

# DISCOVERY SCHOOL

## Parent Handbook

Accredited by:

The National Accreditation Commission For  
Early Child Care and Education Programs



## Gold Circle of Quality

Rated by:

The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agency

An Illinois State Board of Education Preschool

## Hours of Operation

7:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M.

# **DISCOVERY SCHOOL**

## **A Learning Place for Young Children**

810 Obernuefemann, O'Fallon, Illinois 62269 • 632-3670

Email – [discovery.school@sbcglobal.net](mailto:discovery.school@sbcglobal.net)

Website: [www.discoveryofallon.com](http://www.discoveryofallon.com)

**Heather Mayheu, Administrative Director**

**Maria Moehle, Education Director**

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General Information

### **Board of Directors**

The Discovery Board of Directors consists of 6 community representatives and the Directors of the school. The Board meets 4 times during the year. Interested persons should contact one of the Directors for an application and arrange to attend a board meeting.

### **Equal Opportunity School**

Discovery does not discriminate against families and/or children with regard to race, sex, color, religion, national origin, disability, or any other category protected under federal state or local law. This policy applies to applicants and employees, and families and children who may enroll into Discovery.



Dear Parents:

Congratulations on choosing a Gold Quality Rated Preschool for your child. We are excited to have you as part of the Discovery Family!

The Discovery Staff is highly qualified in the field of Early Childhood Education. They create a learning environment that will allow your child to progress to the best of his/her ability based on their individual interests and needs. This is the first step in your child's school career and the foundation that is formed will support them throughout their school years.

There are several opportunities for parents to be involved at Discovery:

- 1) Families will be invited to a few evening events throughout the school year.
  - 2) Families members are always welcome to volunteer at Discovery like on a field trip, or reading books, or helping with everyday tasks.
  - 3) We have a Lending Library where parents can check out materials to take home and play with their children.
  - 4) Our Lending Library also offers reading resources for parents.
  - 5) Having parent involvement in fundraising opportunities is another great way to support Discovery.
- Watch for information on these activities in newsletters, bulletin boards, and on the clipboards. Please join us whenever you are able!

This handbook contains information that will support you and your child throughout the coming year. Thank you for taking the time to read it. The final page is for you to sign please and turn back into your child's teacher.

Please let us know if we can be of assistance to you and your child. Our door is always open!

Sincerely,

Heather Mayheu  
Administrative Director

Maria Moehle  
Program Director/Parent Coordinator

# Philosophy and Goals

**Mission Statement:** To provide high quality education and care for all children and their families by nurturing all areas of development in an enriched learning environment.

We believe that DISCOVERY is a child development center in its truest sense. This means that we have concern for the whole spectrum of development including the social, emotional, physical and intellectual areas; none of these areas are in opposition, but are interrelated.

**Philosophy:** Emphasis is placed on acceptance of the child as a special, unique individual with a particular learning style and set of abilities. We try to meet each child's needs by providing stimulating and challenging activities, accompanied by teacher encouragement and support needed for the child's success. The learning environment stresses hands-on experiences and freedom to select activities. We recognize that children need direct teaching for part of each day; this is done in large and small groups and individually. During these times, teachers prepare lessons around themes or projects to develop concepts, skills, language, literacy, motor skills, critical and creative thinking, print, science and math.

## Goals:

The goals we set for intellectual development include:

1. Developing a positive attitude toward learning
2. Making discoveries
3. Developing problem-solving skills
4. Sharpening sensory awareness
5. Refining and developing communication / literacy skills
6. Developing cognitive skills, concepts, and understandings which are developmentally appropriate
7. Enjoying and expressing oneself through word play, music, movement and the visual arts.

The goals we set for physical development include:

1. Developing wholesome attitudes toward one's body and body functions
2. Developing security through the knowledge and practice of safety
3. Developing muscular control and coordination (eye-hand and eye-foot) by increasing strength, dexterity and balance.

The goals we set for social-emotional development include:

1. Acquiring a sense of interrelatedness with other persons
2. Developing an appreciation of various cultures and backgrounds
3. Developing social skills of cooperation, sharing, taking turns
4. Becoming more aware of one's own feelings and how to express them in acceptable ways
5. Building a positive self-concept involving a sense of self-worth and self-confidence.

# Multicultural Education & Anti-Bias Curriculum

Over the past several years, our staff has been involved in reexamining beliefs and values regarding these issues in the light of a growing awareness among all of us who work in human services. After reviewing a wide variety of materials and attending training seminars, we have developed our philosophy as follows:

1. All parents are welcome in the classroom and are invited to participate in activities.
2. Our environment reflects diversity with dolls, posters, art materials and activities that represent or address different races and cultures. People with varying physical abilities are also represented and respected including those who are physically challenged.
3. Girls and boys are treated as equally capable and interested in all activities; girls do play in the block area and boys do engage in dramatic play in the housekeeping corner. Our goal is to develop fine human beings who share in the activities and responsibilities of life.
4. Prejudiced or biased behavior or language is not accepted at DISCOVERY any more than is mistreatment of another person.
5. We recognize and respect that families may take many forms and lifestyles. We also know that many parents feel alone or unsure about parenting. We can help with parenting classes and can refer you to other sources of support.
6. We will use books and discussions to promote positive social behaviors and discourage bias against others. We talk about both the similarities and differences among us in such a way as to show appreciation for our individuality as well as our commonality.
7. As far as we are able, our staff and board of directors will reflect the human diversity among us. Discovery observes a non-discriminatory policy regarding all admissions.

Should parents become interested in exploring these issues further, books and other supplementary materials may be requested from the staff or office.

## **Holidays and Celebrations**

At Discovery, holidays will be integrated into, but will not dominate, our developmental curriculum. In developing this policy we are careful to offer activities that are not religious in nature, are appropriate for young children, and are sensitive to a culturally diverse population. Discovery will complement, rather than replace, the activities which would be considered traditional. Discovery classrooms will emphasize the values on which holidays are based rather than either their religious or materialistic aspects.

We celebrate holidays in this way as it is difficult to support the culture and heritage of each child in a way that avoids bias and protects his right to believe or not believe, participate or not participate. In addition, we want to avoid making them highly commercialized so that they are simple pleasures rather than being overwhelming and exhausting.

We will acknowledge holidays by including books, songs and discussions in the classroom but specific religious content will not be included. Naturally unfolding literacy activities will be woven throughout the curriculum. If children wish to express ideas about holidays in their artwork, they will be given the material to do so.

We believe that it is important for children to make and give gifts to counteract the emphasis on receiving them. Therefore, at times during the year, children will be making gifts for parents. Staff spends considerable time collecting items for each child's portfolio and taking photos of each child's experience throughout the year. These collections will be given to parents at the end of the school year. These are our gifts to you.

### **Fall**

Each classroom will plan a Fun Family Fall Activity.

### **Winter**

December Holidays - Children will be introduced to the value of giving that is shared by the major winter holidays (Hanukah, Christmas and Kwanzaa). Songs and stories of a non-religious nature may be shared.

**Valentines Day** - Children will all make and receive one valentine that will be distributed in a fun way. They may make other valentines at the art or literacy center. Commercial valentines will not be given. Concepts of love, friendship, giving, and sharing are the values we will focus on during this holiday. No treats or valentines from home please.

### **Spring**

Mother's Day- Children will make a special remembrance for their mother, grandmother or another special loved one.

### **Summer**

Father's Day -Children will make a special remembrance for their father, grandfather or another special loved one.

**Fourth of July** – Staff will plan a Fourth of July event focusing on the colors red, white, and blue, talking about the flag and participating in musical activities.

In addition, there will be other celebrations throughout the year. At least one of the celebrations during the year will be an evening event to accommodate parents who are unable to attend during the day. For all celebrations, we will emphasize positive social behaviors such as sharing, giving, helping, and having fun together.

### **Birthday Policy**

Birthdays are a special time at Discovery. Each class celebrates birthdays in a special way. You will receive a note from your child's teacher concerning his/her special celebration at least one week ahead of time. Classes may sing a special song, play a special game and have the birthday child wear a birthday crown or be a special helper for the day. We know that parents often wish to contribute a birthday snack for the celebration; they may choose the favorite snack of the child (other than candy and soda). Any snack brought into the classroom must be grocery store-bought or bakery-made and peanut free.

**Public Health and DCFS regulations state that parents may not bring food to school, the only exception being birthdays or other celebrations. In addition, regulations state that all food brought by parents are commercially prepared packaged foods in factory sealed containers.**

Discovery strives to be a peanut free center. Snacks may not include peanuts or peanut butter. Please read labels. Discovery will provide 100% fruit juice for the celebration.

We feel that children benefit from foods low in fat and sugar. Some ideas include:

- Pre-packaged muffins
- Pizza from pizza parlor or frozen product
- Fresh fruit (staff will prepare later)
- Applesauce in individual containers
- Yogurt cups

**Treat bags and individual gifts may not be given out at school at any time. This includes plastic toppers on cupcakes.** There are many reasons for this including safety, differing values and family economics. In addition, balloons may not be brought into school for safety reasons. However, you may want to contribute a book, toy or game. We will be sure to label these items with your child's name, noting that it was a birthday gift to the school.

If you are planning a private birthday party for your child, invitations may be given out at school IF every child in the class is invited. If you prefer to mail out invitations names and addresses can be provided from the office.

## **A Day at Discovery**

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|--------------------|--|
| 1. Creative Art    | Painting, drawing, modeling, collage, experimentation with other art materials.  |
| 2. Messy Play      | Sand, water, flour, finger paint, mud, snow  |
| 3. Gross Motor     | Large muscle development through the use of climbers, blocks, balance beams, balls, obstacle courses.  |
| 4. Fine Motor      | Small muscle development through the use of drawing tools, scissors, construction-type materials, printing, including letter and number recognition, visual perception.          |
| 5. Socio-Emotional | Development of positive self-concepts and realistic awareness of responsibility to others, through individual, small and large group experiences.                                |
| 6. Cognitive       | Intellectual development involving language skills, sensory perception, critical thinking, problem solving, concepts in math, science, music, literacy, and creative expression. |
| 7. Technology      |  |

Although our program is very flexible, there is a great deal of structure involved in our preparation of the learning environment.

Parents are always eager to have their children learn their academics. Academics are addressed through the integration of all subjects together. Throughout the course of a day, teacher-initiated activities will be conducted in both large and small group activities that are tailored to meet the needs and interests of children.

We think that learning should be a joyful experience. We hope to give your child a good start in this direction.

## **Services Offered**

**Early Learners, Preschool and Jr. K. (8:30-11:50)** - All children who are enrolled in our programs are in a preschool class.

**Jr. K Enrichment- (8:30 A.M.-1:40 P.M.)** Our enrichment program extends learning opportunities into the afternoon. Children will be introduced to art and artists, music and musicians, literature and authors and one morning a week Jr. K will have Spanish.



**Extended Day-** (7:00 A.M.-6:00 P.M.) For families who need care for a longer period of time each day, we offer extended day services, opening at 7:00 A.M. and closing at 6:00 P.M. Children who are enrolled in extended day also receive preschool and enrichment, if age eligible. If the children arrive before 8:00 A.M., they can receive breakfast, in addition to a morning and afternoon snack and lunch.

**Project Child-** Purple Room (A.M. Class) meets 8:30 A.M.-11:15 A.M.  
Yellow Room (A.M. Class) meets 8:30 A.M.-2:30 P.M.

Extended day is available for Project Child. The Illinois State Board of Education funds this preschool class for children who qualify. Please contact the office for more information on qualifiers. This class was named as one of four Model Preschool Classroom sites in Illinois.

**Summer Camp--**A ten-week summer program is offered with the opportunity for field trips, special interest, and project exploration, as well as lots of fun and outdoor activities that are carefully supervised for safety, and healthy social interaction.

## Unique Programs for All Groups of Children

In many ways, the programs for each of our classes, as described in the school's philosophy, goals and objectives, are quite similar. Creative Curriculum Gold provides the backbone for all that we do.

1. Children have opportunities for self-chosen and group activities: art, block and construction, home-living, manipulatives, math and science, language, book corner and music.

2. Children follow a daily schedule, which alternates active and quiet periods:

Arrival/Greetings

Free Choice in learning centers:

Creative art

Sand/water (or other sensory material)

Fine motor/eye-hand

Language/listening

Writing/drawing

Technology/Computer

Music

Science

Math

Dramatic play

Construction

Snack

Group Time (stories, concepts, thinking skills, music)

Vigorous play on the playground or indoor games

Other projects or themes included in our classes come primarily from children's interests. We try to be very flexible in responding to these interests and allowing time to develop and expand on them. For example, one class may become quite interested by spiders while another is interested in pets. A project is an extended in-depth study of a topic worth learning about. It involves **investigation** in order to answer questions. This may include direct observation, finding information in books, conducting interviews and experiments, and collecting artifacts. After the investigation is completed, children may make graphs, charts and/or representations of their findings in murals, clay models or other art forms, as well as in dramatic play, block construction or writing. We are very excited about sharing results with you through exhibits in the hallways and classrooms.

The manner in which these themes or projects are presented for the different age groups varies, as does the amount of time which can be spent on a given topic. Attention span is generally longer for older children than for younger ones. Less detail is included for the younger ones, whereas four and young five year olds can hold several variables in mind simultaneously. Stories for the older children can be longer and have more complicated plots. In addition, older children have developed better fine motor skills which are needed for representing their ideas. DISCOVERY teachers are well tuned to their individual groups as well as to individual children within a group and strive to provide each group and child with developmentally appropriate experiences.

Even when a child is exposed to some similar themes and experiences a second or third time, that individual child is now a full year older and relates differently to the material. For example, representing ideas with art media takes on a different form as fine motor skills and conceptualization are improved. Repetition is very important to a child as he/she strives toward mastery in his/her life. We often see a child doing the same puzzle over and over again, or doing the same kind of drawing or easel painting repeatedly. Children frequently ask to have favorite stories re-read. Such repetition is positive and helps a child to internalize his learning.

In summary, no matter which group a child is in, the program will be developmentally appropriate. And most of all, the children in each group will enjoy themselves as they work and play individually, with a few friends or with the entire class. Self-esteem will grow, social skills will develop, academics will be

mastered and the children will mature and learn as they work and play together under the guidance of loving and competent teachers.

### **Our Financial Structure**

DISCOVERY is a private, not-for-profit educational organization with tax-exempt status and is registered as a charitable organization in Illinois. Although we are financially sound, we operate on a tight budget. As you make charitable donations, please consider DISCOVERY. Gifts may be earmarked, such as for children's equipment, if you so choose.

### **Ways to Help**

The following are simple ways to financially help Discovery:

**SCHNUCK'S:** Schnuck's has an Escrip card that a family may register for and Discovery will earn a portion of the money spent at Schnuck's. The card is merely swiped upon checkout at the store. You may sign up through the office.

**TARGET:** Discovery may be designated as your school on your Target Charge card and Discovery will receive a portion of money spent at the store. Registration may be done on-line with no other action required at the store. Our Discovery ID number is #2200.

**AMAZON:** Discovery is listed under Amazon Smiles, where Amazon will donate a portion of your purchase to Discovery.

**TREE OF LIFELONG LEARNING:** This tree hangs in the hallway at Discovery. Many years ago, Dr. Louis and Ruby Abrahams commissioned and donated a sculpted metal tree to Discovery. We hope that every family will buy a leaf for the tree. Leaves are engraved with family or children's names. Although we request a minimum donation of \$25, other amounts are acceptable.

**FUNDRAISERS:** Parents chair two fund raisers each year. The purpose of the fundraising is to keep our rates reasonable.

Thank you for supporting the school where you are able. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

## Tuition and Fees

### School Year:

Payments are due the first day of each month, beginning the first of August and ending the first of April. Twelve month plans require payment beginning May 1.

A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for any payment that is ten (10) days delinquent. In the event that any payment is more than ten (10) days delinquent, a fee of \$2.00 a day, additionally, will be charged. If payment is more than twenty (20) days delinquent, student may be dismissed by Discovery School and file records may be withheld until payment is received.

No refunds will be made for absences due to vacations, holidays, staff meetings or closings. Instances of extreme medical emergency may be brought to the Board of Directors for special consideration.

You must notify the Registrar if you are unable to meet the monthly deadline. Make checks payable to Discovery.

**See Enrollment Policies Brochure and Enrollment Agreement for the specifics of your commitment.**

**Late Fees:** Parents will be charged late fees of \$5.00 per every 15 minutes for children not picked up on time after morning, afternoon or extended day classes. The charge is \$5.00 per child; an additional \$5 per child will be charged for every 15 minutes thereafter. If a parent is late more than five times in one school year, the late fees will double. After a reasonable effort has been made to reach parents and other persons authorized to pick up a child have been called and staff must leave, the proper authorities will be called. Please be considerate of staff needing time for lunch, clean-up and going home.

If a parent or responsible adult continues to arrive late after sufficient warning and late fees are assessed, Discovery reserves the right to dismiss if the problem is not promptly resolved.

**Book Order Fees:** After receiving a book order flyer, note the date by which all orders must be in. If you wish to order books or materials, fill out the form and include your child's first and last name as well as the teacher's name, total the amount and include payment. Bring order with payment to the office; do not give order to classroom staff. Make checks payable to DISCOVERY.

**Subsidized Tuition/Child Care:** For children whose parents are working and who meet income guidelines, subsidized tuition is available for children in each age group that we serve. This program is administered through Children's Home and Aid (CHASI). There is an additional tuition fee added to the CHASI co-fee so that when combined with CHASI's payments, the total equals our tuition. (The additional tuition fee is not added to the fees of those children in Project CHILD).

**Project Child:** The Illinois State Board of Education funds the preschool portion of these programs.

**Summer Program:** A special three day per week Summer Camp is held between June and August. It lasts 10 weeks and families can choose the weeks they would like their children to attend. It must be a minimum of three weeks, but can be all 10 weeks, if desired. Children who have attended kindergarten are also invited to attend. Children who require extended care, five days per week may attend all 10 weeks, as well.

## General Information

Discovery uses the team teaching concept. Our staff works in pairs or combinations of three or four. They share the responsibilities for planning, teaching and relating to the children. The staff reserves the right to suggest a group change or class change in order to help your child toward his/her maximum development.

We ask that you bring your child to class on time and pick your child up on time. On arrival and departure, please sign your child in and out and be sure that your child's teacher has seen you.

**Daily Discharge:** Children will be discharged only to parents/guardians or persons designated on the child's record. In consideration of the teachers, please call the school to let them know arrangements you have made or that you will be late. If an emergency occurs and another person is to pick up your child you are required to notify the office. Proper identification, including a driver's license or other picture ID will be required of persons not known by the staff.

As a courtesy, please call when your child will be absent. Please notify us if they are home because of a contagious illness so that we can take necessary steps to prevent spreading.

**Family Participation:** We view parents as an integral part of our curriculum. We hope that you will participate in as many ways as possible. The Department of Children and Family Services requires that any person who volunteers on a regular basis (more than once a month) needs to have a physical and required paperwork on file. Please inquire in the office.

Some ways that you may be involved include reading stories to children, helping with computers, assisting in the classroom with special projects. If you are not able to volunteer regularly, some other special ways of participating include field trips, evening events, parent workshops, parent teacher conferences, using the lending library, office support and other ways in which your teacher will inform you.

Note: Family members can include grandparents, aunts and uncles, college-age brothers and sisters. They are invited to volunteer, also. Of course, we would like notification from the parents that another family member is coming to school. We would also like to know if, for some reason, a family member is not to be included.

**Supplies Needed From Home:** A carry-all bag (backpack) is needed to hold your child's personal belongings. Please have a change of clothing marked with your child's name in your bag each day of class. Make sure that the change of clothing in the bag is "seasonally" correct. Even older children can have accidents or need a change of clothes because of messy play. The newsletter will include school supply list.

**Videos:** Because of legal restrictions and the cost of an expensive license, videos may not be brought from home. DISCOVERY occasionally shows educational and high quality video productions of children's book classics as a part of our curriculum. We do not show typical home "movies" or "cartoons."

**Clothing:** All children should wear comfortable play clothes that can withstand the activity and messiness of creative learning. Tennis or gym shoes must be worn. A child who does not wear tennis shoes will be asked to play on the patio during outside time. Do not send your child in 'onesies'. Whenever possible, clothing should allow for a child to start becoming independent in dressing. We will play outside in weather of 25 degrees real feel or above, so please dress your child appropriately and label all coats and outerwear with child's name on inside tag or lining.

**Lost and Found:** The lost and found drawer is located in the hallway outside the office.

**Personal Items:** DISCOVERY is not responsible for children's or parents' lost or broken items. This includes items which are brought to school or on field trips.

**Oops Box**

Children sometimes bring favorite small items home from school with them. Parents may return these to the Oops container on the desk outside the office door.

**Nutrition, Lunch and Snacks:** DISCOVERY participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. We strive to encourage good eating habits and provide nutritious snacks and meals daily. Breakfast is served until 8:00. We also serve lunch, a morning snack and an afternoon snack. In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, DISCOVERY does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disability.

**Nap Time:** All day preschoolers and Junior Kindergarteners will have rest time each day. Each child will rest on a cot that is assigned to him/her. Blankets and sheets are available for your child's cot; however, you are welcome to bring a small blanket from home. If you choose to bring your own blanket, please take them home at the end of the week for laundering. Cots and sheets are cleaned weekly as well as between uses for two part-week children. Children rest quietly for 60 minutes. If they are not sleeping after this time, they will join teachers for quiet activities.

**Potty Training:** It is expected that preschoolers and Jr.K children in tuition paid classes be potty trained. If your child can wear a pull up and use the bathroom upon request, our staff is willing to support them in this area of development. This policy does not apply to Project Child or Early Learners. Teachers will work closely with you to support potty training.

**Behavioral/Guidance Policy:** DISCOVERY uses Conscious Discipline by Dr. Becky Bailey, which is highlighted by positive guidance techniques including redirection, reinforcement and involving the children in problem-solving of conflict situations. A safe place is available where your child may play alone or take time to recover from a conflict or upset. The safe place offers them books and soft toys to help them calm themselves. Physical punishment is never used. Notes will be sent home as needed. Please support the teachers with your child at home. If behavior problems persist, a conference will be scheduled with parents to discuss alternatives. A guidance policy statement must be signed by a parent.

**Policies Regarding Behavior:** Discovery's curriculum has been developed with the focus of providing a safe and nurturing environment where each child's individual needs are nurtured and learning is enhanced. At times some children may have trouble adjusting to our rules and routines. If this is the case staff will meet with parents or guardians and additional professional support as needed and will together decide on adaptations that might support the child. The plan will be put in writing and with parent written agreement implemented. Documentation will be provided to determine success of the plan. If these adaptations are not successful all parties mentioned above will meet again and together decide on outside help that can provide the support needed for success. Modifications to the plan may be made at this time with parent agreement. Also, at all times safety is a major concern. It may be necessary to call you to come pick up your child if the child is considered a danger to himself/herself, others, or things.

**Expulsion from Discovery:** After exhausting all available interventions and supports recommended by qualified professionals, if it is determined by Discovery that another setting is more appropriate for the placement of the child, Discovery reserves the right to recommend such placement. Discovery will provide you with alternative placement settings. With written guardian permission, Discovery will work with the new program to create a seamless transition plan.

**Special Needs:** At times a child may be enrolled that has an IEP or has had an IFSP. If this is the case, a copy is needed for our files. The information will be utilized by your child's teacher in providing support throughout all curricular areas.

**Conferences:** Only through understanding between the home and the school can the welfare of the child be protected. During the course of the term, at least two parent-teacher conferences will be held. You will also be given a written report twice a year. When a special conference is desired, an appointment may be arranged with the teacher during non-school hours.

**Communication:** Ongoing communication is maintained in a variety of ways.

**Bulletin Boards-**Outside your child's classroom are several bulletin boards. Staff will record highlights of each day. You will also see parent participation sign-up sheets there or on the sign-in clipboard. Along with daily happenings you will find information related to project work.

**Newsletters-**You will receive two monthly newsletters; one from the office and one from your child's teacher. The classroom newsletter is also posted on a bulletin board for your convenience. It will be emailed to you, unless you request a paper copy.

**Language Barriers-** We will provide as needed translators to assist in translating for those families with language barriers.

**E-mail-** Each teacher has an email account set up to support communication with parents as well as parents with teachers. The lesson plan will be emailed weekly as well as being posted on the bulletin boards outside of the classroom. Our teachers check email at arrival and end of their work day; never during class time. Please call the office if you have immediate information to share with your child's teacher.

**Cell Phones-**We ask that parents leave their cell phones in the car when picking up their child. Bringing your child to school and picking the child up is a very special time in your child's day. It is a time for hugs and conversation with your child. A cell phone would cut off that line of communication.

**Notes-**We will be sure to give you a note if your child is injured, becomes sick, or when we notice atypical behavior. We also appreciate your letting us know home happenings that affect your child so that we are able to supply the needed support. (Pet died, grandparents visiting, up unusually late, etc.) By maintaining close ongoing communication between home and school, we will be able to provide the best possible program for both you and your child.

**Confidentiality:** Only the following persons will have access to the information contained in your child's personal file – Office Staff, your child's teachers, parents or legal guardian, DCFS staff (as required by law) and representatives from NAC, the Quality Rating Reviewers or the IL State Board of Education representatives who review randomly selected files for accreditation purposes. If you want us to release information to another agency or person, you must sign a release form.

**Problems and Complaints:** It is our practice to teach children, with staff guidance, to confront another child when there is a problem and to talk things out directly with that person.

If you have a concern with what is going on in a classroom or with a particular staff member, please talk to the person concerned. Our teachers are professional and are trained to recognize you as your child's best advocate. We respect your needs and know that through open and honest dialogue most situations can be resolved. Feel free to request a meeting with the education director about a complaint after you have attempted to address the problem directly with those concerned. If you feel uncomfortable talking with your child's teacher, also let the administrative staff know. If the situation cannot be resolved, your grievance can be documented and shared at a board meeting.

**Medical Records and Emergencies:** Before a child's first attendance day a current medical (and dental report for three years and older) must be on file in our office for all children, including a checkup and immunization record. If a child has any medical problem or physical limitation/handicap, we must be aware of this at the time of enrollment.

We assume that if a child is well enough to come to school, he can participate in all activities, including outdoor play with asthma being an exception. For a child to be kept inside we must have a Doctor's note. If a child has evidence of contagious disease, (vomiting, diarrhea, or a temp. of 100.5), please do not send him to school until symptoms have subsided without medication (e.g., Tylenol, anti-diarrhea meds) for at least 12 hours. Children must be fever and medication free for 24 hours. If your child should exhibit these symptoms at school, he or she will be brought to the office to be separated from the well children. You will be called to pick your child up from school. If you are not able to be reached your emergency contact will be called. Check with doctor or school office about exclusion periods for specific diseases. For the protection of all children, you will be asked to pick up your child within one hour if your child develops any of these symptoms during the day.

**It is necessary to have back-up persons who can pick up your child if you cannot.**

For strep throat and other illnesses requiring an antibiotic, a child may return 24 hours after antibiotic has been started. For bacterial and ear infections, a child may return with medication if he feels well enough to participate in school activities. How sick a child acts should be your guide. If a child is in pain, is obviously uncomfortable or badly congested, he should not attend. For each child's protection, if a child shows symptoms of pink eye, he will be sent home for treatment since it is very contagious. We realize that a child may have an allergy or non-contagious conjunctivitis that resembles pink eye but we will need verification if this is the case. Similarly, we may send a child home with a suspicious rash, unless a physician has determined the rash/illness to be non-communicable. We do need written verification from the doctor in these cases.

If your child is to be given medication during school hours, it will be necessary for you to complete an authorization form in the office. Parent's instructions must match those on prescription container. We can only administer current prescriptions. Medication must be labeled properly with contents, doctor, pharmacy and date and be given to the office personnel where it will be stored because of safety issues. Discovery cannot give the initial dosage of a medication. Authorization for medications may be faxed to our office. Non-prescription medications will not be administered except with verified authorization of physician.

In case of serious injury or illness, appropriate steps will be taken, which may include: (1) first aid, (2) calling paramedics or ambulance service and/or (3) transporting child to hospital. Parents will be contacted immediately and will be responsible for transporting the child, if time is not of the essence. Otherwise, an ambulance will transport your child to your preferred hospital or the closest hospital depending on the judgment of the paramedics. An illness/accident report will be completed and filed within 24 hours. When the child is taken to the doctor or hospital because of an accident at school, notify the school of treatment received. If the family, for religious reasons, requires a practitioner instead of a physician, that information must be in the child's record for reference.

We provide accident insurance on each child. If your child needs to visit the doctor because of an accident that occurred at school and wish to take advantage of this insurance, please contact the office within 24 hours.

**Allergies:** If your child has a food allergy or a medical condition such as diabetes or PKU, we will ask that you sign a permission slip giving us permission to post this information in the classrooms and kitchen. This posting insures that your child will not be exposed to this allergen/food. Please remember that Discovery strives to be a peanut-free school. This is because of the severe reaction that some children suffer when exposed to peanuts. Should you forget and eat peanuts on your way to school, toothbrushes and toothpaste are available upon arrival at school.

**Food and Beverage alternatives:** If your child cannot consume the foods/drinks provided by Discovery for a medical reason or lifestyle choice there is a form in the office that needs to be filled out. In addition a signed/dated note must be given to the front office stating your child's name, what



the food or drink is, when it should be served, and permission to post the information in the child's classroom. Also, a doctor's note may be needed to keep on file.

**Health and Safety:** In addition to issues addressed above, we provide a clean, sanitary, healthy and safe environment for children. We encourage children and staff to wash hands frequently throughout the day. DCFS regulation requires that children wash hands upon arrival. We ask that you please help them do that when you arrive. We also encourage the children to use tissues when sneezing, to cough into their elbows and we air out the rooms and wash materials regularly.

We take children outdoors most every day for a brief period; germs are more likely to breed in stale indoor air than outdoors. We do not take the children outdoors if the wind-chill is below 25 degrees, the heat index is above 100 degrees or if it is an unhealthful (red) air quality day.

We practice fire drills monthly with children and, occasionally, do tornado and earthquake drills. Our school is connected to the fire department and the police department so that we can get assistance at a moment's notice.

Please do not permit your child to bring weapons, marbles, or money to school. Toys should be brought only if requested by the teacher for a special activity.

In order to maintain building security, the only entrance point is the front door. You will be given the code to open the door. Please do not give out the code! A security camera tapes everyone who enters the premises. All visitors must stop at the front desk. If a pick-up person is unknown to the staff, they will need to show a photo ID before the child will be released to them.

**Field Trips:** Field trips are scheduled periodically throughout the year. We generally do not take field trips in the months of December, January, or February because of the risk of winter weather. You will be notified in your classroom newsletter and on the classroom bulletin board or sign-in sheet. We use a commercial bus company to transport the students for field trips. Our staff will carry a cell phone for emergency communication. They will also bring a first aid kit on every field trip.

**Child Abuse:** As a school and child care center, we are classified as a mandated reporter, which means that if we are witness to any evidence or possibility of child abuse or neglect, we are required by law to report it to the Dept. of Children and Family Services. This is for every child's protection. If parents need help with providing positive guidance and discipline, please consult classroom or office staff. If your child sustains marks or bruises during non-school hours, please let us know how they were incurred.

**Staff Meeting Schedule:** We have scheduled periodic staff meetings throughout the year. This may affect your child's schedule at times during the year. These meetings are listed in our school calendar and will also be posted as a reminder. Staff meetings are essential to planning curriculum and special events.

**Extreme Emergency:** Should the building become unsafe for the children, they would be walked to Hinchcliffe Elementary School. Emergency contact information would be taken with us and parents would be notified. This would be in the case of a rare and unforeseeable condition such as a gas leak or a fire. For emergencies such as tornado or fires, we do regularly scheduled drills to help the children prepare should an emergency arise. The emergency preparedness plan is also posted in each classroom. In addition, the entrance code will be changed at the beginning of each school year.

**Transportation and Parking Arrangements:** No transportation is provided by the school. Carpools are encouraged. Please turn off the engine of your car and accompany your child into the building and to the classroom. Do not leave any children in the car. The Department of Children and Family Services has notified us that leaving children alone in a car is something that we should report to them.

**Snow and Ice:** DISCOVERY closely follows District 90 for school closures. If roads are hazardous, we will list Discovery on Channel 5 and Channel 2 on the television. Every effort will be made to put this on the television as early as possible. We will list on Facebook if our school is closed. Also, teachers will send out a classroom email as soon as they have word about school closings.

**Complaint Procedure:** If you should have difficulty with any issues at Discovery, the directors have an open door policy. We are willing to listen to you and make every effort to correct a situation. If necessary, the Board of Directors would be called in for consultation and support.

**Integrated Pest Management:** Discovery's integrated pest management system (IPM) works toward the goal of not having to use any pesticides in the building or on the playground equipment. If we need to use something for the removal of pests such as ants, a bait or trap is used. If the rare situation should arise that the use of a pesticide would be necessary, and you would like to be notified, please notify the office and we will maintain a list to inform you. You will be notified a minimum of two days prior to spraying, unless it was an emergency situation. Pesticides will not be used while the children are in attendance nor would they be used within 24 hours of their presence.

## **Multicultural Education & Anti-Bias Curriculum**

Over the past several years, our staff has been involved in reexamining beliefs and values regarding these issues in the light of a growing awareness among all of us who work in human services. After reviewing a wide variety of materials and attending training seminars, we have developed our philosophy as follows:

1. All parents are welcome in the classroom and are invited to participate in activities.
2. Our environment reflects diversity with dolls, posters, art materials, and activities that represent or address different races and cultures. People with varying physical abilities are also represented and respected including those who are physically challenged.
3. Girls and boys are treated as equally capable and interested in all activities; girls do play in the block area and boys do engage in dramatic play in the housekeeping corner. Our goal is to develop fine human beings who share in the activities and responsibilities of life.
4. Prejudiced or biased behavior or language is not accepted at DISCOVERY any more than is mistreatment of another person.
5. We recognize and respect that families may take many forms and lifestyles. We also know that many parents feel alone or unsure about parenting. We can help with parenting classes and can refer you to other sources of support.
6. We will use books and discussions to promote positive social behaviors and discourage bias against others. We talk about both the similarities and differences about us in such a way as to show appreciation for our individuality as well as our community.
7. As far as we are able, our staff and board of directors will reflect the human diversity among us. Discovery observes a non-discriminatory policy regarding all admissions.

Should parents become interested in exploring these issues further, books and other supplementary materials may be requested from the staff or office.

## Parent/Guardian Handbook Sign-off Sheet

### Parent Handbook:

I understand that upon enrolling my child at Discovery School, it is my responsibility to be familiar with all the Policies and Procedures. I have received the Parent Handbook electronically and may also request a hard copy from the school at any time. A copy of the handbook will be placed in my child's cubby within 72 hours of the request.

Please initial the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read the Parent Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand how to obtain information regarding the Parent Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ We reserve the right to change, adapt, or remove policies/procedures as it deems necessary. Any such changes will be communicated via newsletter/email.

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to your child's classroom teacher!