allowing a child to stay inside won't be possible as there is no adult available to stay inside with that child. Our preschool cancels for inclimate weather if the local school district does.



### **Pre-K Behavior Plan**

Our PreK Program is based on the belief that children learn self-discipline and behaviors that will result in cooperation, sharing, following directions, listening and showing respect for themselves and others. It is the adult's responsibility to help children learn these behaviors. In Pre-K classrooms, this is accomplished by providing activities that encourage children to actively engage in learning, along with consistent rules and consequences for behavior.

#### **Families will be responsible for promoting appropriate school behavior by:**

1. Teaching and discussing the purpose of classroom and school rules.
2. Attending conferences concerning the child.
3. Being an active member of the child's support team.
4. Responding appropriately to school reports by praising and encouraging positive behavior and discussing areas that need improvement.
5. Providing the school with the names and phone numbers of persons who may care for the child if it is necessary that he/she leave during the school day due to illness or behavior the staff cannot safely manage.

Except in rare, extreme, and unsafe cases, ROE 12 Pre-K does not expel students for behavior concerns, as per Illinois state guidelines. A copy of this policy may be found at the end of this book

### **Emergency Procedures**

In case of a suspected contagious disease, these procedures are followed:



- The child will be isolated from other children, and supervised by staff (suspected contagious disease only)
- The parent is contacted.
- The parent is asked to take the child home or to a doctor.

For more serious incidents or accidents:

- The school calls 911.
- The parent is notified.

If necessary, the student is sent with an accompanying adult to the hospital.

All students must have two working emergency contact numbers.

## Health Screening Policy

Health screenings for COVID-19 will be conducted in accordance with ISBE, CDC, and IDPH requirements.

## Illness Policy

- Students with fevers must stay home until they have been fever-free, without medication, for 24 hours.
- Students who are vomiting or experiencing diarrhea must stay home until they become symptom-free, without medication, for at least 12 hours.
- Children who are not feeling well are encouraged to stay home to rest, stay hydrated, and avoid spreading illness to others.
- In accordance with state and federal guidance, school community members who are sick should not return to school until they have met criteria to return. CDC and IDPH guidelines for students who were suspected of having COVID-19, whether they were tested or not, state that 72 hours must elapse from resolution of fever without fever-reducing medication AND 5 days must pass after symptoms first appeared.
- Students returning from illness related to COVID-19 should call to check with the Early Childhood Director following quarantine.
- Please note that ROE 12 staff members are not medical professionals and may not diagnose or speculate on a student, parent, visitor, or other staff member's illnesses.

## Mental Health Services

Occasionally we may have concerns about a student's social or emotional development, or mental health. When this happens, we will contact a parent to discuss anything that may be happening in a child's life that could be a cause for concern. We will work with parents to help provide resources to help alleviate stress or traumatic experiences in the home.

With parent permission, we are able to use the services of a licensed Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant. This consultant will observe the child in the classroom for several hours. She will then have a meeting with parents, staff, and other important people in the child's life, to give suggestions on ways to help the child to be successful at preschool and in the home. The consultant will not provide counseling or other mental health services, but can refer a student for those services, if applicable. The consultant is only able to observe a child with written parent permission, and may not comment on any other students she may see in the classroom, unless their parents have also granted permission.

## Medication

**ALL MEDICATION SHOULD BE GIVEN AT HOME.** However, some students need medication on a regular schedule in order to receive maximum effect in treatment. In these cases, a Medical Authorization Form MUST BE submitted. In addition, to maintain the safety of all children:

- The Medical Authorization Form must contain the name of the drug, dosage and the time interval that the medication is taken.
- All prescription medication must be in the original container with the prescription label.
- Non-prescription medication such as aspirin can only be given with the written permission of the parent **and** physician. It must be in the original container with the label attached. No medications will be accepted without the Medical Authorization Form.
- **Children are not to handle any medication. Medication should be handed from parent to teacher.**

## Smoking

As per state law, smoking is not permitted on school premises, including the parking lot.

## Head Lice

We acknowledge the problems that head lice can cause and encourage families to work together with us to minimize this problem.

We ask that parents:

- Check their child's hair for head lice on a regular basis.
- Check the whole family's hair for head lice on a regular basis.
- Do not send their child to preschool with untreated head lice.
- Discuss with the staff if they are having difficulties controlling head lice.

While we will not exclude children who have head lice, we will ask parents to collect a child from preschool if head lice and/or eggs are visible and we have not been advised that they have been treated. This is to help prevent the spread of head lice to other children. We will not discuss with parents head lice problems of any child but their own.

## Transportation

Parents or guardians who bring children to school in the mornings/afternoon must walk them to the door. When picking up a child, make sure the teacher is made aware that the child is leaving. Parents providing children with transportation are asked to be on time for drop-off and pick-up.

Your child will be released only to the parent(s) or other persons authorized by the parent. The designated person must show identification that matches information on file at the site. A staff member will certify that each student has boarded their designated bus or has been picked up by a parent or guardian.

Children who ride school busses or other forms of provided transportation, where available, are expected to follow the rules set forth by those entities.

## Family Involvement

We believe that a child learns best when there is a partnership between families and teachers. Families are encouraged to visit the classrooms. Anyone visiting a classroom is required to follow all health and hygiene rules set by ISBE, IDPH, the CDC, and ROE 12.

## Supplies Needed

Your child will enjoy a classroom filled with wonderful supplies and equipment! You will only need to provide a regular sized backpack. If you are unable to provide a backpack, please let us know and we will provide one.

## Family Service Program

The Family Advocate is an invaluable member of our team. They are available to assist parents in completing paperwork, obtaining needed documents, or answering questions. In addition, they can provide information on community resources and services offered to families, children and staff. We understand that there are many barriers to children's success in school. Our Family Advocate can help find resources for housing, food, clothing, GED programs, and other community services to help strengthen and support families.

## Meals and Snacks

Students in our full-day programs will receive lunch and a snack. Students in our half-day programs will receive a snack. Snacks and meals are planned in accordance with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) guidelines. Meals and snacks are designed to provide healthy foods for the students. If your child has a food allergy or special dietary restrictions due to medical or religious reasons, please let your child's teacher know prior to the start of school. Food allergies or medically necessary dietary restrictions must be documented by a licensed physician.

ROE 12 Preschool may participate in the Child and Adult Care Food program (CACFP). USDA is an equal opportunity provider. No person shall be discriminated against due to ethnicity, race, sex, or disability. If you feel your civil rights have been violated within the CACFP program, please complete the USDA Discrimination Complaint form located at [http://www.ascr.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) or call 1-800-632-9992.

## Visitors

We value the experience and talents that family members and trusted community members bring to share with our students. Family, friends, community members, and service providers all have skills and talents to share with our students. As with all who enter our classrooms, visitors will be required to follow health policies

## **Clothing**

Please dress your child for play and according to weather conditions. Tennis shoes or other rubber soled shoes are the safest footwear choices. **Sandals, flip flops, shoes with wheels or high heels are not safe for young children and are not recommended.**

Parents are asked to send a complete change of clothes to school (i.e. bottom, top, socks, and underclothes). The clothes are kept to be used as needed. If your child comes home with clothes provided by the school, please remember to wash and return them to school.

## **Potty Training Policy**

We consider potty training to be another skill some children are still learning. We are happy to work with families whose children are in the process of potty training.

## **Communication**

Communication is such a key factor in our programs. We pledge to be open and receptive to your questions and concerns and will do our best to keep a clear positive communication level with you all.

We are happy to visit briefly before and after school, as our attention needs to be with the children. Time for a personal meeting with the teacher other than a family/teacher conference is always possible. The teacher's contact information may be found on the front page of this booklet. All face-to-face meetings will require the use of face coverings and social distancing.

## **Bloomz App**

Our program uses the Bloomz app to send messages and share information and photos. You will receive a letter, text, or email with the Bloomz code for your child's classroom. Download the free Bloomz app, then enter the code (or follow the link sent to you) to see what is going on in your child's class.

## Social Media

We all enjoy chat spaces and places such as Twitter and Facebook. It is our policy, as HIPAA Laws require, to keep those spaces separate from our school space and communication. Specific posts or requests on these sites would be open to the public, and often missed by intended receivers. You may see advertisements for screenings, etc. but no communication is advised through this media. To help maintain privacy, ROE 12 PreK staff are encouraged to *not* be “friends” or “followers” with enrolled families on social media.



## Special Days

We understand the importance of celebrating holidays and other special days. Our staff will provide meaningful and fun activities on those days. However, due to ISBE guidelines to lessen the risk of COVID-19 transmission, we may not be able to hold classroom holiday or birthday parties. These will be determined on an individual basis. We are not permitted to serve snacks or treats sent in from families, unless they are individually wrapped, purchased items. Please contact your child’s teacher prior to sending in any treats. We are never allowed to serve homemade treats.

## Family Engagement

We want our students’ families to be as involved as possible. We will hold in-person Family Engagement activities, following guidance from ISBE, IDPH, and the CDC. When we are able to safely hold in-person activities, we sometimes need to limit the number of participants to make sure we can maintain social distance and to make the most of our resources.

### Family Responsibilities

- Make sure my child attends school every day and arrives on time.
- Keep my child home when they are sick.
- Make sure my child is well rested.
- Check my child’s book bag every day for home/school communication.
- Contact teachers or staff when I have a question about my child.
- Pick up my child if sick or cannot be safely managed.
- Answer health/COVID-19 exposure questions honestly.

### **Teacher Responsibilities**

- Provide a safe, welcoming environment for students and parents/guardians.
- Work with families to learn their priorities and goals for their child's education.
- Communicate regularly with parents/guardians.
- Provide high quality instruction to all students.
- Assess students' progress.
- Teach and practice healthy social and emotional behaviors.
- Work with parents to provide referrals for additional services if needed.

### **Director Responsibilities**

- Create and maintain an environment that promotes inclusiveness and equity, and is welcoming to all.
- Provide continuing professional development for all staff on topics that will benefit children, families, the community, and the program as a whole.
- Collaborate with other community agencies to build a strong Early Childhood system in the community.
- Ensure a healthy school environment by enacting all ISBE COVID-19-related guidelines.
- Maintain a program that meets and exceeds all requirements for safety, learning environments, and staffing.
- Maintain a level of fiscal responsibility that uses funding in a way that best benefits our students, families, staff, and community.

### **Family Advocate Responsibilities**

- Provide a variety of opportunities for parents/guardians to participate in school activities.
- Link families with needed community resources.
- Assist families in overcoming barriers to student success.
- Collaborate with community organizations and agencies to provide resources and referrals for families.
- Assist in maintaining a home/school connection.
- Work with families to ensure all required documentation is completed.

### **Remote Learning**

If the state of Illinois or the Illinois State Board of Education implement remote learning for the state or our zone, or for instances of class-wide quarantines, we will move to a remote-learning format.

Young children learn best through play and by building relationships with their parents, teachers, and other caregivers. While they may gain some skills from an electronic format, research has shown that this is not the best, most appropriate way for children to learn.

Families who are unable to utilize the Bloomz app will receive written instructions and verbal instructions over the phone.

### **Assessment Program**

Your child's teacher will observe him/her throughout the school day, recording what was seen and heard by taking notes, collecting samples of your child's drawings and writings, taking photos, and recording audio or video clips.

Periodically, you will receive an update of your child's progress. For each area of development and learning, your child's current knowledge, skills, and behaviors will be listed, along with skills and or behaviors that your child will be focusing on next. Teachers will share ways that you can support your child's development and learning at home. It is important to remember that all children develop at different rates and that other factors can play a role in this development.

### **Dismissal Procedure**

If a child is not picked up by 10 minutes past dismissal (or their scheduled time), the staff are to contact the child's family, emergency contacts, and director. Each person will be contacted two times, and if after twenty minutes, no one can be reached, due to regulations the staff must contact the City Police Department.

At no time may an employee transport a child or leave a child unattended.

## **NON EXPULSION PROCEDURES**

**RATIONALE:** Most challenging behaviors and expulsion or suspension can be avoided by prevention and being proactive. Staff should work together with administration, parents and early intervention specialists to ensure they have exhausted all remedies to assist a child in coping and reducing their challenging behaviors.



In order to eliminate expulsions, ROE #12 has implemented Non Expulsion Procedures and developed a Child Expulsion Prevention Log. All staff will receive training on implementation and training on challenging behavior strategies. All teachers should be aware of and document challenging behaviors in their classroom.

When a teacher is faced with a child with challenging behaviors, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The Teacher will document the behavior over a two week period. If the challenging behaviors are at the beginning of the school year, then the teacher should wait until the 4th week to start the documentation so the child can get acclimated to his/her new environment and schedule. All documentation should be on the program's "Child Expulsion Prevention Log" with appropriate attachment forms.

3. Teachers will provide redirection, transition strategies, special attention, and communication. They will work with parents to ensure the child is getting adequate food prior to class, will discuss changing from AM session to PM session or full day to half day, and address other barriers to the child's success.

4. If the challenging behavior rises to the level of violence to staff or other children, the teacher should immediately meet with administration to request a parent meeting to get their input into strategies they may be implementing at home or how they believe we can better help their child. A written plan should be developed at this time.

5. After the two week documentation period and after a written plan has been in effect for an additional two weeks, if the challenging behavior persists, then the teacher will meet with the administrator to contact the mental health/special education specialist and request an observation with the permission of the parent. The teacher will then meet with the mental health/special education specialist to discuss the challenging behaviors and other pertinent information prior to the observation day.

6. After the mental health/special education specialist has completed observations, staff and parents meet to discuss her classroom strategies with the permission of the parents.

7. The teacher then documents behaviors of the child for another two week period. If the behavior persists and all strategies are exhausted, another parent/staff meeting is scheduled to discuss future steps and in some cases the parent will be directed to discuss the issues with their child's doctor and report any changes, suggestions, medications that their doctor may advise.

8. If the child receives an updated medical plan, then staff continues to work with the child an additional two weeks to determine if there is a change in behavior.

9. If the child is determined to need a one-on-one aide, then a behavioral study is requested from the local school to determine if the child is better served by their early childhood special education services. This is only done with the permission of the parents.

10. If the behavioral study is conducted and the school personnel determine that the child is suspected of having a developmental delay, disability, or mental health issue, a referral may be made to refer the child's parents to the mental health system, the State's early intervention program, or their local school for information regarding evaluation for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B or C programs. These systems will conduct an evaluation, so that if the child is eligible, he or she may receive the appropriate services and supports as soon as possible. Children eligible for services under Part B or C are also likely entitled to protections under Title II and Title III of the ADA, such that programs must make reasonable modifications to their policies, practices, or procedures to *ensure that children with disabilities are not suspended or expelled because of their disability-related behaviors*.

11. Should a situation arise where there is documented evidence that all possible interventions and supports recommended by a qualified professional, such as an early childhood mental health consultant, have been exhausted – and it is unanimously determined by the family, teacher, program, and other service providers that another setting is more appropriate for the well-being of the child in question – all parties, will work together to develop a seamless transition plan and use that plan to implement a smooth transition.

If the child has a disability, including children receiving services under Part B of the IDEA, additional procedural safeguards and nondiscrimination requirements apply. When making decisions about transitioning a child and family to another program, specific attention will be paid to ensure that the new program is inclusive and offers a rich social context and opportunities for interactions with socially competent peers to ensure that children can optimize their learning, and develop their social skills alongside their peers in a natural environment.