

# Amboy Central Preschool

as part of the

**Amboy Community Unit School District #272**

*"Empowering world class learners and responsible citizens."*



# Parent/Student Handbook 2023-2024

Amboy Central Elementary School  
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**Mission Statement:**

Our mission at Amboy Central Elementary Preschool is to provide exceptional care and developmentally appropriate educational experiences in a child centered, safe and nurturing environment.

**Philosophy:**

The preschool team believes that each child is unique. We believe that each child has varied needs, abilities, interests and learning styles. To best facilitate the needs of each individual child, we have integrated a play based, child centered curriculum that integrates; physical, cognitive, social-emotional, language and literacy, math, science, social studies, arts, and technology. In this program, each child is exposed to new learning experiences and draws upon those experiences to gain new knowledge. Parent/child activities, take-home activities and other materials are used to facilitate the learning at home and encourage parent participation. Our forward-thinking, comprehensive, research-based and research-proven curriculum resources includes an assessment component individualized to each child while allowing us to be effective, while still honoring their creativity and respecting our critical role in making learning exciting and relevant for every child. This allows us to provide children with developmentally appropriate programs that support active learning and promote progress in all developmental areas.

The preschool team also believes that children learn best in a clean and stimulating environment. The classroom is set up in centers to encourage multiple learning opportunities on a daily basis. Each center is supplied with various materials to facilitate the learning of each individual child.

Our goal is to have each child and parent excited to be a part of our program each day!

*“Play is the highest form of research.” - Albert Einstein*

**Program Goals and Objectives:**

Our hope is to prepare students who do not have access to preschool a chance to move forward to kindergarten with the necessary skills to be successful. We also intend to use the preschool program as a strategy for closing the achievement gap for at-risk students and for creating a positive transition for children into the K-12 learning environment. Students will engage in a research based, child centered curriculum that integrates; physical, cognitive, social-emotional, language and literacy, math, science, social studies, arts, and technology.

**Enrollment and Eligibility:**

Amboy Central Preschool is a free preschool program for children between the ages of 3 to 5 who are not eligible for Kindergarten. Prior to enrollment, parents will complete a Family Questionnaire and children will participate in a developmental screening. Information gathered from the Family Questionnaire and the results from the developmental screening will be considered within a weighted risk factor eligibility system. Children determined to be the most at-risk will be given priority for enrollment. Once the program is full, a waiting list will be maintained. If an opening occurs during the school year, priority for enrollment is again given to the child determined to be the most at risk. Amboy Central Preschool accepts all eligible families regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin.

Prior to enrollment, your child will need the following on file:

- Permission to conduct preschool screening form
- Family Risk Factor Questionnaire
- Agreement Form
- Emergency Contacts and Pick Up Form
- Home Language Survey
- Birth Certificate
- Income verification
- Current Physical with immunization records

### **School Calendar:**

Amboy Central Preschool has both morning and afternoon class options available. Classes run Monday through Friday for 2 ¾ hours each session.

AM Class: 8:10 a.m. - 10:55 a.m.

PM Class: 12:30 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Since our classroom is located in the Amboy Central Elementary School building, we will closely follow their attendance days. You will be provided with a yearly calendar showing the specific attendance days for the program.

### **Weather-Related Conditions:**

If weather conditions are uncertain, listen to the local television stations for announcements for **AMBOY CUSD #272**. Parent Square notice will be made to all parents if school is canceled.

The following media sources are used by the Amboy School District in an event of bad weather or closures:

WREX TV Channel 13

WTVO TV Channel 17

WIFR TV Channel 23

KWQC TV Channel 6

WQAD TV Channel 8

WHBF TV Channel 4

### **Curriculum and Class Schedule:**

*The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Volume 6* is the curriculum used to guide instruction. This comprehensive curriculum provides integrated learning in all domains including: visual-motor, language, fine and gross motor, health and nutrition, social and emotional, and cognitive (including language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and fine arts). This research-based curriculum was selected because it provides a holistic child-centered approach to instruction and it is aligned with the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards.

Each day the schedule will consist of time for:

- Child-directed free choice time
- Teacher-directed activities
- Large group time
- Small group activities
- Literacy activities
- Snack
- Gross motor activities

Concepts and skills are taught in both large and small group situations in the areas of motor, social, intellectual, and language development. Every effort is made to identify and challenge each child's unique educational needs. Materials and experiences that meet the needs of children who are functioning at different developmental levels are used throughout the classroom. Classroom activities include: cooking, art, block play, exploration with sand, water, and other materials, puzzles, music, dramatic play, gross motor, fine motor, science, social-emotional experiences, and language and literacy.

### **Attendance Policy:**

In order to gain the greatest benefit from participation in Amboy Central Preschool, it is necessary for children to attend preschool regularly, and for preschool to be a part of children's normal routine. Children who are habitually late miss a significant portion of the day; therefore it is also important to be on time to preschool.

Our goal is to maintain 100% average daily attendance. **If your child is going to be absent, it is extremely important to communicate with the school regarding the reason for the absence. Please call 815-857-3619 to report your child's absence.**

### **Excused Absences:**

1. Hospitalization, serious illness or injury, communicable disease, or other health ailment that temporarily prevents attendance
2. Medical appointment of child or other family member
3. Family emergencies (such as car accidents, death of family members, temporary family crisis situations, etc.)
4. Severe weather conditions that prohibit travel to and from preschool
5. Official or legal agency appointments
6. Court-ordered visitation

## 7. Religious/cultural celebrations

Staff will analyze the reasons for the absenteeism based on patterns of absence for the child, reasons for the absences, and the number of absences on consecutive days. Should attendance fall below 90%, staff will work with the family to try to eliminate any barriers to attendance and successful participation.

### **School Physicals/Immunizations:**

The School Code of Illinois states that a physical examination is required of all students in public schools. Complete physical forms **MUST** be presented within 30 days of enrollment. All children are also required to have current immunization records on file in order to attend Amboy Central Preschool.

### **Illness and Communicable Diseases:**

The following illnesses need to be reported immediately to the teacher and school: chicken pox, mumps, strep throat, scarlet fever, infectious mononucleosis, rubella, influenza, hepatitis, measles, meningitis, encephalitis, salmonella, pink eye and shigellosis.

*Below is guidance for specific conditions:*

- Chicken Pox: Wait until scabs have fallen off to return
- Coughing: Use your best judgment for coughs including harsh coughs or coughs that produce mucous or phlegm
- Diarrhea: Wait until there has been at least 24 hours since the last episode to return
- Fever: (Temperature over 100°) Wait to return until fever-free for 24 hours **without** Tylenol
- Head Lice: Wait until after the first treatment. Child must be lice- and nit-free and checked by the school nurse.
- Open Wounds/Sores: Must be covered and have a doctor note stating it is non-infectious.
- Pink Eye: (Including pink or red eye with white or yellow eye discharge) Wait until 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Rash: Wait until a doctor has determined rash is not contagious
- Vomiting: Wait until there has been at least 24 hours since the last episode to return
- Influenza: Wait until there has been at least 72 hours since the onset of symptoms to return
- Runny Nose (Yellow or Green): Use your best judgment, but please be cautious
- Strep Throat: Wait 24 hours after treatment has begun and fever-free for 24 hours to return
- Other: Other diseases have symptoms which could indicate a serious communicable disease identified by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Talk to a staff member for more information if you are concerned about your child's symptoms

If a child comes to class with any of the illnesses stated above, he/she will have to return home immediately. If you are in doubt about whether or not your child should attend, please call a staff member and discuss the situation with them. If your child becomes ill at school, the teacher will contact you or an individual on your release form to pick up your child.

**Medication:**

Since your child only attends school for 2 ¾ hours a day, please administer medications before or after class rather than sending it to school. If your child has a special situation, please discuss it with the teacher to work out a solution.

If your child will have any medication on-site that Amboy Schools District Nurse may need to administer (such as inhalers, insulin, Epi-pens, etc.), you will need to complete an *Administration of Medication* form.

**Injuries:**

Amboy Central Preschool or Amboy schools staff members will treat on-site any minor injuries occurring at school. An injury report will be filled out and handed to the parent to sign that day. Both the teacher and the assistant are trained in CPR and First Aid and a first aid kit is kept in the classroom and carried to the playground and gym and on all field trips and other outings. Amboy Central Elementary School has a nurse on site during the day to assist with injuries and illness treatments.

Should an injury occur that staff deem serious enough for emergency medical care, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The teacher will remain with the injured child.
2. The teacher assistant or staff member will:
  - a. Call 911
  - b. Call parents and/or emergency contact for the child. You will be asked to meet the child at the hospital, NOT the school.
  - c. Assemble any information on the child to accompany the child to the hospital.
  - d. Call the School Office
3. The teacher will accompany the child to the hospital and report to emergency room staff and the child's parents.

**Nutrition and Snacks:**

Research indicates that a child's school performance depends on proper nutrition. It is important for your child to eat breakfast/lunch before coming to school in order to function at his/her peak level.

Amboy Central Preschool provides a healthy, nutritious snack for the children on a daily basis. Occasionally, snacks are prepared as part of a classroom cooking project or special activity and all children are encouraged to participate.

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday, please speak with the teacher. Any snacks you provide for your child's birthday must be store-bought and in the original wrapping. We strongly encourage you to provide healthy birthday treats.

Information about special classroom parties will come home in the newsletters. In order to protect those children with food allergies, we ask that you do not purchase products for the parties without first talking to the teachers.

If your child has a food allergy, please inform the staff so that we can make the appropriate accommodations.

### **Arrival and Departure Procedures:**

Amboy Central Preschool is concerned for the safety and well-being of all children and want to ensure that children arrive and depart as safely as possible. Since we share the building with other classrooms, you will need to be aware of other busses and cars that are arriving and departing.

**Tobacco products, alcohol, and drugs are prohibited on school grounds and during all parent/child activities and school functions.**

### **Arrival Procedure:**

- Please do not arrive more than 5 minutes before class begins.
- Park in the parent parking area only. Please do not leave any young children in the car unattended.
- Adults **must** walk the child into the school/drop off area.
- For safety's sake, children must **NEVER** be dropped off without direct transfer to an adult; therefore children must always be brought directly to the drop off area. Children may not be sent in alone from outside the building.
- Please be considerate of the time the teachers need before school to prepare for the school day. Doors will open 5 minutes before the start of class. Teachers use the time prior to and following class for preparation and planning.
- If you arrive more than 5 minutes after the start of class, you will be directed to the waiting area.

### **Departure Procedure:**

- Punctuality is expected. Children must be picked up within 5 minutes of the end of class. **We ask all adults to always be prepared to show a photo ID if asked.**

- **Only adults listed on the release log** will be allowed to pick up your child. ***Please tell the individuals on the form to have a photo ID to show to the teachers.***
- Children may **not** be left alone on the playground, in the hall, or with an elementary-age child.
- If it is necessary to pick your child up before the end of class, please make the appropriate arrangements with the teacher.
- Late pick up procedures will be instituted 5 minutes after dismissal. Parents will be called first and then the emergency contacts will be called. If no one on the emergency pick up list can be reached, parents will be called again. If no one has picked up the child by 30 minutes after class ends, and if staff members have been unable to reach the parents or emergency contacts, we may contact the local police department or the DCFS hotline to determine how to proceed.

### **Backpacks:**

Your child will need to have a standard size backpack. Please label your child's backpack and no small backpacks please. Children should bring their backpack to school everyday. Also, please be sure your child can carry and open this bag easily. Zippers seem to work best.

### **\*\* Please check your child's backpacks each night.**

This is so important! Lots of papers and artwork will be sent home throughout the year in your child's backpack such as forms for field trips and reminders to send more pull ups/diapers to school. Please put any notes or papers that need to be brought back to school or papers that the teacher needs to see in your child's folder. It will get checked daily at school.

### **Parent Involvement:**

We recognize and understand that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children. We want to provide parents with the information and skills necessary to assist them in this task. Parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer in our program. We welcome any parent participation such as: assisting in the classroom, accompanying field trips, reading a story to the class, providing a special activity in the classroom. We will also have days with planned special activities that you will be invited to attend.

In addition to the classroom staff, Amboy Preschool has a family educator in the program. The family educator will serve as a resource to families. He/she will provide information about learning standards, supporting your child at home, ways to connect to community resources and events, and will run a parent lending library that contains family engagement items that can be sent home or checked out.



We will occasionally offer special parent events or parent/child activities. Surveys will be distributed to parents in the fall to gather information about interests and parenting concerns. The results will help the teacher and the family educator choose what types of activities to plan. The meetings may be parent education sessions, parent/child interaction activities, or a combination of both. In order to accommodate a variety of schedules, we may offer both daytime and evening activities. Parents will be notified of these meetings in notes sent home and in the newsletters. Your participation is strongly encouraged.

### **Field Trips:**

As grant funds allow, Amboy Central Preschool children and parents will participate in field trips. These trips provide children with first-hand experiences related to classroom topics of study. We will also plan to visit a Kindergarten classroom in order to prepare children for Kindergarten. Parents are encouraged to help in chaperoning these trips. Parent permission for field trips will be sent home when necessary. Details for specific field trips are provided throughout the school year. Siblings are not allowed on classroom field trips. However, they are always welcome to attend Family Events!

### **Newsletters/Communication from School:**

Parents will receive weekly classroom newsletters describing activities for the week. To encourage parent participation, additional reminder announcements and invitations are sent to parents regarding any upcoming special events. Parents will also receive periodic newsletters from the family educator covering a variety of topics.

### **Guidance and Discipline Policy and Procedures:**

Amboy Central Preschool provides a positive approach to discipline. The teachers form loving and trusting bonds with the children while being a positive role model for the children to follow. The classroom will be predictable, consistent, and age-appropriate. Student will have the opportunity to learn and practice strategies for interacting with others.

Children are expected to show respect for the other children, classroom rules, classroom materials, and the staff. Here are some techniques that will be used in the classroom:

- Children will be praised for positive behaviors throughout the day
- Staff will give children appropriate words to use to settle disputes if needed
- Children will be guided to change their behavior using positive wording, such as, “use your walking feet,” when a child is running
- Children will be redirected to a new activity and shown how to play appropriately if they have difficulty in an activity. Some choices may be given
- Children will have a “safe spot” to go to where they may release their emotions in a suitable manner

- Staff will use natural or logical consequences. To be most effective, consequences follow immediately after any inappropriate behavior. Staff will phrase things in a matter-of-fact way and use a short explanation about the consequence, such as, “Your hands hurt your friend. You need to make them feel better. What are some ways we can do that?”

If a child has a difficult day at school, staff will notify the family. Any child who endangers himself/herself, other children, or staff may be temporarily removed from the classroom.

Consistent and severe problems will result in a parent/teacher meeting to develop a behavior plan. The teacher may have recommendations and/or referrals. **Amboy Central Preschool prohibits any corporal punishment.**

#### **Dress Code:**

Children should be dressed in comfortable clothes and shoes for active play. Children are often involved in messy activities such as painting or cooking when at school and should be dressed accordingly. Shoes with rubber soles, such as tennis shoes, are preferred. **For safety's sake, shoes must have backs and have closed-toes (no flip flops or open-toed sandals).** Cowboy boots and “party shoes” can lead to accidents. Girls who wear dresses to school need to wear a pair of shorts or leggings underneath the dress to protect their modesty.

Children will play outdoors when the temperature permits. Please be sure your child wears a hat, mittens, coat, snow pants, and boots on chilly winter days.

In case of sickness or an accident, please provide a complete change of clothes that are versatile for the changing seasons. They will be kept in a labeled bag in your child's locker. Don't forget to check the bag several times per year. As your child grows during the year they may need to be replaced with more appropriate clothing.

#### **Mandated Reporting:**

All preschool program staff are professionals who work with children in the course of their professional duties and are therefore, by law, defined as mandated reporters. This means they are required by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

#### **Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information:**

This program is grant funded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). As such, the Amboy CUSD #272 is responsible for the security and maintenance of your child's educational and service records and is responsible for monitoring release of information related to those records.

It is understood that the information shared with the program is confidential in nature and is used solely for the purpose of providing high quality services to your child and family. It is further understood by the staff members that they are responsible for maintaining the highest standards in accessing and using your child's records.

The following policies are in place to protect the privacy of participants in our program. Your family has the right to personal and informational privacy, as outlined by the following policies:

- To refuse to talk with or see anyone not affiliated with Amboy CUSD #272.
- To meet in surroundings designed to assure reasonable visual and auditory privacy.
- To expect that any discussion or consultation involving your child will be conducted discreetly and that individuals not involved in providing services to your child will not be present without your permission.
- To have your records read only by those directly involved in providing services to your family. Other individuals can have access to your records upon your written authorization.
- To expect all communications and other information pertaining to your child to be treated as confidential.
- To understand that under certain conditions, Amboy CUSD #272 staff members may be required legally to disclose confidential information. This may occur if there is any evidence of child abuse, if there is evidence one may harm others or oneself, or if a court orders that information be disclosed.

As a participant in the Amboy Central Preschool program, you agree to the above statements and policies as a condition of enrollment. The Amboy School District will provide ISBE with personal information about your child that has been provided by you or obtained from partner organizations in order to meet the requirements of the funder and to meet your child's needs as a participant in the Preschool program. Information that can be disclosed includes that which was provided by you on entry into the program, as well as information gained during your participation in programs and services offered at or through the Amboy School District. Please understand that the program is a voluntary program and that participation is a privilege.

**Grievance Procedure:**

As a participant in the Amboy Community Unit School District #272, you have a right to file a grievance if you feel your rights have been violated. A written grievance with supporting documentation should be directed to the Superintendent who will review the grievance and evidence and make a decision regarding the outcome.

**Please Do:**

1. Volunteer in the classroom
2. Notify teachers of any unusual bruises or injuries your child may have (All staff members are DCFS mandated reporters)

3. Provide a change of clothes that is versatile for the changing seasons
4. Leave toys, money, candy, and other personal belongings at home
5. Share concerns and suggestions
6. Dress your child for active play and to get messy
7. Dress your child for appropriate weather -- we will go out in the snow!
8. Use a respectful voice and appropriate language when talking with staff
9. Use a respectful voice and appropriate language when talking with your child and around other children in the program
10. Speak respectfully of the program, school, or teaching staff within hearing distance of children
11. Remain positive about school. It should not be used as a threat or discipline technique
12. Please remember that information about children/families learned in the classroom through volunteering is confidential