



# PARENT HANDBOOK

**Wilmington Head Start, Inc.**

Karen F. Pierce, Executive Director

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Center Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Service Advocate: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Assistant: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

### **What is Head Start**

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

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

### **Mission Statement**

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

## **Licensing**

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

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

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

## **Confidentiality**

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

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

# **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

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

- ) Visit their child's center anytime
- ) Discuss their child with staff
- ) Attend Parent Committee meetings

- ) Be elected to Policy Council
- ) Volunteer
- ) Attend any parent trainings or activities

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

### **School Messenger System**

We use this system to communicate with all the parents, you can receive text messages or e-mails but first you need to send us a text message to 67587 saying YES to authorize to receive our notifications. If your information changes at any time please let your FSA know.

### **Volunteering**

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

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

### **Dropping off and Picking up Children**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Home Visits/Parent-Teacher Conferences**

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

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

### **Family Visits**

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

### **Newsletters**

Throughout the year a newsletter will be sent home with your child. The newsletter is our way of sharing information about your child's center.

There are also helpful articles for the entire family. Please feel free to submit information to share with other families.

## **Backpacks**

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

## **Holidays and Special Events**

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

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

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

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

## **Photographs**

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

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

### **Parent Code of Conduct**

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

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

### **Swearing and Cursing**

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

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

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

### **Physical or Verbal Punishment of Children at WHS**

While WHS does not support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the child-care facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child.

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

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness

another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner, or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Center Manager.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

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

### **Smoking**

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

### **Clothing**

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

### **Firearms and weapons**

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

## **EDUCATION**

### **Educational Philosophy**

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

Young children learn by exploring their environment and from the people in it. Our classrooms are designed to accommodate children with disabilities and those who are English Language Learners so that they can benefit fully from our program.

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

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

## **Curriculum**

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

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

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

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

## **Assessment**

*Teaching Strategies GOLD* is a system, developed by the creators of *The Creative Curriculum* to assess the development and learning of children

from birth through age six. Wilmington Head Start uses this system to assess our children.

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

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

1. Data Collection – Teachers and teacher assistants observe the child in the classroom setting and record their observations as “anecdotal notes.”
2. Individualization – Teachers will use the data collected through observation to plan individual learning experiences for each child in their class.
3. Checkpoints – The program year at Wilmington Head Start is divided into three designated checkpoint periods (Fall, Winter and Spring). At the end of each checkpoint period, teachers will use their accumulated anecdotal notes to establish checkpoint levels for each child.
4. Analysis and Further Planning – Once checkpoint levels have been established, teaching teams will set up a meeting with each child's parents (parent/teacher conferences in the Fall and Spring, home visit in the Winter). This is an opportunity for parents and teachers to share information about the child's development and collaborate on goals for the child in the upcoming checkpoint period.

## **Transitions**

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

During the school for newly enrolled children or children changing classrooms the Family Service Advocate will arrange a visit for the parent and the child to visit the new classroom prior to the child's first day of school.

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

## **Schedules and Routines**

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

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

### **Sample Schedule Part Day Head Start Classroom:**

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

### **Sample Schedule Full Day Classroom:**

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

- ) Choice Time/Center Time
- ) Departure

### **Field Trips**

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

### **Toys**

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

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

### **Classroom & Center Safety**

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

## **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**

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

### **PATHS**

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

### **Behavioral Screenings**

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

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

### **Positive Behavior Support**

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

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

#### **Be Safe**

#### **Be Kind**

#### **Work Together**

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

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

### **Positive Behavior Policy**

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

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

- ) Removal from the activity/area in the classroom
- ) Positive reinforcement
- ) Problem solving with the child

- ) Routines
- ) Developing behavior plans
- ) Giving choices within limits
- ) Teaching children how to calm themselves
- ) Redirecting them to appropriate activities.

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

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

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

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

### **Handle With Care Policy**

Classroom rules are intended to protect the rights of all students and staff and promote a safe learning environment. The behavior of a child must not interfere with his/her safety or that of other children or adults in the classroom. When a child's behavior poses imminent danger to the physical well-being of her/himself or others, **Handle With Care** intervention may be used. **Handle With Care** is a passive physical hold that is utilized by trained and certified Wilmington Head Start, Inc. staff.

Verbal de-escalation techniques and redirection strategies must be utilized first. Our staff strives to create a developmentally appropriate environment, set reasonable limits, redirect unacceptable behavior, and nurture positive interactions. **Handle With Care** intervention is a last resort measure to ensure safety and appropriate behavior redirection.

## **Suspension and Expulsion Policy**

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

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

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

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

## **Mental Health**

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

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

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

## **DISABILITIES SERVICES**

### **Children with Special Needs**

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

### **ASQ-SE2/ASQ-3 Screenings**

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

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

If the screening results indicate the presence of significant abilities and/or needs, you will be contacted to review the situation and address the possibility of further assessment. Further assessment does not necessarily mean that a delay exists. Further assessment means that a more detailed evaluation and/or examination may be necessary to determine if a problem does, in fact, exist.

# **NUTRITION AND HEALTH**

## **Nutrition**

As your child attends WHS he/she will be receiving healthy meals which are approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.) Your child will be served 2 meals per day (breakfast and lunch). The children who attend the full day program will also receive an afternoon snack.

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

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

## **USDA Nondiscrimination Statement**

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

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service

at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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

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

### **Family Style Dining**

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

### **Monthly Menus**

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

### **Health Services**

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

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

## **Health Policy**

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

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

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

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

## **Health History**

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

## **Physical Examinations/EPSDT/Immunizations and TB Screened**

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

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

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

### **Medical Records**

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

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

### **Screening**

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

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

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

### **Medication Policy**

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

### **Exclusion of Children Due to Illness**

A child who is not feeling well may cause other children and adults to become sick. It is important that parents keep their sick child at home, so

the others can remain healthy. A child is to stay home from school when experiencing the following:

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

**Cold Sores  
Diphtheria  
Hepatitis  
Impetigo  
Measles  
Meningitis  
Mumps**

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

### **Emergency/Sick Child Pick Up**

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

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

### **Absence from School**

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

### **Injury Outside of School**

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

### **Diapering Policy**

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

### **Extra Clothing**

Because accidents do happen (toileting, spilled water, milk, etc.), we request that you send an extra set of clothing (shirt, pants, socks, and underwear) for your child to keep in the classroom. Before sending, please label each article of clothing with your child's name. Soiled or stained clothes will be sent home in a plastic bag. **Remember to send in new**

**clothing. As a safety precaution, children are not allowed to wear open toed shoes (flip flops and sandals).**

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation will be provided to children in accordance with the bus routes and guidelines established by WHS. Persons dropping off children to the bus or picking up children from the bus must be at least 16 years old and provide a picture ID to confirm their identity. Bus service is not provided to children in the Full Day program.

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

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

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

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

### **A Message for Parents about Pedestrian Safety**

**Here are some facts you should know:**

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

**This is How You Can Prevent These Tragedies:**

- ) Supervise children at all times.
  - ) Children should not be allowed to cross the street alone.
  - ) Teach them who can help them cross the street safely.
- 
- ) Teach by explaining. Explain to your child the safe way to cross a street. Say: "When I cross a street, I always stop at the curb. I look for cars. I look left for any traffic coming and then I look right for traffic coming that way. Then I look left again. When it is clear, I cross the street and keep looking left and right."

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

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

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

## **Procedures for Bus Riders**

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

**Parents/Guardians must contact the school immediately if your child will not be attending school.** Your child must be ready when the bus arrives. The bus driver will not wait if he/she does not see anyone at the bus stop. Your child must be taken to the bus door when bus arrives for pick up. Please be ready ten (10) minutes before and allow ten (10) minutes after the schedule bus time.

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

Please make arrangements with the people you have designated to pick up your child in case of an emergency. Parents/guardians should inform

all authorized persons that they are on the Emergency Release Form and therefore, authorized to pick up your child. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to inform the authorized persons of the program's bus procedures.

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

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

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

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

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

### **Emergency Closing and Inclement Weather Information**

In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, parents will be notified of the closing at our Facebook page, our website [www.wilmheadstart.org](http://www.wilmheadstart.org), [www.wjbr.com](http://www.wjbr.com), [www.wdel.com](http://www.wdel.com), [www.wilm.com](http://www.wilm.com), on Facebook, as well as television (Channels **3, 6** or **10**), radio stations (**WDEL 1150AM** or **WILM 1450AM**). Parents are encouraged to register to receive alerts via email or text from our School Messenger System. Please make sure that your FSA has a current phone number.

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

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



## **SCHOOL CALENDAR 2020-2021**

Wilmington Head Start, Inc.

SEPTEMBER 2020:	8 <sup>th</sup> School starts for returning children and Purchase of Care 18 <sup>th</sup> In-service.
OCTOBER 2020:	30 <sup>th</sup> In-service.
NOVEMBER 2020:	3 <sup>rd</sup> Election Day 25 <sup>th</sup> In-service. 26 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup> Thanksgiving.
DECEMBER 2020:	23 <sup>rd</sup> In-Service. 24 <sup>th</sup> to 31 <sup>st</sup> – Winter Break.
JANUARY 2021:	1 <sup>st</sup> New Year 15 <sup>th</sup> In-service. 18 <sup>th</sup> MLK Holiday.
FEBRUARY 2021:	12 <sup>th</sup> In-service. 15 <sup>th</sup> President's Day.
MARCH 2021:	19 <sup>th</sup> In-service.
APRIL 2021:	2 <sup>nd</sup> Good Friday. 5 <sup>th</sup> Easter Monday
MAY 2021:	28 <sup>th</sup> In-service. 31 <sup>st</sup> Memorial Day.
JUNE 2021:	3 <sup>th</sup> Last day for part year children.
JULY 2021:	5 <sup>th</sup> Independence Day recognized
AUGUST 2021:	9 <sup>th</sup> Last day for full year children. 20 <sup>th</sup> Last day for POC children.



## NOTES