



2023–24

Minnewaska Area Schools **PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK**

ENGAGE EVERY STUDENT, EVERY DAY!



Welcome!

Our staff would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to the Minnewaska School Readiness Program. This program is designed to provide a safe and supervised environment for children ages 3-5 years old. The Minnewaska Little Lakers Preschool program is operated under the umbrella of Minnewaska Community Education. Our 9-month preschool program for 3-4 and 4-5-year-old children provides early childhood social experiences and pre-academic skills to prepare them for Kindergarten.

Our program offers a variety of activities to channel children's energies into positive growing experiences. The purpose of a school-readiness preschool is to provide all children adequate opportunities to participate in early childhood experiences that enable them to enter school with the necessary skills and behaviors.

Minnewaska Little Lakers Preschool welcomes ALL families and does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, gender, sexual orientation or economic status.



***Minnewaska Early Childhood Program is a Four Star Parent Aware Rated Program
(Highest Possible Rating)***

Four things that make Minnewaska Little Lakers Preschool unique:

- As part of the school district, we have access to an array of quality resources to support the early educational and emotional needs of young children.
- Our curriculum is designed to meet the State of Minnesota K-12 Standards and the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress which were developed by the Minnesota Department of Education.
- Children acquire the skills they need to be successful in school and transition to Kindergarten
- High quality staff

Our preschool options are as follows:

3-4 Year Olds

We offer a two or three day, half day program for children who are 3 by September 1 (8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.)

4-5 Year Olds

We offer half day and full day options for children who are 4 by September 1st.
8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

12:15 to 3:00 p.m.

8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

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Preschool A to Z

ADMISSION

A child must be at least three years of age on or before September 1st of the present school year to enroll in preschool. Children must have had the state required immunizations completed upon starting preschool. A \$40.00 non-refundable registration fee is required at the time of registration. All registration forms must be on file before the first day of school.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance contributes to the healthy development of your child by allowing them an opportunity to practice transitions, gain self-management skills, benefit from the consistency of a predictable schedule, and ensures quality education. It is the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian to inform the preschool in the event of a student's absence.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

If a student is/will be late to school or absent due to illness, vacation, etc., the parent/guardian must notify the preschool or their child's teacher.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Students may register for before and/or after school care relating to their preschool class times. An authorized adult is required to sign the child in or out upon drop-off or pick-up.

BEHAVIOR GUIDANCE

Our goal is to ensure that each child is provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior. Our guidance methods are tailored to the developmental level of the children in our program. Our main behavior guidance method is redirection and teaching children problem-solving skills, acceptable alternatives and thus protect the safety of all children and staff persons. We provide immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior. If this type of behavior persists, the child will be given a "Cool Down Period" (sitting away from the group but within sight of the staff) until his/her behavior is improved and under control. If needed, a meeting will be scheduled with the child's parents to discuss solutions to aid in the child's success.

BIRTHDAYS

Students may bring purchased snacks to share with their class, but are not required to do so.

Students may not hand out party invitations at school. State law prohibits homemade food from being brought to school to serve as treats for parties, birthdays, etc. If your child has a summer birthday, we will celebrate their half-birthday with them. The teachers will let each family know when

their child's birthday will be celebrated in school.

CALENDAR

Preschool programming dates follow the Minnewaska Area School district calendar. If there are changes in the calendar for any reason you will be notified in the monthly newsletter and with messages sent home in your child's folder.

CLOTHING

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes for preschool. An extra change of clothes for your child should be kept in their backpack. During the winter, ALL CHILDREN must bring snow pants, boots, hats, and mittens! Parents are responsible for ensuring that students dress appropriately for all weather conditions. Please label all coats, boots, hats, mittens, backpacks, etc., with your child's name. Your child does need to wear shoes in the classroom all year round. Shoes can be sent in a backpack during the winter months when boots are worn. We will go outside unless the temperature and/or the wind chill are below zero.

COMMUNICATION

Your child's teacher will communicate important information and updates from their classroom through weekly newsletters and Seesaw. The Elementary monthly newsletter will also include Early Childhood related information. It is important that you thoroughly read each newsletter! Please send a backpack to school each day with your child and check your child's take-home folder daily for newsletters, special notices, and projects.

CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held twice during the school year. The first conference will be held in the fall, and a second conference will be held in the spring of the year.

CURRICULUMS & ASSESSMENTS

We believe that play provides the foundation for school learning. A large portion of a child's preschool experience is the learning that naturally unfolds through play with the support of highly-trained and engaged adults. Our program offers a variety of activities to channel children's energies into positive growing experiences through large-group and small-group instruction. The Minnesota Department of Education's Early Childhood Indicators of Progress state standards act as a framework for our instruction.

Curriculums:

- DLM Early Childhood Express
- Haggerty
- Second Step
- Minnesota Reading Corps.

Assessments:

- Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)
- Preschool Early Literacy Indicators (PELI)
- Early Math Inventory (EMI)

CUSTODY

If custody changes after enrollment, documents should be provided to the school as soon as possible after the change. The school will follow court orders that specifically authorize or direct custody or related custodial issues. The school system will give non-custodial parents, upon request, duplicate school information about their child unless prohibited by court order. A certified copy of that order must be on file at the school.

DRILLS

As per Minnesota state law, the following drills will be held annually: Fire, Tornado / Severe Weather, and Lockdown drills.

E-LEARNING DAYS

In the event your child does not have preschool due to a late start or snow day (see WEATHER below) your child's teacher will be sharing E-learning activities via Seesaw. Our teachers have worked hard to prepare a list or grid of activities that can be done at home using everyday objects that align with what is actively being taught and practiced at preschool.

On an inclement weather day, you can expect your child's teacher to post e-learning activities on Seesaw at the start of the day. Families can work on these activities at a time that works best for them. Since this is a regular work day for teachers, your child's teacher will be available to respond to questions, share feedback, and connect individually if desired. As a result, we are treating a 'snow day' as a regular school day. If a class accrues more than five flexible learning days, team leaders will discuss the option of either additional days added to the school calendar or refunding tuition to families for missed days.

EARLY CHILDHOOD STAFF

All teachers are licensed by the State of Minnesota Department of Education with a degree in early childhood education or elementary education. Support staff are experienced with young children and receive ongoing training.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SCREENING

An Early Childhood Screening is required within 90 days of starting preschool. This is a mandatory requirement of the Minnesota Department of Education.

FIELD TRIPS

Parents/guardians will receive notices of field trips in advance and will be asked to sign a permission form.

HEALTH POLICIES

If your child does not feel well, please do not send him/her to school. Many diseases are spread from one child to another when the child returns to school too soon or is sent to school ill. If your child will not be attending class, please call the preschool or your child's classroom to notify staff and mention the illness your child has.

Please keep your child home if she/he has:

-Oral temp of 100°F or higher- Keep child home at least 24 hours after it returns to normal.

- Vomiting or diarrhea has taken place in the previous 24 hours. If your child has thrown up during the night-Keep, the child home EVEN if they feel fine in the morning. Often vomiting is the first symptom of a disease that develops later. This is usually the most contagious time for the other children.
- Draining or inflammation of ears or eyes (including Pink Eye)
- Sore Throat-may also be accompanied by chills, fever, earache, or the throat is bright red or contains white spots. See your doctor and keep your child home as long as the doctor recommends. (Including Strep throat infection)
- An undiagnosed or contagious rash
- Cough that is interfering with or limiting their activity

If a child begins to experience one of these conditions during the school day, his/her parent will be contacted to take the child home. If a parent can't be reached, one of the emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child. It is important to inform the preschool of any phone number changes or changes in emergency contacts.

LUNCH PROGRAM

With the introduction of the Free Schools Meals Law, half day students will receive one full breakfast or lunch meal, and all-day students will receive one complete breakfast meal and one complete lunch meal each school day at no cost.

MANDATED REPORTERS

Minnesota state law requires all school employees to report suspected child abuse and neglect. If any parent is concerned about abuse or neglect, please talk to a teacher who will assist you in finding help.

PARENT ADVISORY BOARD

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to become involved in the Parent Advisory Board. The Advisory Board supports early childhood programming, helps organize fundraisers and events, and provides opportunities for parents/guardians and school staff to work together for the betterment of the school and its students. Contact a Parent Advisory Board member or the Early Childhood Coordinator for more information.

PARENT AWARE

Minnewaska Little Lakers Preschool is a four-star Parent Aware rated program - the highest possible - committed to maintaining the highest standard of excellence in programming and family support.

PAYMENT

Preschool tuition is based on the total number of school days per year, not the number of days per month. Tuition can be paid in one payment at the beginning of the school year or, for your convenience, can be paid in 9 monthly installments. Little Lakers Preschool is set up with an automatic payment system. Families are billed for that month's tuition on the 15th of each month. Minnewaska Area Community Education uses paperless billing. Online account access can be viewed at: <https://minnewaska.reg.eleyo.com/child-care/2/preschool>.

Little Lakers Preschool is a self-supported program and must have prompt payments. Preschool tuition costs are as follows:

\$130/month for the two-day/week classes, \$155/month for the MWF PM class, \$180/month for the three-day/week AM classes, \$350/month for the three full-day/week classes, and \$550/month for five full day classes.

SCHOOL READINESS AGREEMENT

By enrolling my child in Little Lakers Preschool, I understand the fee amount for my child's preschool class and agree to have any outstanding balance paid in full by June 1, 2024, made payable to Minnewaska Area Schools.

Limited preschool scholarships are available and must be applied for in writing using the current Scholarship Application. Scholarships may be awarded based on income eligibility.

Payment is due monthly, unless alternate payment arrangements are made. An automated payment withdrawal will be made on the 15th day of each month. Nine payments September 2023 - May 2024 are due.

A \$40.00 annual registration fee is required and is non-refundable. This fee was collected at the time of online registration.

Programming costs for staff, food, and materials remain the same whether my child is in attendance or not; The program is not able to provide a refund for days my child is absent.

Unpaid charges can and will be sent to a collections agency for payment. Minnewaska Area Schools Community Education reserves the right to discontinue or limit participation in Little Lakers Preschool programming due to nonpayment.

PETS

No pet of any kind is to be brought to school without prior permission from the teacher and administrator.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships may be available to families who meet income guidelines. Scholarships are based on first come, first serve, and availability of funds. Scholarships are made available through various grants. Please contact the Early Childhood Coordinator if financial assistance is needed.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

A list of school supplies is provided to families prior to the start of school. These items are thoughtfully chosen to provide optimal tools to support developmentally appropriate experiences. Families unable to purchase the supplies due to financial hardship should request them from the program coordinator. Families wishing to provide more than what is listed are welcome to contact the teacher or coordinator for a list of supply needs.

SNACKS

Snack is served daily at school. Students are asked to bring a healthy classroom snack as scheduled during the year. Examples of healthy snacks include cheese sticks, yogurt, fresh fruit or vegetables, and whole-grain crackers. All food must be purchased; we are unable to serve homemade items.

Food and snacks must be brought to school in unopened packages if they are to be shared with others. If your child has an allergy to some type of food, please inform the teacher, and we will make sure that all parents are aware of these allergies as well. Our goal is to ensure a safe environment for all children.

STUDENT DROP OFF & PICK UP

Children should not be dropped off earlier than 10 minutes prior to class start time as staff are preparing for the day. Please pick up children promptly after class. The time before and after class is reserved for staff prep time. Please note that your child will not be released to any individual not listed on the authorized pick-up list. Your child will remain at school until you can be reached by phone or person.

Parents/guardians should use the SW doors for drop-off and pick-up. To ensure the safety of students, a preschool badge must be visible when entering the building. Individuals without proper identification will be asked to check in through the main doors of the school with the building secretary.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Minnewaska Schools provides services in various disability areas when a student has been through the referral process and meets the criteria for additional help. With parent/guardian permission, special education services are integrated into their child's school day.

TOILET TRAINING

We ask that children be toilet trained before they attend preschool. However, we also recognize that developmentally, some three year old's may still be working on this skill. If your child is not fully trained, please talk to the teacher/coordinator to help determine if we can support their needs in this area.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation for students attending Little Lakers Preschool is not provided by the Minnewaska Area Schools bussing system. However, Rainbow Rider busing may be an option. Parents are expected to communicate transportation plans and changes directly with Rainbow Rider.

Changes to student transportation plans, times, and authorized pick-up individuals should be communicated to the classroom teacher.

VISITORS

Parents and community members are always welcome at our school. As a school safety measure and in compliance with school policy, all visitors should enter through the main doors and check in at the front office to receive a visitor's badge.

WEATHER

Throughout the year, there may be times when school will be delayed or canceled due to inclement weather or some emergency. All preschool classes are automatically canceled if Minnewaska Schools are canceled.

Morning classes will NOT be held when Minnewaska Schools start late or are closed for the day.

Afternoon classes will NOT be held when Minnewaska Schools have an early dismissal or are closed for the day. Start times for afternoon classes are unaffected on late start days.

Full-day students should follow the district's late start schedule. Ex. If school is 2 hours late, full-day students should arrive 2 hours after their normally scheduled arrival time.

Official announcements for unscheduled delayed starts and school closings may be heard over the radio. Weather-related announcements are also posted on the Minnewaska Area Schools website at www.minnewaska.k12.mn.us Parents that have current phone numbers on file with the District will also receive a phone call from our automated calling system. When a preschool class is canceled due to weather, rescheduling will be at the school district's discretion.