



# ABIDING HOPE NATURE SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

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Dear Parents and Families,

Welcome to Abiding Hope Nature School; a ministry of Abiding Hope Church.

Our ministry is fully licensed by the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) - License Number 1768178 for children ages 6 weeks through 8 years. Our goal is to provide a welcoming, safe and developmentally appropriate environment for every child. In this handbook we have tried to anticipate many of your questions about the program. The purpose of this handbook is to outline the program's policies and procedures. We strive to work closely with parents in a partnership that will facilitate the transitions between home and school. Communication and a sense of trust between parents, teachers, and administration are vital. Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and education for children and to ensure that parents and children are valued and respected. To accomplish this, we depend on parents to be responsible and active child care consumers. We expect parents to read this handbook, follow the policies and procedures outlined, provide us with all necessary information, and be open and honest with us regarding your feedback about the program. We welcome your comments, questions, concerns and suggestions about your child's experience and the program. We understand that nothing is more important than your child's early education and care experiences. Given the nature of an ever-changing quality early education and care program, this handbook is a "living" document. You will be notified of formal policy changes during the year via a written policy notice through email. In addition, the handbook will be updated as needed. Come and talk with us should you have any suggestions, questions or concerns.

Blessings,

***Erin E. Fisher***

Executive Director of Schools

## **Mission**

Equip all to be the heart, hands, and feet of Jesus in the world!

We welcome and celebrate all children regardless of race, creed, ethnicity, or ability.

## **Philosophy**

All children are gifts from God and through guidance, love, socialization, and education each child can freely share their talents with others and the rest of the world. Our school offers a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment that fosters creativity and endless opportunities for self-discovery. Children are given a multi-sensory approach to learning, which allows for discovery, imagination, and development along with the strengthening of their gifts and talents within a Christian setting. This instills in children respect, the love of God, and a love for one another.

Abiding Hope Nature School provides a unique sensory rich learning environment that is accessible to all children. In order to develop a love of learning for life, our nature school uses experiential learning to inspire wonder and creativity so that all children can flourish and thrive.

According to Oxford Learning these are 5 ways nature promotes learning:

1. **Learning Outside Helps Keep Kids' Brains Active.** *The Children and Nature Network **found** that with daily exposure to the outdoors, children's cognitive abilities were enhanced. Contact with nature and play in natural settings creates nature-smart kids. Children should be getting **at least 60 minutes outside a day** to maintain their mental and physical health.*
2. **Nature Promotes Creativity.** *Whether it's a hike in the woods or time spent climbing on a playground, **outside play and learning often allows for more creativity.** By reducing stress associated with online time, time in nature can boost inspiration for creative endeavors. Creativity is boosted thanks to reduced fatigue and boosted energy levels.*
3. **Nature Increases Childrens' Self-Discipline.** *Many children have difficulties managing their impulse control, which can hinder their ability to learn. Taking your child on a hike, a walk, or to explore in the backyard acts as a tool to **recharge their self-discipline.** Impulse control and self-discipline are directly linked to academic success. Contact with the outdoors can significantly improve attention. It can also help with deficit difficulties and allow children to improve their self-discipline and stability.*
4. **Nature Provides Real-Life Context.** *When children learn outside, they have the opportunity to take what they learned in the online or in-person classroom and apply it to real-life situations. **An American Institutes For Research (AIR) study found nature helps improve academic success and students' attitudes.** The study found that children who spent time outdoors showed significant improvements in conflict resolution. Students also demonstrated gains in leadership and cooperation.*
5. **Time in Nature Improves Attention Skills.** ***Attention skills** are a vital part of a child's development. Spending time outside in nature helps restore concentration. In fact, **CBC News reported** that time spent outdoors can improve attention span, reduce stress and help with self-discipline*

As part of your child's week they will have chapel time with an Abiding Hope pastor to support and enrich your child's learning experience.

All staff members are qualified to teach young children based on the guidelines set by Colorado Rules Regulating Child Care Centers (Section 7.707.52 & 7.707.54).

## Ages of Children Accepted at our School

Abiding Hope Nature School is licensed and accepts children ages 6 weeks to 8 years of age.

## Assessments and Conferences

You will be able to follow your child's progress throughout the school year by scheduling a Parent/Teacher conference, in the fall and again in the spring. Each child will be assessed individually for growth and developmental milestones according to Early Learning and Development Guidelines. You are welcome to schedule additional conferences with your child's teacher if you have questions or concerns.

## Staff:

To ensure the safety and well-being of all the children, all staff members have been cleared to work with a background check and are certified in CPR, first aid, standard precautions; child abuse and neglect mandatory reporting, abusive head trauma training, and select staff are certified in Medication Administration

## Staff Development and Training

To further develop the educational backgrounds of staff, all staff members participate in continuing education and workshops during the school year, June through May. These trainings enhance their existing knowledge of ECE and help them gain new ideas and tools to use in the classroom. Staff members are required by the school and the Rules and Regulations for licensing to attain a set number of hours per school year (See Colorado Rules Regulating Child Care Centers, Section 7.702.43E). The center must have a staff development plan that includes a minimum of fifteen (15) clock hours of training each year for all staff. The training must relate to one or more of the following areas-child growth and development, healthy and safe environment, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism. (Rules Regulating Child Care Centers, 2012, p. 4)

## Hours of Operation

Abiding Hope Nature School is open Monday thru Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. We follow the Jeffco School Calendar closely and are closed for all holidays observed, including Federal Holidays. In the event we are closed during the school year for Parent/Teacher Conferences and Jeffco Schools are not closed, we will offer extended care from 7:30 AM –5:30 PM. The rate for care is as follows:

**Daily rate 9AM-1PM** - Infants \$90 / Littles & Twiddles \$75.00 / Tweens \$70.00 / Threes & Up \$65.00

**Daily rate 9AM-3PM** - Infants \$100 / Littles & Twiddles \$85.00 / Tweens \$80.00 / Threes & Up \$75.00

**Before or After School Care - Infants** - \$20.00 an hour with a minimum of an hour charge

**Before or After School Care – Littles, Twiddles, Tweens, Threes & Up (Not potty trained)** - \$15.00 an hour with a minimum of an hour charge

**Before or After School Care -- Threes & Up (Potty trained)** - \$12.00 an hour with a minimum of an hour charge.

\*After 1st hour; customers will be billed by the ½ hour (7:30-9:00 AM or 3:00-5:30 PM)

Please see school calendar on our website for a detailed listing of closures

## **Entering and Exiting Preschool**

The doors to the school remain locked at all times:

- Please ring doorbell for help

**All remaining doors of the building are locked, please do not enter or exit through these doors.**

## **Class Schedules/Arrival and Pick-up Times**

Infant Class	9AM-1PM and 3 PM – Ratio 1:5 Group Size 10
Littles and Twiddles Class’	9AM-1PM and 3 PM -- Ratio 1:5 Group Size 10
Tweens	9AM-1PM and 3 PM -- Ratio 1:7 Group Size 14
Threes	9AM-1PM and 3 PM -- Ratio 1:10 Group Size 20
Pre-Kindergarten	9AM-1PM and 3 PM -- Ratio 1:12 Group Size 24
Jr Kindergarten	9AM-1PM and 3 PM -- Ratio 1:15 Group Size 24

## **Admission, Registration, and Schedule Changes**

Registrations will be accepted until all spots have been filled, at which time children will be placed on a waiting list for openings. A registration fee and enrollment form are required at the time of registration; this fee secures the child’s spot and is non-refundable.

## **School Closure due to Weather**

**If Jefferson County closes all schools due to inclement weather, Abiding Hope Nature School will also be closed. Local radio and television stations will announce closures.** If there are limited school closures in the County, we will notify 9 News. There will also be an e-mail from administration and a message indicating school closure left on the school line 720-823-9294 as soon as the information becomes available. In the event of an emergency that would require the school to close during school hours, parents would be notified, and staff would remain with children until a parent or authorized contact person can pick up the child. If Jefferson County Schools are on a delayed start, Abiding Hope Schools will make a decision based on the reason. If no message is sent then AH schools will be running business as usual.

## **Inclement Weather and Outdoor Play**

Weather permitting; children will be given the opportunity to be outside on a daily basis. In the event of inclement weather, the decision to go outside will be determined by the weather and by the temperature guideline created by Child Care Weather Watch developed by the Iowa State Health Department, Healthy Child Care Iowa.

In the event we are unable to go outside, i.e. excessively cold or hot weather days, the children will be taken to a common area for recreational activities and exercise. Please send your child with weather appropriate clothing including coat, jacket, sweater, snow pants, gloves, and boots. Also, apply sunscreen when appropriate. We encourage parents to dress all children in practical clothing that allows freedom of movement, easy buttoning and fastening, and is easily washed. Appropriate

footwear is important for the playground and outdoors., please avoid “open backed” shoes and flip-flops for these activities, as they can present a hazard for children wearing them.

## **Sexual Harassment Conduct Code**

Colorado State Law indicates that any acts constituting sexual harassment by one child to another must be regarded seriously. Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical conduct or other verbal or physical conduct communicating a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment may include, but is not limited to, inappropriate patting or pinching, or any sexually motivated unwelcome touching. Abiding Hope Nature School will follow the discipline code with regards to sexual harassment (see Discipline Code section). The department of Human Services requires this information be given to all parents of children attending Abiding Hope Nature School.

## **Statement of Racial Non-Discriminatory Policy**

Abiding Hope Nature School believes that all children are part of God’s family! Our doors are open to all children that God sends our way, regardless of race, color, religious, national or ethnic origin. All children in our program are entitled to experience every activity we offer. Administration and educational policies are designed for all children and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color or ethnic origin.

## **Policy on Guidance, Behavior and Discipline**

### **General Procedure**

Abiding Hope Nature School is committed to each student’s success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free of discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their full potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the school community.

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

### **Challenging Behavior**

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness.

Each student at Abiding Hope Nature School has a right to:

**\*\* Learn in a safe and friendly place / Be treated with respect / Receive the help and support of caring adults \*\***

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all other children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate

interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. We maintain a zero tolerance to bullying. If you have any concerns about this at any time, please report it to the Director of the Center.

### **Physical Restraint**

Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may need to gently hold them only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

### **Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families**

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

- On occasion a child may require 1:1 attention at times throughout the day. If this becomes a requirement parents will be notified and a \$25 per hour fee will be charged on the student's account for the time that a staff is assigned to that child alone. For example a child generally has good mornings but around 10 AM begins to exhibit severe behavioral challenges (biting, hitting, kicking, throwing things, screaming, etc...) that require removal of themselves or all other children from the classroom for safety reasons. The child requires a staff to work with them on calming strategies until they can re-enter the group. The time will be prorated to the ½ hour; if 1:1 is needed 1.5 hours throughout the school day a charge of \$37.50 will be reflected on the account for that day. There will be significant communication between administration and the family before this charge is reflected.
- On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:
  - A child appears to be a danger to others.
  - Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
  - Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

### **Policy on Exclusionary Discipline**

As an inclusive early childhood program, we try to cultivate positive child, staff and family relationships. We try to create and maintain a socially and emotionally respectful early learning and care environment. We will implement teaching strategies supporting positive behavior, pro-social peer interaction, and overall social and emotional competence in young children. We try strongly to establish policies that eliminate, or severely limit, occurrences of expulsion, suspension, or other exclusionary discipline. We believe these exclusionary measures should be used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a determination of a serious safety threat that cannot otherwise be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications. We will provide individualized social and emotional intervention support for children who need them, including methods for understanding child behavior; and developing, adopting and implementing a team based positive behavior support plan with the intent to reduce challenging behavior and prevent suspensions and expulsions.



Should a situation arise where there is documented evidence that all possible interventions and supports recommended by a qualified professional (such as an early childhood mental health consultant or other specialist as needed) have been exhausted, it may be determined that another setting is more appropriate for the well-being of the child in question. In such extraordinary cases, our program will try to assist the family and child in accessing services and an alternative placement. We will make a valiant effort to communicate with the new receiving program and work together to develop a transition plan that will be as seamless as possible.

## **Speech and Occupational Therapists Screening and Evaluation**

- Abiding Hope Schools contracted pediatric speech therapist and occupational therapist will be occasionally observing, supporting, and facilitating small and large groups in all classrooms. Children will be screened throughout the year, if deemed necessary by the teacher and after an initial observation.
- If after a child is screened and further evaluation is recommended, the parents will be notified, and will take the steps toward formal evaluation with either AH Schools therapists or an outside source (for example Child Find or a developmental pediatrician) to either rule out or confirm a need for early intervention services.
- Parents have 90 days from notification of referral to have their child evaluated. After evaluation and within the 90 days, services must be started to support their needs or Abiding Hope Schools must receive a letter from the evaluators stating that early intervention support services are not needed at this time.
- If it has been determined that a child would benefit from receiving early intervention services, and a family chooses to decline the offered services through the evaluator, the child may not be able to continue attending Abiding Hope Schools without services.
- If a child requires 1:1 in a classroom for more than 50% of the school day, Abiding Hope Schools will notify the parents, and will provide staff, which will be billed to the account at the set rate for this service per hour. It is the parent's prerogative to find and provide their own 1:1 if preferred.
- Abiding Hope Schools provides student support groups during the school day throughout the school year. If it is decided that it is in the best interest of a child to participate in a group, parents will be notified and the expectation is that the child participates in the group. If there is an additional charge for this group, families will be notified.
- Before enrollment acceptance, the Abiding Hope Schools student support team, consisting of administration, teacher, occupational and speech therapists, and instructional coach will be reviewing all IEPs, IFSPs to determine placement.
  - We try our best however, AH Schools may not be equipped to serve the needs of all children. If a child's needs exceed the support or resources available at the school, parents will provide or pay for a 1:1 for their child, or the child will not be eligible to enroll. Abiding Hope Schools has the right to terminate services if any information regarding development or behaviors has not been disclosed.

## **Community Collaboration**

Abiding Hope Nature School coordinates and/or collaborates with community service providers, families, school district personnel, etc. as needed in order to design learning activities that aid in meeting outcomes/goals of School Readiness Plans, Individual Learning Plans, and/or other individual plans that may be deemed necessary during the year.

These partnerships are intended to:

- Assist in building early childhood systems
- Provide access to comprehensive services and support for all low-income children
- Encourage widespread collaboration between AHP and other appropriate programs, services, and initiatives
- Augment AHNS's capacity to be a partner in state initiatives on behalf of children and their families
- Facilitate the involvement of AHNS in state policies, plans, processes, and decisions affecting target populations and other low-income families.

## **School Readiness Plan for Family Engagement**

Abiding Hope Nature School:

- Maintains consistent, two-way communication with families consistent with their language preference through multiple forms including e-mails, translated materials, web postings, telephone calls, home visits, videos or photo albums that depict a day in the class, and face-to-face-communication.
- We encourage teachers to seek out information about their students' lives, families, and communities and integrate this information into their curriculum and instructional practices. Staff is willing to conduct home visits as requested to support this.
- We make information available to families, using a bulletin board, posters, flyers, e-mail, website, and displays of information – including information about early childhood development, community services, learning opportunities outside of the child care site (museums, libraries, etc.), and parenting classes and adult education.
- We collaborate with families to create a home environment that values learning, supports children's development, and reinforces what was learned at school.

## **Preparing Colorado's Children with School Readiness and Educational Information**

CDE and School Readiness promote a start early approach to school. With a strong, early start Colorado children will be more likely to continually succeed in school. School Readiness supports teachers' ability to create responsive learning environments that ensure academic and developmental growth for students. This includes promoting awareness of developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) that supports hands-on learning experiences and challenges students' thinking. To do this, school readiness assessments are used on an ongoing basis to measure children's growth.

Information collected through the assessments provides teachers with targeted instruction opportunities for individual students and small groups of students, thereby strengthening the learning environment for students. We also offer an annual educational information session at parent orientation on child development and learning that are aligned with the Early Learning and Development Guidelines.

## **Multiculturalism and Home Language**

Multiculturalism is vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we inhabit. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it. This program utilizes interpreters, or other resources for help with varying languages of enrolled families when needed. Our school employs teachers who are fluent in languages other than English, when available we place children who come from families with a home language other than English in a classroom with a teacher who speaks the same language. If a child speaks a language other than that of the teachers, we employ we make every effort to communicate effectively throughout the day.

## **Services for Children with Special Needs**

Abiding Hope Nature School "...welcomes all children, regardless of their physical, emotional, or developmental abilities." We follow and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (see below) and we will offer reasonable accommodations for all children within the ADA guidelines. We are "...equipped with grade level entrances for any child who cannot use stairs." We offer inclusive classrooms and contract with pediatric occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, and other therapists as needed. We partner with families and come up with a plan so children can receive services during their school day as needed.



## **The Americans with Disabilities Act 1990 (as amended link after paragraph 1)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a law that was enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1990. It was signed into law on July 26, 1990 and later amended with changes effective January 1, 2009. On September 25, 2008, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA) was signed into law. This was intended to give broader protections for disabled workers and "turn back the clock" on court rulings which Congress deemed too restrictive. (The Americans with Disabilities Act 1990, as amended link – <https://www.ada.gov/law-and-regs/ada/> )

The ADA is a wide-ranging civil rights law that prohibits, under certain circumstances, discrimination based on disability. It affords similar protections against discrimination to Americans with disabilities as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which made discrimination based on race, religion, gender, national origin, and other characteristics illegal. Disability is defined by the ADA as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity." The determination of whether any particular condition is

considered a disability is made on a case by case basis. Certain specific conditions are excluded as disabilities, such as visual impairment which is correctable by prescription lenses.

The "original intent" of the law was to create civil rights law protections for people with disabilities that would be permanent, would not be able to be reversed or weakened, and would prohibit all discrimination. It was also intended so that Americans with disabilities would be kept in the mainstream in certain terms of society. It was intended to be a flexible set of laws that could only be strengthened, not weakened, by future case law.

The ADA mandates that equal access be given to all children with disabilities in child care programs and that children with disabilities be fully integrated into the regular activities. The law not only covers the facility where child care is offered, but also features, which are needed to access the facility such as sidewalks, doors and bathrooms. However, child care providers are not expected to do the impossible.

Child care programs are required to make "readily achievable accommodations" for all children with disabilities. "Readily achievable" is defined as being "able to accomplish easily and without much difficulty or expense." Programs are not required to make changes that would create an undue burden, which is most simply defined as creating significantly difficult or expense or increasing safety or crime considerations."

For the purposes of the ADA, a disability is a "physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities." Short term or temporary illnesses or conditions do not qualify.

Child care programs are required to make an individual assessment about whether it can meet the particular needs of the child without fundamentally changing the program. The ADA generally does not require centers to hire additional staff or provide constant one-to-one supervision of a particular child with a disability.

#### **A few examples of situations where accommodations can be made in a child care program**

Child older than 4 years of age who wears diapers; Child that requires daily medication at lunchtime; Child that requires blood glucose testing during the day by child care personnel; Child that has a life-threatening allergy and requires an EpiPen in case of severe allergic reaction; Child that wears leg braces that needs assistance in taking off and then putting them on; A 3-year-old child with Down's syndrome, with moderate developmental delays, attending a private preschool program.

#### **Resources**

Department of Justice Information Line 1-800-514-030 / Americans with Disabilities Act – [www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada)

All Kids Count: Child care and the ADA/Rocky Mountain 1-800-949-4232 — [www.adainformation.org/ChildCare](http://www.adainformation.org/ChildCare)

**NATURE SCHOOL FEE SCHEDULE** - See website - [www.abidinghopenatureschool.org](http://www.abidinghopenatureschool.org) / Parents Tab / Forms and Information / Fee Schedule

## **Payment Policy**

School tuition is due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month, a late fee, of \$35, will be assessed after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Full payment on the invoice is to be received by the end of the month, or services will be suspended until payment is received and the account is brought to a zero balance. At the end of the school year, in May, all charges on the account are to be paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> or services will be suspended. Families utilizing Extended Care will be given a final invoice on their last day of their child's attendance and will be due upon receipt. We accept cash, checks, and online payments ([www.abidinghopenatureschool.org](http://www.abidinghopenatureschool.org)) with a credit card. In the event of a returned check for insufficient funds, a fee of \$35 will be charged and only cash or credit card payments will be accepted thereafter on that account. Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation.

## **Attendance**

### **Absence**

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9 AM, please call us at 720-823-9294. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you.

### **Vacation**

If your child is going to be on vacation, please call us at 720-823-9294 to let us know the dates. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you. While we recognize the value of family vacations, the center does not provide credit for vacation days and the regular tuition amount will be due by the scheduled due date.

### **Withdrawal**

A written notice, one month in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Registration, tuition, and fees are non-refundable. All accounts must be paid in full at time of departure. In the event Abiding Hope Nature School is no longer able to meet the needs of a child or services must end due to but not limited to delinquent payments, continual late pick up, and/or failure to follow school policies, the parent or guardian will receive a written notice that services will no longer be offered. Written notice will include the date of when services are no longer available and are considered on a case by case basis. If services are ended due to lack of payment all accounts must be paid in full and failure to pay in full will result in further collections and/or collection agency.

### **Transfer of Records**

Whether transitioning to the next program setting or to a new classroom, your child's records will be transferred internally.

If your child is transitioning to a new school, a written request from you with instructions to where the records should be sent is required.

## **Child Health Promotion**

Each year Abiding Hope Nature School provides dental, hearing, vision, and language screenings, through a third party, for every child. We believe early intervention is key to children succeeding in their later years; if during the screening it is decided there is a need for a child to receive further evaluation, we have a policy and procedure we follow to ensure we are following up. We also track information on children's medical and dental providers, as well as insurance membership. If families do not have specialists in these areas, we use our referral policy to help connect them with providers in their community.

## **Policy & Procedure – Referral to Outside Resources**

When a program staff member determines a family is in need of outside services such as medical, dental, developmental, financial, mental health, clothing, food, shelter, etc. the staff member will assist the family by following the procedure below. Staff members may make the determination for referral based on screening results, the child's classroom behavior, or other circumstances that are discussed with families throughout the year.

### **Responsibility & Accountability**

This policy applies to all staff and is enforced by the director. Staff will be trained in this policy during orientation and the policy will be reviewed with staff annually. Failure to comply with this policy is grounds for written warning and corrective action. Repeated failure is grounds for termination.

### **Procedure**

1. The staff member will communicate the need, in confidence, to the director or administrator.
2. The director or administrator will maintain a list of approved organizations and resources for outside services. If no resources are on the list for the particular need, the director or administrator will make inquiries to find the appropriate resources.
3. The staff member and director or administrator will confer on the subject and determine if the circumstance indicates need for a third-party professional. If a professional is required, the director or administrator will contact the professional and assume responsibility for the referral.
4. If no third-party professional is required, the director or administrator and staff member will confer and agree who will communicate the referral to the family.
5. After a reasonable amount of time, the person who communicated the outside resource will check back with the family to make sure the referral was helpful. If it is not, additional resources will be sought.

## **Continuous Quality Improvement Plan - QIP**

Abiding Hope Nature School is dedicated to the continuous quality improvement of our program. To achieve this, we have a plan in place that reflects our goals, timelines, and outcomes; this plan is available in the preschool office and can be viewed upon request. The program's QIP is reviewed and revised annually by the director.

## **Ratio and Group Size in Classrooms**

Abiding Hope Nature School tries diligently to maintain appropriate group sizes and teacher to child ratio in each classroom which align with the NAEYC Standards. We are well within adult: child ratios in each classroom and strive to keep the group sizes smaller by breaking into smaller rotational groups during the day (see page 6 for ratios and group sizes). This changes year to year depending on enrollment, however is constantly being monitored and revised by the director to ensure each child, and staff, is having a positive experience every day.

## **Student Check-in and Out**

All students must be signed in and out by an adult. No child should be signed in, or left in a classroom, until the teacher is present and acknowledges your arrival. It is the policy of the school that all children be escorted and supervised by an adult staff member during all hours of operation. Each teacher will keep a roster and maintain a count throughout the day of the students present and in their care. At the end of the day all rosters will be verified and checked by the classroom teacher (s), the teacher will circulate their classroom, halls, and bathrooms to verify that all children are accounted for and/or in their age appropriate classroom. Before closing for the day, the final staff member (s) will verify that all children have been accounted for and signed out by a parent or guardian. The staff member(s) will also walk through each classroom to verify that all persons have left the building.

If you are carpooling, please make sure that the driver signs in and out all children in the carpool. Unknown persons picking up your child will be required to show identification, which needs to coincide with the parental permission given to the director. If an unknown, unauthorized person attempts to pick up your child you will be notified immediately, and if necessary, the sheriff will be called.

## **Morning and Afternoon Extended Day School Procedures**

We must have written authorization for any changes in who is to pick up your child; or if there is a last-minute change in who will be picking up we request a phone call from you. We will not release children to anyone not known by preschool staff without authorization from parents or guardians and an identification card. If you get delayed or are going to be late picking up your child, please let us know as soon as possible. It is school policy that ten minutes after school ends, any child remaining will be signed into extended care and a minimum fee of \$12.00, \$15.00, or \$18.00 will be charged depending on the child's age. If you are going to arrive late to school or need to pick up your child early from school, please enter through the building's main office.

**School Office 720-823-9294**

## **Extended Day at Abiding Hope**

Abiding Hope Nature School offers extended hours. Extended care is a flexible program designed for parents who need additional care on a regular or drop in basis. Extended care fees are separate from monthly tuition costs and are billed monthly running one week in arrears. No reservation is needed, however, if your child will be staying after and it is outside of the regular routine please let the teacher know. If it is a last-minute need please call the preschool office and we will alert your child, you are running late. Hours for extended care will be as follows unless otherwise stated:

**Before School:** 7:30 – 9:00 AM; Please note: children who arrive before 8:50 AM and are signed into extended care will be charged a minimum of \$12.00, \$15.00, or \$20.00 depending on their age.

**Breakfast:** Offered each day on an as needed basis and as requested by a parent for \$3.00.

**After school:** 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm at a charge of \$12.00, \$15.00, or \$20.00 per hour depending on the child's age. Please note: when the child is picked up the charge will be rounded to the nearest half hour after the hour minimum is met. Parents can utilize extended care every day, regardless of regular preschool schedules. After school snacks are provided at 3:30 PM with another light snack being offered at 5:00.

## **Late Pick Up Policy**

If you get delayed or are going to be late picking up your child, please let us know as soon as possible.

In the case a child is unintentionally left behind or forgotten within normal business hours the procedure is:

Ten minutes after school ends, each child remaining will automatically be signed into extended care at a charge of \$12.00, \$15.00, or \$20.00 per hour depending on the child's age.

**Extended care ends promptly at 5:30 PM. If a child is left after 5:30 PM, AHNS will:**

- 1) Call parent numbers listed; home, work, cell phone.
- 2) Call emergency numbers listed for an authorized person to come and pick-up your child.
- 3) After 60 minutes, if we are unable to contact the parents or other authorized person to pick-up the child, we will contact the proper authorities.

**\*It is vital that one of the parties listed above is available at all times. Please make sure that AHP has current student contact information throughout the year. Immediately notify the school, in writing, with any changes made to the emergency cards.**

**\*\*Parents will be allowed no more than two unscheduled late (after 5:30 PM) pick-ups (traffic, car problems, weather etc.). After two times parents will be charged \$5.00 per minute thereafter until the child is picked up.**

**THE AMOUNT DUE WILL BE BILLED AS LATE PICK UP FEE**

## **Visitors to the School**

For security purposes, a sign-in/sign-out sheet or other mechanism for parents and guardians is maintained daily by Abiding Hope Nature School; we keep a record of all visitors to our school. Visitors, including parent helpers, need to sign in the visitor log as you enter through the main office. Identification will be requested from anyone who is not known to the staff.

## **Policy for Transitioning Children within Our Program Setting**

We want every child to feel welcomed in their classroom. Each child is unique and will respond to change and new experiences in his/her own way. Some children are more resilient and open to change. Some children feel comfortable in a new setting right away and others may take significant time – even weeks! - to adjust to a new classroom, routines, schedule and teachers.

Teachers must take their cues from each child and respond to interests and needs. Parents should be welcomed and encouraged to assist their child in this transition. The family may have had other changes that have precipitated the placement of the child into our program such as: relocation, new job, medical issues, new baby, etc. When children are moving from one classroom to another, they are leaving the comfort of secure attachments to the current teachers and must form relationships with the new teachers. This takes time and patience; nurturing adults and predictable routines will help the children with transition.

Parents and other adult family members are encouraged to talk openly with their children especially at arrival and departure times. Reassure children that they are in a safe and loving place and that they can trust the staff. We recommend 3 hugs, 3 kisses and saying goodbye. We encourage families to bring family photos that can be posted in the room or in the child's cubby. We also encourage each child to have one comfort object from home such as a blanket or small stuffed animal. This comfort object will be offered to the child if he or she becomes distressed.

Specifics of the transition process will vary as needed from child to child but generally we follow the procedures below.



### **For Children New to Our Program**

- Once a child is enrolled in the program and the application and enrollment process is complete, we can schedule an additional tour of the classroom the child will be placed in.
- We offer a meet your teacher event each year before school starts. Parents are welcome to bring their child and any other family members that would like to attend. Families can attend both days if they wish and can stay for a maximum of 3 hours each day. This allows the child and parents to explore the room together as well as build a relationship with the teacher.
- We can offer an altered schedule at the beginning of the year for example: Child attends 2 hours, then 3 hours, then stays through lunch, eventually working up to staying through nap. Parent/caregiver will meet with the teacher during nap and discuss progress. Child goes home after naptime. This routine may be needed for several days and will vary depending on the child.
  - Please note that a transition period is not necessary for most children. Children are resilient and adjust to new settings in a matter of weeks. Our staff are trained and have expertise in calming children and communicating with families during this time.

### **For Children Transitioning to a New Classroom within our program**

Transitioning children from one classroom to another is as critical a time as when a child first enrolls in our program. There is a partnership needed between the child's family, the previous teacher, and the receiving teacher that must be in place for an effective transition. We follow the procedures below.

- We have information available for the next age group; what a typical day may include, things the children will need from home, introductions of new teachers, and other topics unique to the age group such as potty training for toddlers. Articles and resources can be shared with families.
- Meetings with the family and the teachers can be scheduled prior to transitioning. Individual goals for the child, special needs, IEP/IFSP's, and family concerns are addressed at this time. Written or oral communication between the new teacher and the parents regarding the child's transition and needs may take place.
- Children can visit the receiving classroom prior to attending by scheduling a tour with administration or attending a Meet your Teacher event.

## **Policy & Procedure – Teacher Change/Transition**

### **Policy**

The program seeks to minimize changes of teachers and caregivers during the school year so that children and families can enjoy the comfort and security of a familiar face and consistent learning environment. If a change in staff is necessary, the program will prepare children and families and ease the transition by following the procedure below. The transition process is a team effort which involves everyone at the center, regardless of organizational position.

### **Responsibility & Accountability**

The Director is responsible for enforcing the policy by ensuring that staff understand the policy and follow the procedure. The Departing Staff Member, Replacement Staff Member, and staff assigned to fill positions temporarily are accountable for executing the policy and procedure.

## **Procedure**

1. A letter will be emailed to the affected children's families to inform them of the upcoming change in staff.
2. The new teacher will be available at drop off and pick up to meet the children and families and promote familiarity and recognition.
3. The new teacher will observe the daily routine and interactions between the other teacher(s) and children.
4. If appropriate and if the time frame allows, the departing staff member will talk with the children about his/her departure. There will be a "goodbye activity" (such as a special snack) and the children will have the opportunity to make cards, pictures, etc.
5. If possible, the departing teacher will periodically visit his/her first classroom during the first two weeks following his/her departure.
6. If there are two teachers in the room and one teacher leaves the program, the second teacher will help the children cope with the change.
7. When possible, job openings will be filled from qualified substitutes and part-time personnel who are already familiar with the children.
8. When a teacher needs to leave abruptly, and there is no opportunity to plan for the change, the following procedure will be followed:
  - a. An email will be sent home to notify the children's families immediately.
  - b. The director or an experienced teacher from another classroom will function as temporary teacher until a replacement teacher arrives.
  - c. The center will make every effort to have staff recognized by the children, such as part time teachers, student teachers and specialists, spend extra time with the children during the transition.
  - d. The new teacher will carefully review assessments, IEPs and ISFPs of children in the classroom, and get to know the individual needs of the children ASAP.

## **School Readiness Plan for Transition to Kindergarten**

The transition to kindergarten is one of the biggest transitions for children; it is a major event in the lives of children and their families. It is a separation from a safe, familiar setting.

- Abiding Hope Preschool staff is available to assist families in deciding which elementary school their child will attend by:

- Determining which school their child is automatically eligible to enroll in, based on where they live, or whether a different school is preferred.
- Determining whether they want their child to attend half-day or full-day kindergarten and whether the child has special needs that must be addressed – if they want full-day or have a child with special needs, it might necessitate choice enrollment. ○ If necessary, we can provide information about the district’s policies and procedures for school choice and when choice enrollment takes place – it is usually in January.
- Abiding Hope Preschool staff can provide information about the school district’s procedures and deadlines for kindergarten enrollment and registration, including:
  - The dates for kindergarten registration, because that can differ from the dates for higher grades.
  - The kinds of information they will need to bring with them for registration – it usually includes the child’s birth certificate, immunization record, and proof of residency.
  - Provide information about how the family can access extra support and resources for themselves and their children.
- Abiding Hope Preschool provides support in a variety of ways on what it means to be ready for kindergarten. We host parent workshops, send electronic information, and are available for private conferencing upon request.

## **Primary Caregiving Practices**

Abiding Hope Nature School uses a “Primary Caregiving System”. This means we allocate one or two teachers to each child and these teachers take personal responsibility for the child’s overall well-being within the group. This helps the child form a secure attachment with their primary caregiver(s) and reduces stress for the child while they are in the care of adults other than their parents.

## **Illness, Sickness, and Injury Policy**

In the event your child becomes ill at school, we will provide a supervised, safe place for your child to rest until the first available emergency contact person is reached and arrives to pick up your child. If a child becomes distraught it is the expectation of the school that the child’s parent or emergency contact person picks up the child ASAP.

If you are contacted because your child needs your care, we ask that you arrive within 30 minutes of being notified.

**Please contact the school if your child will not be attending class due to illness. If your child sees a physician and a specific diagnosis is made (e.g. strep throat, croup, conjunctivitis, chicken pox, etc.) please notify the school so other families can be alerted. Neither your child’s name nor the family’s name will be disclosed to other families.**

**Please refer to following guidelines to determine if your child should remain home:**

### **How Sick is Too Sick?**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RcdCmU4SYXwmVhJrA3Pyk0gP0MTDClkF/view>

## **General Exclusion Requirements**

Children and staff must be excluded from schools and child care facilities when they have certain symptoms of illness, including if they are unable to participate or perform the functions required for their position.

- A “child” means any child enrolled in the child care program or a student at a school.
- A “staff member or staff” means any person working or volunteering to perform duties in a child care facility or school.

Symptoms that require exclusion are listed in the attached document (link above) How Sick is Too Sick? When Children and Staff Should Stay Home from Child Care (How Sick is Too Sick). The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Infectious Diseases in Child Care and School Settings (Infectious Disease Guide) will be used to determine exclusion for symptoms of illness not included in How Sick is Too Sick.

### **Excluding Children**

Staff are responsible for observing children at drop off and throughout the day for signs of illness. If a child arrives at the facility or school with signs of illness that require exclusion they may not be accepted. If a child develops symptoms of illness that require exclusion during the time of care, the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the child. The child will be provided with a place to rest which is separate from the other children until the parent/guardian arrives. The child may return to child care or school based on the requirements in How Sick is Too Sick, the Infectious Disease Guide, or as directed by their health care provider or public health professional.

Information will be recorded on an illness log when children are sent home due to symptoms of illness that require exclusion. All items used to care for the child (cot, bedding etc.) will be cleaned and sanitized or cleaned and disinfected if contaminated by body fluids after the child leaves the child care or school. The date and time when the child returns to the child care facility or school will be recorded on the illness log.

### **Excluding Staff**

The person in charge of staff is responsible for observing the staff for signs of illness throughout the day. Staff members have the responsibility of reporting, to the person in charge, any signs of infection or illness that may pose a hazard to the health of children and other staff. If a staff member is not well enough to work they may return based on the requirements in How Sick is Too Sick, the Infectious Disease Guide, or as directed by their health care provider or public health professional.

### **Outbreaks**

When a school or child care facility has a child or staff member with an illness that is required to be reported to the health department, the health department will be contacted immediately. Outbreaks of illness must also be reported to the health department when there is a larger number than normal of children or staff ill with the same symptoms. For example, above normal seasonal absenteeism for a school or a child care facility would be concerning and the health department will be contacted. The health department will also be contacted when there are two or more people that do not live together who are ill with symptoms including vomiting, diarrhea, or jaundice.

### **Food Handling Staff Exclusion Requirements**

Special attention will be given to staff members that handle food because many illnesses can be spread through food from an infected person. Food handling activities include preparation of any food (i.e. washing, cutting, cooking, and portioning), the mixing and feeding of bottles, and feeding infants and toddler's solid foods. Food handling staff must notify the person in charge:

1. If they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- a. Vomiting;
- b. Diarrhea;
- c. Jaundice;
- d. Sore throat with fever; or
- e. Any open or draining wound that is not covered with a water proof bandage and is:
  - i. On the hands or wrists\*;
  - ii. On any exposed portions of the arms; or
  - iii. On other parts of the body.

\* In addition to water proof bandages covering wounds on hands and wrists, single service gloves must be worn at all times when handling food.

2. Has an illness diagnosed by a health care provider due to:

- a. Norovirus
- b. Hepatitis A virus
- c. Shigella
- d. Shiga Toxin Producing Escherichia Coli (e-coli)
- e. Typhoid fever (caused by Salmonella Typhi) or
- f. Salmonella

3. Has been exposed to, or is the suspected source of, a confirmed disease outbreak or living in the same household as someone who works or attends a setting where there is a confirmed outbreak. Staff will be allowed to return to work based on requirements in How Sick is Too Sick, the Infectious Disease Guide, as directed by the health department, or as directed by a health care provider, or public health professional.

### **Stomach Ache/Vomiting/Diarrhea**

If your child has a stomach ache which lasts longer than 4 hours or is severe enough to limit activity, he/she should stay home.

Your child needs to stay at home for 48 hours after presenting with vomiting and diarrhea at the same time. It is recommended by the Colorado Department of health that your child stay home for 48 hours, after vomiting, diarrhea, fever (if present), and until your child can keep food down.

### **Fever**

Fever alone does not exclude children from school activities; however, fever with other symptoms such as vomiting, lethargy or diarrhea is reason to remain home for the day. A fever is a temperature over 100.4 degrees F. Most fevers are part of a viral infection. The body helps to fight the infection by raising the bodies' temperature. How sick your child looks, and acts is often a more telling sign than the level of the fever.

### **Rash**

A rash may be the first sign of one of childhood's many illnesses, such as chicken pox. Please do not bring a child with a rash to class until your doctor has said that it is safe to do so. The school requires a note from the doctor confirming rash diagnosis. According to training in universal precautions, all rashes, even if they are not contagious, must be completely covered and inaccessible to children if they contain or are seeping fluid.

### **Common Cold**

A cold is an infection of the upper respiratory passages (nose, throat, sinuses, Eustachian tubes, trachea, and larynx). Young children average 8 colds per year.

You will benefit both the community and your child if you can keep him/her home for the first few days of the cold, as this is the contagious phase. If your child has dark yellow or green mucus running from the nose, please keep them at home and seek medical advice.

### **Pink Eye**

If your child's eye looks red or irritated, please consult a physician before coming to preschool. Pink eye is very contagious, and we want to ensure the safety and health of all of our children. If your health provider decides not to treat your child, a note from the provider is needed.

### **Sore Throat**

Please keep your child at home if the back of the throat looks red and/or white spots are present; if the child has swollen glands; if fever is present. Your child may return 24 hours after treatment and has been fever free for 24 hours.

### **The Flu and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Recommendations:**

- 1) Can my child go to school, day care or camp if he or she or she is sick?

"No. Your child should stay home to rest and to avoid giving the flu to other children."

- 2) When can my child go back to school after having the flu?

"Keep your child home from school, day care or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone.

(Their fever should be gone without them having taken a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 101 degrees F or 38.3 degrees C."

For more information call **1-800-CDC-INFO** or go online to **WWW.CDC.GOV** OR **WWW.FLU.GOV**

## **Medication Policy**

State licensing and Abiding Hope Schools require that all enrolled children must submit a current General Health Appraisal (GHA) that has been signed by a health care provider.

Any child with a diagnosed medical condition listed on their General Health Appraisal, who requires specific treatment(s) or medication(s) while in the care of Abiding Hope Schools is required to have a current Health Care Plan (HCP) and/or Permission for Medication Administration Form(s) on file.

These forms must be signed by a parent/guardian and a health care provider with prescriptive authority.

For existing health conditions, the Health Care Plan and **any required medications and/or supplies must be unexpired and on site prior to the child's first day.** For a child with a newly diagnosed health condition, 30 days are allowed to provide the required paperwork, medication and/or supplies. This complies with the CO Department of Early Childhood Rules and Regulations to ensure the safety of children in childcare and preschool. Failure on the part of the parent/guardian to comply with any part of this policy after reasonable reminders have been provided, including emails and phone calls, will result in the child being unable to attend until all requirements have been met.

- Your signature on the parent agreement form is an acknowledgement of this policy. Further, your signature releases all Abiding Hope Schools and its contractors from all liability related to willful/negligent omission of health information that could impact the health and safety of your child while in the care of Abiding Hope Schools.

Medication may be given only after completing the Instruction and Permission to medicate form. These must be complete with physician and parent signatures. All medications given (prescription or over-the-counter) must be in the original container, marked with the child's name, doctor, and dated. These medications will be kept in a secure location. Medication can only be given with a prescription from the child's physician and will be administered by a staff member who is trained in medical administration and delegated by the nurse consultant according to Section 12-38-132, C.R.S., of the "Nurse Practice Act". AH Schools contracts with a nurse consultant who reviews medical needs monthly, provides training, and advises staff. If your child has a health condition and you choose to not share that information with the school, or you choose to not provide daily or emergency medication and applicable permission forms, if needed or prescribed, the parent or guardian understands and agrees to release the school and its personnel from any and all claims regarding the consequence of this choice. The parents or guardians are aware that 911 may be called in an emergency regardless of if the school has current insurance information on file.

## **Emergency Cards, Immunization Cards and Health Form**

Each child is required to have a current immunization record, as well as a current health statement on file. These must be signed by your child's physician's office and are due within 30 days of school starting. We must have current emergency contact information by the first day of school.

## **There May Be Under-Immunized Children at AHP**

Abiding Hope Nature School does enroll children whose parents choose to exempt them, or delay them, from immunizations due to medical, religious or personal reasons. In the event of an outbreak, exempted persons will be subject to exclusion from school and quarantined.

## **Accident and Injury**

Parents will be notified of all accidents and injuries occurring at school. A minor or serious injury or accident will be documented according to Colorado State Rules and Regulations. Notification of the parent will take place as soon as possible after the accident/injury. Depending on the nature of the accident/injury, notification of all other agencies will take place in accordance with state guidelines.

In the case of an emergency illness or accident/injury (ex.: serious allergic reaction, unexplained seizure, or traumatic injury), 911 will be contacted immediately.

Parents or guardians are required to sign and permit the school to seek medical or surgical care should an emergency arise, and the Parent, Guardian, or Emergency Contact cannot be reached. It is understood by the parent and school that a conscientious effort will be made to contact the parent(s)/guardian before any action is taken.

Medical Insurance and Hospital Preferences must be kept on file and all information must be updated annually or as information changes.

## **EMERGENCIES**

### **Lost Child**

It is the top priority of Abiding Hope Nature School and its staff that all children are safe and accounted for at all times. In the unlikely event a child goes missing, staff will immediately notify the director and support staff will be contacted to circulate and search premises. In the event the child is not immediately located, a lead staff member will alert the 911 Emergency System and ask for assistance in locating the child. The assisting staff members will simultaneously contact the parents or emergency contact person by telephone. The school will submit a written report to the Department of Human Services regarding any child who has been lost from the school and for whom the local authorities were contacted.

The same procedures will be followed if a child is missing on a fieldtrip.

### **Fire**

Children will practice periodic fire drills. Children will exit out the nearest door and be escorted to the end of the parking lot. Once outside the teacher will check attendance to verify that all children have been evacuated. Please refer to the Emergency Disaster Preparedness Manual on our website.

### **Tornado**

All staff and children will seek shelter in the closest interior room or hallway, void of windows. Each classroom has an assigned location indicated on the emergency exit plan and will house all children until the "all clear" has been given. Please refer to the Emergency Disaster Preparedness Manual on our website.

### **Security Lockdown or Lockout**

If an emergency arises in the area that jeopardizes the safety and well-being of our children, AHNS will initiate a lock down or lockout procedure. Children will remain in secured classrooms; exits will be locked and proper verification will be required of all persons entering the facility. Please refer to the Emergency Disaster Preparedness Manual on our website.

## **Policy on Parent Involvement and Volunteers**

Abiding Hope Schools always invites and welcomes parents and family members to help with events throughout the school year. The opportunities during the school year include but are not limited to the following: Halloween Parties, Scholastic Book Fairs, Thanksgiving Parties, Happy Birthday Jesus Parties, Empty Bowl Luncheons, Valentine Parties, Parent Class Readers, etc. If you would like to help, please contact your child's teacher. Even if parents are not available to help, they are always invited to attend our special events which occur about once a month throughout the year.

### **Parent Helpers**

We encourage every parent to observe and assist in the classroom when possible, however we do not schedule any parent helpers for the first 6 weeks of school, to allow children to acclimate to their new class. We always welcome new ideas and help with planning activities in the classroom or schoolwide. All visitors must sign in on our visitor log before heading to the classroom.

### **Volunteers**

We welcome volunteers at our school. We have many different opportunities for volunteers such as helping with crafts, games or reading in the classroom. We also welcome volunteer help with different landscaping projects around the building. Volunteers 12-15 years of age may volunteer only 2 hours per day. Additionally, it is recommended that children volunteers aged 12-15 should not volunteer longer than 112 hours or 14 days. There must be a written purpose for the volunteer prior to them starting. All volunteers must sign in on our visitor log before heading to their designated spots.

### **Parent Support Team (PST)**

Abiding Hope Nature School seeks parents and/family members of students to join the Parent Support Team to support the endeavors and ministry of the preschool. An orientation meeting will take place with the addition and/or transition of new members to the team. This meeting will provide information and education about the roles and responsibilities of the members on this team. These candidates will be passionately supportive of a ministry that believes in the importance of Early Childhood Education. Also, the candidates will;

- Recognize that education serves the child as a whole; spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially, and academically.
- Accept all children as gifts from God and have the desire to invest in children. They will build a relationship of trust and serve as a mentor to the child so they may explore their gifts and talents; in which they will feel fully vested to share those gifts with their peers and adults.
- Understand the importance of investing in other passionate adults and the preschool ministry who are advocates for their children.
- Utilize this time to voice opinions and share in the decision-making process of the program.
- Understand the importance of community and school events, which support and celebrate the whole child.
- Help with the writing and re-writing of practices and policies that affect the children.

If the above mirrors your feelings about education and you have the time to devote at least two years,

Please contact the school office at 720-823-9294 to get involved!

Another way to get involved is to join the **Triad Early Childhood PTA** – please call or visit the school office for more information.



## **Field Trips and Transportation**

- Abiding Hope requires the assistance of parents in order to take field trips.
- Self-contained establishments are used to minimize uncontrolled variables.
- If attending, parents are responsible for their child during the trip.
- Select Abiding Hope Staff members will be present at the field trip at all times for the overall supervision of the field trip, students, additional attendees, and will be the main contact when off site.
- Off-site field trips for Jr. Kindergarten/Kindergarten students require participation by one parent for every three students.
- Written permission slips are required by all students in order to participate in the field trip, which must be completed and signed by a parent or guardian.
- Abiding Hope does not own a school van or bus; all field trips are taken in a teacher or parent's personal vehicle. Drivers are required to have a valid driver's license and current auto insurance. Copies of these items will be left with the preschool office prior to the field trip. All children must be properly buckled up, per Colorado Seat Belt and Booster Seat Law.
- During summer camp Abiding Hope Preschool rents a charter bus to transport children and staff.
  - All staff carry a cell phone on field trips; in the event of an emergency proper authorities will be notified
  - All staff carry a daily roster of children attending with emergency contact information, medical/emergency information on each student and student medication along with the appropriate paperwork for the administration of prescribed medication if needed
- If a child exhibits any disruptive, unsafe or aggressive behaviors on a field trip the child exhibiting these behaviors will no longer be able to participate. No second chances and no exceptions.
  - \*\*Any adverse behaviors will be documented and parents will receive information in writing via email and a phone call or in person conversation with a member from administration
- If a child arrives late and their class is on a field trip the parent will need to transport the child to the location of his/her class and walk them to the specific location. No on site care will be available for children arriving late or choosing not to participate in field trips with associated age groups.
- ***Children enrolled in the Littles through the Tweens Class do not participate in off-site field trips during the school year or summer camp.***

## **Television, Website, and Video Policies**

State Law requires we inform parents that AHNS may occasionally use age appropriate programming with the use of television and/or videos. Please be aware that these programs may occasionally be used as a recreational tool during special events, parties, etc., as well as an educational resource. There will be times during the year when we may be videotaping and/or photographing our classrooms and students. These will be used for staff training, media publications, memory books/videos, and to inform parents about our program. Names of children or families will never be used in these publications and/or training.

All families must check the box on the enrollment form for Permission to Watch Educational/Recreational Television/Video Programs and Permission to Video and Photograph form provided.

## **Special Activities**

To enrich the learning experience for the students, on occasion a special presentation may be brought to the school. In the event of a special activity, parents and guardians will be notified of the date, time, and name of the presenter. Teaching staff will be present for the entire activity and responsible for the supervision and safety of the students.

## **Personal Belongings, Money, and Cubbies**

Each child is assigned a cubby where he/she can store smaller belongings. Important projects, newsletters and notes will be placed in the cubbies. Please check your child's cubby daily. If you are picking up another child/children in a car pool, please check their cubbies and take the contents with you so all parents will receive school information on a timely basis.

Please do not send personal treasures or items of value with your child to school. Money for parties and special activities is to be given directly to the classroom teacher. Tuition and money for special orders should be placed in the locked wooden box outside the *Director's Office*.

## **Cell Phone Policy**

Abiding Hope Nature School is a cell phone free zone. We ask that you please finish your calls before you enter the building. This is so your child has a warm welcome when they see you and so their teacher can share any information they may have about your child's day.

## **Meals and Snacks**

Please provide lunch for your child each day he/she attends school. Abiding Hope Nature School provides a healthy morning snack, an afternoon snack for children staying later than 3:00 PM, and a light snack will be offered to children who are here after 5:00 PM.

## **Food Allergies**

We are an allergy aware school. Due to severe food allergies, each staff member makes a concentrated effort to make sure lunches and snacks are **nut free**. This means peanuts, almonds, cashews, walnuts, etc.... Children who bring products containing nuts, or that are processed in a facility with nuts, will have to leave the product unopened and take it home. If necessary, an alternate lunch will be provided.

**Read labels and watch for "traces of peanuts/tree nuts" or "processed/manufactured in a facility that also processes peanuts."**

## **Birthday Treats**

Please let your child's teacher know if you would like to bring a special **non-edible** treat for your child's birthday. You can schedule a child's "un-birthday" with your child's teacher, if your child's birthday is in the summer.

If your child is having a party outside of school, we request that you mail your invitations, so that children that have not been invited do not feel left out.

**Please note:** Due to allergy and health concerns, Abiding Hope Nature School does not allow parents to bring edible treats to class. Please do not bring birthday cupcakes, candy or other birthday snacks. Teachers have been asked not to allow edible treats and we do not want your child to be disappointed if they are not allowed to share the treat they have brought. Your child's teacher will celebrate your child's birthday in other ways and you are invited to bring Non-Edible Treats.

**\*The only exceptions to this are class parties or school celebrations where parents are available and can monitor the needs of their child.**

**Thank you in advance for respecting this rule.**

## **Diapering and Toilet Training**

Children in the twos class and the young three-year-old classroom are not expected to be potty trained at the time of enrollment. It is the goal of the staff that when the young child displays signs of being ready to be potty trained that the parent and teacher will work as a team to help the child achieve this milestone.

Abiding Hope Nature School requires children entering the 3, 4, & 5-year-old rooms, and Kindergarten classes to have potty training mastered. Accommodations will be made in these classrooms if a child has a medical diagnosis that prevents this skill from being mastered and can reasonably be accommodated according to ADA Guidelines (See Page 6).

Children who are not potty trained must bring diapers, and at least 2 changes of clothes. All items must be labeled with your child's name and supplies will be kept in the child's bag or cubby. Children will be changed or taken to the potty on a regular basis throughout the day. Children in the Ones and Twos classes will have a log kept every day for the times when the child was changed and/or taken potty. The log will be kept in the classroom bathroom and a copy of the log will be sent home every day.

The assigned staff members will stay with the child/children in the bathroom or directly adjacent to the restroom to assist the child if needed with toileting, changing, and with the correct washing of hands. All children ages three and up are encouraged to be able to manage toileting skills independently with little or no assistance.

Children who are potty trained should have a change of clothes in their backpack or cubby for unexpected accidents or illness. All items must be labeled.

## **Signs Your Child is Ready to Start Potty Training**

According to WebMD (2013),

Your child must be both physically and emotionally ready for toilet training. Most children are ready when they are between 22 and 30 months of age, although every child is different. Toilet training usually becomes a long and frustrating process if you try to start it before your child is ready.

Before children can use the toilet, they must be able to control their bowel and bladder muscles. Some signs of this control are having bowel movements around the same time each day, not having bowel movements at night, and having a dry diaper after a nap or for at least 2 hours at a time. Children must also be able to climb, talk, remove clothing, and have mastered other basic motor skills before they can use the toilet by themselves.

Most children are physically ready to toilet train before they are emotionally ready. Your child must want to use the toilet and be willing to cooperate with you. He or she may even talk about being a "big boy" or "big girl" and wearing underpants rather than diapers.

Training generally does not go well if your child is in the stage where "no" is his or her automatic response to every request. ("When Should I Start Toilet Training my Child")

## **Infant Care and Needs**

### **● Items Supplied by School**

- Wipes (included in supply fee)
- Bottle Labels (included in supply fee)
- Sunscreen - infants 6 months and older with signed permission form (included in supply fee)
- Snacks - when applicable (included in supply fee)

### **● Required Items - Please provide the following items for your infant:**

- Three changes of clothing - including socks or booties
- Sleep sack
- Diapers (school will provide upon request for a fee)
- Diaper Cream or Ointment (school will provide upon request for a fee)
- Enough prepared and labeled bottles for the day (please use bottle labels provided)
- Baby food and cereal (when applicable)

- Pacifier (must be loose, pacifiers attached to a stuffed animal are not permitted)
- Sweaters and/or jackets to accommodate indoor/outdoor temperature changes
- Emergency bottle and formula (for our emergency evacuation bag)
- All items must be labeled with the child's first and last names. Infant belongings (soiled clothing, used/unused bottles, etc.) must be taken home nightly.
- **Bottles and Food**
  - Families are required to provide a nutritional diet for their infant. All foods, including formula, breast milk, baby foods and cereals, must be supplied and labeled by the parent with provided labels including child's first and last names, contents, and date.
  - Infants will be fed formula or breast milk in accordance with parent/guardian instructions. All infants less than 6 months of age will be held for bottle feedings. Bottles will not be propped or allowed in a crib. Unused portions of bottles will be discarded within one hour from the beginning of the feeding. Bottles must be prepared prior to being brought to the school. Frozen breast milk may not be stored at the center. Please fill bottles only with the amount of formula/breast milk your child will drink at each feeding. Please do not leave any bottles or open food at the center at the end of the day. All leftover bottles or open food items not taken home will be discarded at the end of the day. Glass bottles are prohibited.
- **Safe Sleeping Position**
  - Infants nap in assigned cribs according to their individual schedule. In accordance with the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics, we place infants on their backs to sleep in cribs. Alternate sleep positions are only granted after completing an Alternate Sleep Position permission form which will require written doctor's authorization including start and end dates, and detailed instructions.
  - Soft materials including, but not limited to, blankets, pillows, wedges of any kind, bumper pads, and stuffed animals are not allowed to be placed in the cribs.
  - Swaddling is not permitted.
  - Sleep sacks that do not restrict arm or leg movement may be used.
  - Abiding Hope Nature School will provide crib sheets and they will be washed daily.
- **Diapers**
  - Families are required to provide diapers to accommodate the child's needs and replenish as needed.
    - Diapers may be purchased from the school upon request and with a signed agreement form
  - Your child's teacher will communicate with you when the student's diaper supply is running low.
  - Diapers are changed every 2 hours, or more frequently as needed.
  - Fragrance Free Baby Wipes are provided by Abiding Hope Nature School.
  - For families who prefer alternative diapers with a cloth or disposable insert, please see the director to discuss available options.

## **Process for Developmental Screening, Evaluation and Early Intervention Services as needed**

Abiding Hope Nature School recognizes the importance of children reaching their developmental milestones and the impact that early detection of concerns through developmental screenings has on lifelong learning and social emotional wellbeing.

In an effort to provide pro-active student support, Abiding Hope Nature School has partnered with Blackbird Therapy Group to offer weekly sensory based groups that target developmental milestones for each classroom. Additionally, Blackbird Therapy Group offers developmental screenings when concerns arise so that strategies can be immediately implemented into the educational environment to ensure student success.

If Blackbird Therapy Group has received information from your child's classroom teacher that a developmental screening has been recommended, then the following process will be followed to ensure diligence and communication. This process is designed with the student's success in mind and begins with obtaining teacher communication and parent consent to conduct the screening at Abiding Hope Nature School.

The steps of this process are outlined below:

### Step One

Teacher identifies a concern and shares specific concern with caregiver

### Step Two

Screening is recommended to address specific concern

### Step Three

"Permission to Screen" form is given to caregiver

### Step Four

Signed Permission to Screen form is signed and returned, screening is conducted

### Step Five

Meeting is set up to discuss results and next steps with caregiver & teacher

### **Screening results may lead to recommendations for Monitoring or Evaluation.**

### Step Six

Screening results may lead to recommendations for Monitoring or Evaluation.

### No Evaluation Recommended at this Time - Monitor

A recommendation to "monitor" involves classroom modifications, strategies and/or adaptations to meet the individual needs of the child. Therapist is available to offer classroom teacher support and ongoing strategies for a 4 to 6 week period of time. At the end of this time, a conference may be held to determine the effectiveness of monitoring and if further evaluation is warranted or discontinuation of monitoring is necessary.

### Evaluation Recommended

### Step Seven

Prescription from primary doctor received

### Step Eight

Evaluation scheduled and conducted

### Step Nine

Therapist meets with caregiver to review results from evaluation and the plan is developed (teacher may be invited at parent request)

### Step Ten

Course of treatment established therapy begins

## **Child Abuse Reporting**

We are required by Colorado licensing and law to report any reasonable suspicions or known child abuse, which includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and verbal or emotional abuse. Reports will be made to Jefferson County Social Services, local law enforcement, or the county in which the child resides.

Dear Parents:

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) licenses Abiding Hope Nature School. The license indicates that this facility meets the required standards for operation of a childcare center. Abiding Hope's license hangs outside the director's office. Current inspections reports are located in the school office and are available for review.

Abiding Hope Nature School is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children. Unfortunately, on rare occasions, an incident of physical or sexual abuse may occur. If you believe that your child has been abused in any way, you should seek immediate assistance from:

Arapahoe County Department of Social Services: 303.636.1750

Adams County Department of Social Services: 303.421.8121

Douglas County Department of Social Services: 303.688.4825

Jefferson County Department of Social Services: 303.271.4357

Colorado law requires that childcare providers report all known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

Child care services play an important role in supporting families and strong families are the basis of a thriving community.

## **Licensing Information - License #1768178**

Your child's education, physical, emotional and social development will be nurtured in a well-planned and run center. Remember to observe the children's health and safety, equipment, play materials and staff. For additional information regarding licensing, if you would like to review a licensed facilities file, or if you would like to file a complaint about a facility please contact: The Division of Child Care – 303.866.5948

### **Division of Child Care**

**1575 Sherman Street – First Floor**

**Denver, Co. 80203-5958**

Thank you -- Red Rocks Community College

Contractor for the Licensing Program, effective July 1, 2008

## **Confidentiality Statement**

All staff and student records are confidential and secured in the school office. Parents have access to their child's file only.

Staff members have access to student files including emergency information, health and immunization, screenings and assessments, and these items may only be used to meet the needs of the child academically, socially, and emotionally, etc. Personal files never leave the school office.

A request for personal information on other students or staff is strictly prohibited. Public access to personal information such as names, addresses, emails, and phone numbers is located in the preschool directory and only printed with the permission of the parent or guardian. **No personal information about another child or staff member verbally or in writing will be shared with other parents, family members, guardians, or other staff members without written permission from the involved parties.**

In the event personal files or information are revealed by a staff member, a meeting will be held immediately with the parties involved.

Immediate termination or probation are the consequences in the breach of confidentiality.

**Your Rights** What is available to you the parent- You have the right to view the most recent inspections kept on file at the school, you have the right to contact the CDHS to receive public information about our center, which includes licensing and its agencies, you have the right to CDHS contact information, and how to make a report. This information is posted by our license in the main hallway.

**The following information is NOT available for public use or knowledge to be shared by the preschool or CDHS**

- Names of families or children
- Records including academic, health, and social or psychological reports
- Personal references requested by the department
- Reports and records received from other agencies including the police department and child protection agencies

## **Parent Resource Guide**

## Pediatricians

Academy Park Pediatrics  
7373 W Jefferson Ave #102  
Lakewood, CO 80235  
303-988-5252  
[www.academyparkpeds.com](http://www.academyparkpeds.com)

Arapahoe Park Pediatrics  
7780 S Broadway #220  
Littleton, CO 80122  
303-795-2345  
[www.arapahoeparkpediatrics.com](http://www.arapahoeparkpediatrics.com)

Focus on Kids Pediatrics  
5920 S Estes St #250  
Littleton, CO 80123  
303-972-7337  
[www.focusonkidspeds.com](http://www.focusonkidspeds.com)

Greenwood Pediatrics Southwest  
10901 W Toller Dr #101  
Littleton, CO 80127  
303-973-3200  
[www.greenwoodpediatrics.com](http://www.greenwoodpediatrics.com)

Littleton Pediatric Medical Center  
8340 Sangre De Cristo Rd #106  
Littleton, CO 80127  
303-979-1234  
[www.littletonpeds.com](http://www.littletonpeds.com)

Pediatrics West  
13402 W Coal Mine Ave #200  
Littleton, CO 80127  
303-973-9300  
[www.pediatricswest.org](http://www.pediatricswest.org)

## Pediatric Dentists

Dentistry for Children  
404 E Mineral Ave  
Littleton, CO 80122  
303-798-4400  
[www.drgoodsmiles.com](http://www.drgoodsmiles.com)

Kids to College Pediatric Dentistry  
10146 W San Juan Way #220  
Littleton, CO 80127  
303-979-9500  
[www.kids2collegedds.com](http://www.kids2collegedds.com)

Littleton Kids Dental & Orthodontics  
10184 W Belleview Ave #110  
Littleton, CO 80127  
303-973-4424  
[www.littletonkidsdental.com](http://www.littletonkidsdental.com)

Southwest Family Dentistry  
9200 W Cross Dr  
Littleton, CO 80123  
720-506-9938  
[www.southwestfamilydentistry.com](http://www.southwestfamilydentistry.com)

Southwest Pediatric Dentistry  
6931 S Peirce St  
Littleton, CO 80128  
303-978-1104  
[www.swpdo.com](http://www.swpdo.com)

Summit Family Dentistry  
12999 W Bowles Dr  
Littleton, CO 80127  
303-625-7997  
[www.summitfamilydentistry.com](http://www.summitfamilydentistry.com)

## **Emergency and Urgent Care**

Children's Hospital CO, South Campus  
1811 Plaza Drive  
Highlands Ranch, CO 80129  
720-478-1234

<https://www.childrenscolorado.org/locations/south-campus-highlands-ranch/>

Century Health ER & Urgent Care  
3280 S Wadsworth Blvd  
Lakewood, CO 80227  
303-649-3620  
[www.centura.org](http://www.centura.org)

SCL Health Community Hospital  
8515 W. Coal Mine Ave  
Littleton, CO 80123  
720-573-5020  
[www.sclhealthcommunity.org](http://www.sclhealthcommunity.org)

Swedish Medical Center ER  
501 E Hampden Ave  
Englewood, CO 80113  
303-788-5000  
[www.swedishhospital.com](http://www.swedishhospital.com)

Swedish Southwest ER  
6196 S. Ammons Way  
Littleton, CO 80123  
303-932-6911  
[www.swedishhospital.com](http://www.swedishhospital.com)

## **Pediatric Eye Doctors**

Mountain Vista EyeCare & Dry Eye Center  
7761 Shaffer Pkwy, Ste 200  
Littleton, CO 80127  
303-979-4505  
[www.mountainvistaeyecare.com](http://www.mountainvistaeyecare.com)

## **Pediatric Occupational Therapy**

Blackbird Therapy Group  
Tia Gamelin, OTR/L  
303-472-1746  
[www.blackbirdtherapygroup.com](http://www.blackbirdtherapygroup.com)

Peak Pediatric Rehabilitation  
5951 Middlefield Rd, Ste 100  
Littleton, CO 80123  
720-328-9920  
[www.peakpediatricrehabilitation.com](http://www.peakpediatricrehabilitation.com)

Play Therapy at LifePaths Counseling  
Gina Hebb, LPCC  
6901 S Pierce St. #350  
303-801-7878  
[lifepathscounseling.com](http://lifepathscounseling.com)

## **Pediatric Ear, Nose, Throat**

Rocky Mountain Pediatric ENT Associates  
2055 N High St #110  
Denver, CO 80205  
303-301-9019  
[www.rockymountaintainsent.com](http://www.rockymountaintainsent.com)

## **Child Find Colorado**

Visit website to find a Child Find Contact in your area  
for a screening or evaluation

[www.cde.state.co.us/early/childfinddirectoryinfo](http://www.cde.state.co.us/early/childfinddirectoryinfo)

or call

1-888-777-4041

## **Jefferson Center for Mental Health (JCMH)**

[www.jcmh.org](http://www.jcmh.org)

Access to Services 303-425-0300

Colorado Crisis Services 1-844-493-8255



## **Pediatric Eye Doctors**

Highlands Ranch HD Eye Care  
8677 S Quebec St, Ste A  
Highlands Ranch, CO 80130  
303-479-4771  
[www.hdeyecare.com](http://www.hdeyecare.com)

## **Family Counseling**

Real Life Creative Counseling  
Amy Wheeler, MA LPC  
Therapist, Coach, Consultant, Speaker  
720-634-LIFE (5433)  
[amy@reallifecreativecounseling.com](mailto:amy@reallifecreativecounseling.com)  
[www.RealLifeCreativeCounseling.com](http://www.RealLifeCreativeCounseling.com)  
Blog [www.live-love-thrive.com](http://www.live-love-thrive.com)

## **Speech and Language Services**

Blackbird Therapy Group  
Nan Butler, SLP-CCC  
303-472-1746  
[www.blackbirdtherapygroup.com](http://www.blackbirdtherapygroup.com)

Cobblestone Speech, Language & Learning  
10579 Bradford Road Suite #104 Littleton, CO  
80127  
303-952-9038

Foothills Speech & Language  
26 W Dry Creek Suite #425 Littleton, CO 80120  
303-794-4900

## **Insurance Assistance**

Connect for Health Colorado  
855-PLANS-4-YOU (855-752-6749)  
[www.connectforhealthco.com](http://www.connectforhealthco.com)

## **Assistance with Bills**

[www.needhelppayingbills.com](http://www.needhelppayingbills.com)

## **General Assistance**

Mile High United Way  
Call 2-1-1  
Text 898-211  
[www.unitedwaydenver.org](http://www.unitedwaydenver.org)

Government Benefits  
[www.benefits.gov](http://www.benefits.gov)

Jefferson County Human Services  
[www.jeffco.us/793/Human-Services](http://www.jeffco.us/793/Human-Services)

## **Parks and Rec Centers**

Powderhorn Park  
11501 W Coal Mine Ave  
Littleton, CO 80127

Water's Edge Park  
12819 W Coal Mine Ave  
Littleton, CO 80127

Ridge Recreation Center  
6613 S Ward St  
Littleton, CO 80127  
303-409-2333  
[www.ifoohills.org](http://www.ifoohills.org)

Lilley Gulch Recreation Center  
6146 S Holland Way  
Littleton, CO 80123  
303-409-2500  
[www.ifoohills.org](http://www.ifoohills.org)

## Food Pantries

FBR Mobile Pantry  
Red Rocks Community College  
13300 W 6<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Lower parking lot on 6<sup>th</sup> Ave service rd & Arbutus  
Dr.  
Lakewood, CO 80228-1255  
303-371-9250

Open Arms Food Bank  
6500 W Coal Mine Ave  
Littleton, CO 80123  
720-288-0155  
[www.openarmsfoodbank.org](http://www.openarmsfoodbank.org)

St Mary Parish Pantry  
6853 S Prince St  
Littleton, CO 80120  
303-798-8506  
[www.stmarylittleton.org](http://www.stmarylittleton.org)

## Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline

Denver: 720-944-3000

Statewide: 1-844-CO-4-KIDS (264-5437)

**Abiding Hope Nature School**  
**5707 S. Simms Street Littleton, CO 80127**  
**Website: [www.abidinghopenatureschool.org](http://www.abidinghopenatureschool.org)**  
**School Office: 720-823-9294 / Fax: 303.972.0424**