



## Family Handbook 2024-2025

### **Northeast Iowa Montessori School**

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## **Northeast Iowa Montessori School**

### **Welcome**

Welcome to Northeast Iowa Montessori School (NEIM). The Head of School, staff and Board of Directors are pleased to invite you to become a part of our school. This handbook is provided as a ready reference of the most commonly referred-to policies at NEIM. Please feel free to address any questions about content in this handbook to the NEIM Head of School, or Board of Directors. We are proud to have you join the NEIM community.

### **Vision Statement**

Northeast Iowa Montessori School offers an enlightening and nurturing Montessori environment to educate and support each individual child in reaching their full potential and inspiring a passion for learning. With this foundation, our students will go on to become positive contributing members of their immediate and global communities.

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of NEIM is to provide a nurturing environment that cultivates each child's intellectual and creative potential while instilling a sense of individual and global responsibility. NEIM directly follows the philosophy, principles and methods of Dr. Maria Montessori.

### **Diversity and Inclusion Statement**

It is the policy of Northeast Iowa Montessori School not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, physical ability, religion, creed, age (for

employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, pregnancy, gender identity, socioeconomic status, genetic information, and learning style in its educational programs and its employment practices.

### **Montessori Education**

Montessori education was founded in 1907 by Dr. Maria Montessori, one of the first women in Italy to become a physician. Through her scientific observation of children's learning processes, Dr. Montessori developed an educational philosophy, methods, and materials. She theorized that children have sensitive periods of development early in life during which they have the special ability to learn through interaction with their environment. She called this stage from birth to age six the 'absorbent mind.' Based on the premise that children teach themselves, Dr. Montessori designed a 'prepared environment' (or 'Children's House') in which children could choose from developmentally appropriate materials to fulfill their natural drive to discover and learn.

Today, Montessori educators continue to design classrooms following Dr. Montessori's core educational philosophy to provide an environment in which children are free to respond to their tendencies to explore and discover. Children's innate desire to do meaningful work is supported through opportunities to engage in spontaneous, purposeful activities with the guidance of a trained adult. Within a framework of order and freedom within limits, children develop concentration and joyful self-discipline, and progress at their own pace and rhythm according to their individual capabilities.

The Montessori method is now well-known throughout the world, and Montessori schools can be found in over sixty countries. In the United States, there are over 5,000 private Montessori schools with an additional 200 Montessori programs operating within public schools.

Montessori schools vary greatly in their scope and structure. A Montessori school is recognizable by its adherence to basic Montessori principles and by the leadership of a Montessori-trained teacher. The most commonly found Montessori school is the 'Children's House' or 'primary' level, serving ages 3-6 and including kindergarten. There are also Montessori schools for infants and toddlers, Elementary I (6-9), Elementary II (9-12) adolescent and high schools with full diploma options.

### **About NEIM**

The NEIM program was created in 2003 by a group of parents in Northeast Iowa interested in developing another option for supportive and creative education in the area. NEIM is a private non-profit agency with 501(c)3 status. The school operates under the direction of a volunteer Board of Directors made up of parents of current and former students and external community members. The Board of Directors is responsible for the strategic vision and management of the school and meets on a monthly basis. The Board welcomes comments and ideas from NEIM families.

Northeast Iowa Montessori School, located at 604 South Ave Decorah, Iowa, serves families with children ages 3 years to 12 years old in daily preschool and elementary

programming and after-school care. NEIM follows the Montessori philosophy of learning.

NEIM is currently licensed by the Iowa Department of Human Services to provide a full or part time learning environment in compliance with the Iowa Administrative Code 641, Chapter 109, and is a certified collaborative partner with the Decorah Community School District. NEIM adheres to the Iowa QPPS (quality preschool program standards) and maintains a 1 rating under IQ4K system issued by the Iowa Department of Human Services.

NEIM is an equal opportunity provider. Applications for enrollment are considered without regard to race, religion, color, gender, national origin, disabling conditions, or any other basis prohibited by law. NEIM will follow the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) as required by law. NEIM will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of families with children with limited English proficiency and families with children with disabilities, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format and in alternative formats on request, and, if possible, in the family's preferred language.

In NEIM's carefully prepared Montessori learning environment, the children are exposed to materials and experiences through which they develop critical thinking skills as well as physical and psychological abilities. The program is designed to help children with their task of inner construction as they grow from childhood to maturity. The multi-age classroom provides a family-like environment in which older children reinforce their own learning by helping younger children, and younger children enhance their own learning by observing and interacting with others.

NEIM offers children a variety of educational experiences, including exercises for motor development and self-mastery, and programs in language, reading, math, culture, sensory experiences, practical life, geography, science, nature, music and art. These early learning experiences lay a foundation for future success by developing focus and determination, and instilling within each child a profound sense of accomplishment and inner joy related to learning.

Although much emphasis in the NEIM program is placed on academic development, the school also recognizes the importance of social development in young children and includes a curriculum to support social growth. Throughout the day, collective group activities and free-play times provide children with both structured and unstructured social situations in which to build social skills and practice living and working peacefully in a community with others.



### **NEIM Staff 2024-2025**

Head of School: Rachael Buresh

- 35+ years of business administration experience, including non-profits, school, and child development centers.
- National Administrators Credential
- New Staff Orientation Director
- Youth and Mental Health Credential
- ECERS-3 Certified
- The Center for Guided Montessori Studies Fundamentals graduate
- BA, North Dakota State University in Fargo, ND
- MA, Teacher Leadership from Upper Iowa University

Children's House Lead Guide: Heather Vilardo

- Center for Guided Montessori Studies Lead Guide
- AA degree from Waldorf College
- BA degree in Elementary Education from Luther
- MA degree in Special Education from Grand Canyon University
- Director of a child care center/Head Start - Decorah

Children's House Assistant Guide: Jenny Lenehan

- AMI Assistant Training at Montessori Training Center of Minnesota
- BA, Upper Iowa University in Elementary Education with Early Childhood and Reading Endorsements

Children's House Assistant Guide: Claire Tebbenhoff

- AMI Assistant Training at Montessori Training Center of Minnesota
- BA Luther College, with emphasis on Early Childhood and Special Education

Cosmic Explorers Lead Guide: Jane Busch

- AMI Elementary Training at Montessori Training Center of Minnesota
- BA University of Northern Iowa, in Elementary Education with an endorsement in Middle School education
- MA Loyola University, in Montessori Education

Cosmic Explorers Assistant Guide: Gabriel Surovy

AMI Assistant Training

Cosmic Explorers Reading Intervention and Assistant Guide: Erin Smock

Trillium Assistant Training  
K-6 Teacher Elementary  
K-8 English/Language Arts  
K-8 Reading

Mentor and Substitute guide: Christine Gowdy-Jaehnig

After School Care Program Supervisor: Claire Tebbenhoff

After School Care Program Assistant/Art/Spanish/Substitute: Faith Robinson

Custodian: TBD

## **PROGRAMS AT NEIM**

### **NEIM Children's House**

The NEIM Children's House, or primary Montessori environment, is a multi-age classroom of children ages 3 years to 6 years old. The NEIM Children's House is recommended as a three-year program, with children entering first grade upon graduation. Because a child builds on previous years' experiences and mastery of materials, the three-year program facilitates growth toward independence and increased self-confidence. The three-year program also supports the development of leadership skills by allowing older children the opportunity to teach, guide, and serve as role-models for younger children in the program. This program operates Monday through Friday, 8:15-3:00 p.m., and is a full day program.

### **Cosmic Explorers (Elementary)**

This Montessori experience is for our 6-12 year old students. This translates to the traditional classroom grade level of 1st through 6th grades. Elementary is a multi-aged program to allow for growth of the human tendencies by learning through exploration and observations. This program operates Monday through Friday, 8:15-3:00 p.m., and is a full day program.

**After School Care Program** - this program is for **registered NEIM students only**. ASC runs from 3:15p-5:30p and has two options available:

### **Scheduled Rate**

Utilize After School Care at a 3 or more days per week schedule (\$15 per child per day)

Utilize After School Care at a 1 or 2 day schedule per week (\$20 per child per day)

You will be billed regardless of attendance.

### **Drop-in Rate**

Drop-in after school care is offered Mon-Fri (\$20 per child per day)

Please note, however, that daily drop-in availability is not guaranteed due to staffing constraints. Arrangement will be made with the After School Supervisor.

A separate invoice will be sent and payment will be due the 5th of the month for the previous month. EX) September ASC will be paid on the 5th of October).

### **Planes of Development**

Dr. Montessori's theory of cognitive, social and emotional development is rooted in the Four Planes of Development. With regard to the child, education should correspond to them, so that instead of dividing the schools into nursery, primary, secondary and university, we should divide education in planes and each of these should correspond to the phase the developing individuality goes through. -Dr. Maria Montessori

#### ***First Plane: Ages 0-6 "Early Childhood" (Individual Creation of the Person)***

This stage is characterized by the young child's "absorbent mind." Children have a desire for physical independence ("I can do it myself!") and are interested in real activities with an intelligent purpose. Sensitive periods during this plane include: movement, language, small objects, toileting, order, music, grace and courtesy, senses, writing, reading, spatial relationships, and mathematics.

#### ***Second Plane: Ages 6-12 "Childhood" (Construction of the Intelligence)***

Children in the second plane of development have a thirst for knowledge, love of imagination, fascination with fairness, and a desire for intellectual independence. This is the time for "cosmic education," in which the child explores their place within the world and comes to appreciate the interconnectedness of all things. This is also the "bridge to abstraction"—the transition from concrete to abstract thinking. Children in this plane have a desire for intellectual independence. ("I can think it myself!").

### **Third Plane: Ages 12-18 “Adolescence” (Construction of the Social Self)**

Children in the third plane of development are characterized by self-concern and self assessment. This is a sensitive period for both critical thinking and exploring social and moral values. Adolescents in this plane have a desire for emotional independence. (“I can stand on my own.”)

### **Fourth Plane: Ages 18-24 and Beyond “Adulthood” (Construction of Self Understanding)**

The fourth plane of development is characterized by the construction of the spiritual self. Young adults are in the process of conscious discernment of right and wrong, seeking to discover their place within the world. Young adults in the plane have a desire for financial independence. (“I can get it myself.”)

Within these planes of development are three-year cycles, a period of intense acquisition and a period of refinement and assimilation. This happens both over the six-year plane in a broad sense and within the three-year cycle in a more specific or refined sense. The infant and toddler learn to crawl and walk, the young child learns to run and skip. During these planes of development are sensitive periods for acquiring certain skills, think of the toddler who has to open or close all the cabinet doors - the sensitive period for order, the 4-year-old that colors for hours- the sensitive period for writing, the 9-year-old that plays games for hours-the sensitive period for rules, fairness, fantasy.

The multiage classrooms, three-year curriculum and specific materials in a Montessori school are designed to meet the needs of the children as they move through these developmental planes in a three-year cycle. If a child hasn't had the opportunity to internalize a certain skill it is important they are given the opportunity to internalize a skill. You can't learn to read or count to 100 if you haven't mastered being able to concentrate on a task. Giving the child three years to explore the environment and materials gives them the opportunity to have the time to meet those needs. As we know, everyone learns differently and at different rates.

Even as adults the more experience we have with a concept or skill the more we understand and are able to then impart that knowledge to others- from playing tennis to mastering a new computer program. By the end of the three-year cycle the child will have had the opportunity to move through part of a plane of development and will have assimilated the acquired skills they need to start the next developmental phase in the next classroom. For this reason, the third year in the Montessori classroom is sometimes called the leap year. This is when students internalize all the various skills for which they have both indirectly and directly prepared during the earlier years. It is also the time when students become self-possessed learners, confident in their abilities. It's when they emerge as leaders, eager to share their skills with their younger peers.

### **Key Aspects of the Montessori Method:**

- Deep respect for children as individuals
- Multiage classes allow teachers to develop close and long-term relationships with their students, allow them to know each other's learning style well, and encourage older students to become role models, mentors, and leaders to younger students.

- Integrated curriculum is carefully structured and connects subjects within programs (e.g., history and cultural arts to maximize the opportunity for learning and builds from program to program to progress from concrete to abstract learning).
- Independence is nurtured and leads to children becoming purposeful, motivated, and confident in their own abilities.
- Peace and conflict resolution are taught daily and children learn to be a part of a warm, respectful, and supportive community.
- The child creates, in a very real sense, the adult that is to be, through their experiences, interactions, and environments. Character development is a central focus of the Montessori curriculum.
- Hands-on learning is central to the curriculum in all programs and leads to children being engaged rather than passive with their work.
- The environments are responsibly and carefully prepared with multisensory, sequential, and self-correcting materials to support self-directed learning.
- Teachers and children and teachers and parents work together as a warm and supportive community.
- Self-expression is nurtured in all children. Children experience art, music, poetry, theater, writing, and other forms of creative arts with confidence and passion.
- Uninterrupted Work Time –The purpose of long, uninterrupted blocks of work time is to allow students to freely select work, eventually becoming absorbed in work that has particular fascination for them at this point in their development. Interruptions disturb the development of the child's focus, concentration, and opportunity to deeply delve into work. During this uninterrupted work time, teachers also have the opportunity to present lessons to the children, ensuring that lessons are given and work is explored in all areas of the classroom.

### **Sign-In/Sign-Out**

This system helps to maintain a secure environment for children and staff. This also provides a means to contact visitors if needed or to ensure all individuals in the building are evacuated in case of an emergency. A daily attendance is taken that includes the times of arrival and departure of the child as well as the person dropping off and picking up. Visitors will sign and include time in/out, name and reason for visit. HOS will reach out to families before 10am if there is no communication from the parent/guardian about the child's absence.

### **Parent/Guardian Communication**

Enrolling your child at NEIM begins a relationship - a creative partnership. Your involvement in your child's education provides your child with security and continuity and supports our efforts to provide an extraordinary learning experience. Our staff is available to respond to questions from parents or guardians, and to act as a resource and support to them. Regular, private communication with your child's guides is highly encouraged.

- Miss Jane: [buschj84@gmail.com](mailto:buschj84@gmail.com)
- Miss Heather, Miss Jenny, or Miss Claire: [neimguides@gmail.com](mailto:neimguides@gmail.com)
- Head of School, Rachael Buresh: [neimontessori@gmail.com](mailto:neimontessori@gmail.com)

Much of the correspondence regarding school happenings and ongoing opportunities will be communicated electronically via newsletter and end of month email from the Head of School.

A hard copy of the Family Handbook is kept in the Head of School office. Should a parent or guardian need assistance accessing information or clearly understanding content within the handbook, the Head of School will arrange for appropriate accommodation.

### **Parent/Guardian Participation**

Dr. Montessori meant for the prepared Children's House environment to be a supplement, not a substitute, for a child's home environment. She recognized that parents and guardians are the main educators for their children and that educators are in a partnership with parents and guardians. It is our responsibility to communicate openly and honestly with parents and guardians so that we can work together to meet the needs of the children.

We strive to provide parents and guardians with meaningful ways to participate and help with the environment, while respecting the important work being carried out by the children. We are careful to not interfere with the independence, work cycles, and presentations taking place.

Some of the ways in which families can participate at NEIM include:

- \*Assisting with the care of the environment - laundry, cleaning, recycling, library returns, shoveling, maintenance work
- \*Making materials
- \*Helping out on field trips
- \*Sharing your special interests or talents
- \*Celebrating your child's birthday in the environment
- \*Attending and participating in fundraisers
- \*Attending parent education events
- \*Volunteering - Individuals who wish to volunteer in the classroom will be asked to complete a background check through the Department of Human Services and sign a statement that they are free of communicable disease or other health concerns that could pose a threat to the health, safety, or well-being of children. Volunteers are required to maintain confidentiality regarding personal information about children and families.

### **Observing**

NEIM welcomes parent and community observers, and we appreciate your interest in your child's education. Observation is the cornerstone of the Montessori method. Scientific observations by Dr. Maria Montessori allowed her insight into the true nature

of the child. At NEIM, we believe that observation of the children is the most important role of the trained adult in the prepared environment. Only by careful observation can the adult appreciate and thoughtfully guide the development of the young child.

### [Guidelines for Observing in the NEIM Classrooms](#)

Please consider the following when planning an observation at NEIM:

- Parents and community members are always welcome to observe at NEIM. We request that most formal observations in the Children’s House and Cosmic Explorer programs be scheduled after November 1. This gives the students two months at the beginning of the school year to build their community and become confident and comfortable in their learning space.
- Please arrange observations in advance with the Head of School.
- As with all visits, please check in with the Head of School or one of the guides when you arrive.
- To help make your observation fruitful and enjoyable, please come with an open mind. Try to be objective, unobtrusive, patient, and humble.
- During your observation time, please minimize interaction with the students and guides so that work is not disrupted.
- Please remain in the observer’s chair to help the students respect your place as an observer and allow you a more productive glimpse into the activities happening in the programs.
- We encourage observers to write down comments or questions and discuss them with a guide or the Head of School after your classroom visit.

### **Withdrawal, Leaves of Absence and Vacations**

We understand life events happen and should the need to withdraw your child occur, the annual tuition amount will be prorated accordingly. Full payment is due for the final calendar month in which the child is in attendance for any portion. Any remaining payments for the balance of the school year will be waived. If full payment was made at the beginning of the year, a refund will be issued equal to the amount paid less the value of the regular monthly payments that would have been required to that point in time. A two-week notice is required.

We feel children benefit the most by having consistent attendance for the entire school year, however we realize absences and vacations may occur. If an extended absence or vacation is required, the full annual tuition amount will still be due.

Should a family withdraw their child/ren and then wish to re-enroll in the same academic year, the full annual tuition will be due. Upon re-enrollment, any monthly payments not made during the child’s absence will be due prior to the child returning to school. Example: If a family withdraws their child/ren in March, the full March payment is due. Should the family re-enroll in May, both the April and May payments would be due.

Under rare and extenuating circumstances, the school board may consider exceptions to this policy at their discretion.

### **Orientation/Procedure**

The HOS along with the NEIM staff and board of directors will host an orientation program for new and returning families the week before school is in session. At this program the following will be covered:

Welcome, Introduction of staff and board, Volunteering, Communication, Typical Day, Lunch and Snack, After School Care, School Calendar and snow days, Family Handbook, Montessori in a Nutshell book, Tour of classrooms and what to expect at the Winter open house. NEIM will also provide reading and translation services as needed.

### **Silent Journey**

#### **Family and Community Partnerships-Activity Summary**

#### **Silent Journey**

**03/11/2023**

A "Silent Journey" is a relatively new way to experience the Montessori Classroom. So many parents, after observing our classrooms, have commented that they wish they were "Montessori children"! The purpose is to offer parents an opportunity to see their child's classroom through the eyes of their children. And, as one teacher put it, "We love what we do, and we wanted to share it with you."

Miss Jane and Miss Heather plus a few guides and board members were on hand throughout the journey. It was separated into two parts, the first giving the event its name of "silent". As a group, the parents moved from Children's House to Cosmic Explorers. The group explored with their eyes, neither touching the materials or speaking. After spending



about 10 minutes in each classroom, the group reconvened and shared their observations of not only the materials, but also the environment in general.

It was noted by several parents that the furniture grew in size, perfectly matching the size of students in each room. And that some materials in the Children's House classroom were also in the Cosmic Explorers classroom!

The next step offered parents was to have actual lessons and see how the use of materials becomes more and more complex with each level-especially the math work. It is so wonderfully supportive to have manipulatives available for a student's use at all levels. It is so much easier to comprehend abstract math concepts when you can touch a representation of a number or a formula! A student new to numbers can feel the difference between one unit in one hand and a cube comprised of a thousand units in the other!

It was a wonderful morning. So much insight was gained by the participating parents. They were all Montessori students for the day.

The staff and board learned a lot from the Silent Journey. Montessori education can sometimes be difficult to explain so any chance we have to "show" the Montessori Method in practice is a benefit not only to the staff but the families as well. We learned that this activity is a must and we will continue to implement this practice. We will continue to add different components to the journey as well as have it run two days instead of one and open this activity up to the public.

### **Behavioral Code**

NEIM staff and Board of Directors have set a Behavioral Code for the purpose of ensuring that all students learn in an orderly, efficient, safe, and caring learning environment. The effectiveness of these policies requires the positive and voluntary cooperation of all concerned.

NEIM believes that each student, parent or guardian, and staff member participates in creating a disciplined environment in which all persons are appreciated, feel safe, and are free to learn. The Montessori environment and philosophy encourages choice and freedom within an atmosphere of love and positive guidance which helps the child to create an inner guide and develop their own self discipline. The staff, in coordination with the school administration, is responsible for ensuring implementation of and compliance with the school's behavior standards. Staff expects and appreciates parental support when a child experiences behavioral issues.

The guide is responsible for establishing and maintaining a safe, disciplined environment. Each student will be held accountable for his or her behavior in keeping with the NEIM community's behavior expectations. We seek to lead students to cooperative behavior and membership in a productive, loving and caring classroom

community, as well as the playground and the larger community of Decorah.

Each classroom gives lessons on grace and courtesy to model polite and respectful behavior. Role-playing of the expected behavior is encouraged in all classrooms in order for students to practice these life skills of cooperation with other people. Children are treated with respect and in turn are expected to be respectful to others.

At NEIM, we expect the children and adults to observe the behavior standards referred to as the **Life Rules**.

The Life Rules are:

- 1. Love for self.**
- 2. Love for others.**
- 3. Respect for materials, tools, and equipment.**
- 4. Respect for the environment.**

Guides and children will explore problem solving and alternative behaviors, particularly in conflict situations. Circumstances surrounding the behavior will be discussed with the child. The guide will offer positive guidance techniques to help the child evaluate his or her actions and quiet energies and emotions. Children will be taught acceptable alternatives to problem behavior, redirected toward a constructive activity, encouraged to address a wrongful action, and will receive forgiveness.

### **Positive Discipline**

Northeast Iowa Montessori School (NEIM) uses positive discipline, which is implemented in a developmentally and age-appropriate fashion to meet the needs of the individual child. Our focus is on how to help children resolve problems and empower them to have a successful experience in the classroom and school community. The goal of our discipline policy is to provide an environment that promotes respect and safety for each person as well as the space we share. NEIM does not use corporal punishment or physical discipline.

The need for discipline within a Montessori classroom is greatly reduced by the prepared environment. The teachers make a point of keeping engaging activities available for the children so there is never a lack of something interesting for each student to do. The teacher may also redesign the work areas, jobs available, number of children allowed in a work area, etc., in response to classroom behavior.

For younger children, the primary method in a Montessori classroom is redirection – moving the child from a disruptive activity and engaging him or her in something more productive. Emphasis is put on directing a child to what they may do (making appropriate choices) rather than telling them what they may not do.

For elementary-aged children, the primary method used in a Montessori classroom is involving the child in making respectful and constructive choices. This may be done using mini-conferences, reflective listening, and questioning, giving limited choices, making agreements, class meetings, helping to resolve conflict, etc.

The classrooms also utilize a peace area. This is a comfortable area in which the child may relax and calm down, or to try to resolve conflict with another child. The child may choose to go to the peace area her- or himself or may be requested to visit the area by a teacher, or, in the case of conflict resolution, by another child. On occasion, in the event of unsafe physical or verbal behavior, or a persistent problem, a child may be removed from the classroom for a period to collect him or herself and to give the staff an opportunity to help resolve the situation.

Parents will be notified of significant or persistent disciplinary problems at school in a timely manner. If it is necessary to involve parents in the resolution of a problem at school, it will be done with a spirit of cooperation and with the aim of helping the child. Parental support during that time is very much appreciated. Through conferences, goals will be mutually agreed upon. If the goals are not able to be met within an allotted time, further professional help or other school placement will be considered for the child. Parents or faculty may call upon the Head of School to act as a facilitator at any time. Should it become apparent that a family cannot be supportive of the school's missions or goals, it may be necessary for the Head of School to consider whether it is in the best interest of the school to keep the child enrolled at NEIM.

To provide an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for all children, suspension or expulsion procedures may be executed in the event of serious and/or persistent behavior problems. Such behavior includes but is not limited to defacing or damaging property (school or other), profanity (verbal or written), triggering a fire alarm, violence, threats of violence, blatant disrespect, disorderly conduct, and endangering the safety of self or others. This kind of disciplinary action will be determined by the Head of School upon consultation with the faculty. The Board of Directors will be notified if such disciplinary action is taken.

All leads and guides are trained in the Montessori Peace Method which utilizes the Montessori method of peaceful and thoughtful conversation and guidance of next steps to ensure positivity and success for each individual student.

NEIM will educate families and staff on the positive discipline practice via the Family Handbook, Employee Handbook and the Parent Orientation meeting.

### **Intoxicated Parent or Pick-up Person**

If anyone authorized to pick up your child (including a parent) arrives intoxicated or Staff deems this person a potential risk to the child, NEIM has the right to refuse to release the child to this person. The child can be released to a different person provided that they are on their pick-up list. If the parent refuses to authorize another designated

person, Staff members have the right and will inform the police and a child protection agency in the interest of the safety of the child.

### **Missing or Lost Child**

If a child becomes lost or missing, the NEIM Head of School and all available staff will conduct a full search of the building and surrounding perimeters. If necessary, we will call the police, HHS, and parents with the last known location of the child. An incident report will be filled out and filed.

Prevention measures include staff counting children frequently with name-to-face counting, talking to the older children about what to do if they become separated from the group, and practicing this measure.

### **Intruders on Premises**

NEIM staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is. If staff is unsure about the reason given they will contact management staff to get approval for the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation, staff will follow the “intruder in the center” procedures.

Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc. will be monitored by paid staff and will not be allowed to interact with the children on premise.

A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian, or custodian) who is required to register with the Iowa sex offender registry (Iowa Code 692A):

- Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or act as a contractor or volunteer at the child care center.
- Shall not be on the property of the child care center without the written permission of the Head of School, except for the time reasonably necessary to transport the offender’s own minor child or ward to and from the center. The Head of School is not obligated to provide written permission and must consult with their DHS licensing consultant first. If written permission is granted it shall include the conditions under which the sex offender may be present, including:
  - 1) The precise location in the center where the sex offender may be present.
  - 2) The reason for the sex offender’s presence at the facility.
  - 3) The duration of the sex offender’s presence.
  - 4) Description of how the center staff will supervise the sex offender to ensure that the sex offender is not left alone with a child.
  - 5) The written permission shall be signed and dated by the Head of school and sex offender and kept on file for review by the center licensing consultant.

### **Smoking**

Smoking and the use of tobacco products are prohibited in the NEIM building, outdoor play area, and in vehicles driven for school purposes.

## **Firearms**

The use and possession of firearms are prohibited on the NEIM premises. If weapons are suspected, the staff will call 911 immediately.

**Note: Toys that resemble weapons are not allowed on the premises.**

## **Pets**

Animals at NEIM will be kept in good health with no evidence of disease, be of such disposition as to not pose a safety threat to children, and be maintained in a clean and sanitary manner. Documentation of current vaccinations shall be available for any cats and dogs visiting the environment. No ferrets, reptiles, including turtles, or birds of the parrot family shall be kept on site. Pets will not be allowed in the kitchen or food preparation areas.

## **Biting**

NEIM understands that intermittent biting by young children is normal in early childhood development. However, since biting and other such behaviors have the potential to harm others, NEIM has established the following biting policy to help manage this behavior.

On a regular basis, guides introduce appropriate ways that children can deal with feelings of frustration and anger through grace and courtesy lessons. Emphasis is placed on using words and language rather than aggressive behaviors. Any incident of aggressive behavior, including biting, will be used as an opportunity to reinforce appropriate behavior.

Upon observing a biting incident, the guide will first attend to the bitten child, comforting the child and cleaning the area of the bite gently with soap and water. If bruising occurs, ice will be applied for a short time period. The guide will also remove the child who bit from the setting in which the biting occurred. In an age-appropriate manner, the guide will explain to the child that this behavior is not acceptable. The guide will not reward the biting child by immediately giving that child extra attention.

A guide who observes aggressive behavior such as biting will document the behavior on an Incident/Accident form and report the incident to the Head of School and the child's parents. The names of the children involved will not be released, nor will any medical or other information.

## **First Aid Kit - QPPS 9.13**

A first aid kit is located in the preschool classroom in the Practical Life area. It is inaccessible to children, but readily available for adult use. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Healthy Child Care Iowa. Following each use of the first aid kit, the contents will be inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The first aid kit will be inspected monthly. A first aid kit is taken to outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from NEIM. First aid kits are also available by the back door to the play-space and in the Elementary classroom.

## **Illness**

Your child's health is a matter of importance to all of us. Before your child may attend NEIM, a copy of the physical health form must be completed. A current record of immunizations (or an exemption from immunizations card) must be kept on file at the school. Please keep the school updated as changes in your child's health occur. (i.e. allergy is developed, immunization update, etc.).

**If your child has had any of the following conditions in the previous 24 hours on any day of school attendance, please keep child home until the condition improves:**

- A fever of 100.4 or above Fahrenheit within 24 hours of attending school.
- Uncontrolled diarrhea within 24 hours of attending school.
- Vomiting within 24 hours of attending school.
- Symptoms or signs of possible severe illness such as unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs for the child.
- Mouth sores with drooling unless a health care provider determines the condition noninfectious.
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools.
- Tuberculosis until 24 hours after treatment.
- Strep throat or other streptococcal infection until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever.
- Pertussis until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed.
- Skin sores that are open and draining (including such things as impetigo, etc.) The child may return to school when the drainage ceases and the sores begin to heal and medication has been administered for 24 hours.
- Chickenpox until 6 days after onset or rash or until all sores have dried and crusted.
- Mumps until 9 days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
- Hepatitis A virus until 1 week after onset of illness or as directed by the health department when passive immunoprophylaxis has been administered to appropriate children and staff.

**Your child should also be kept home if the illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in the activities planned or the illness results in greater care needs than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the children.**

Please inform staff of any infections your child may have. In the event of a communicable disease outbreak, such as strep throat or chickenpox, a sign will be posted outside the classroom.

### **Sick at School**

The staff has the authority to identify whether a child is too ill to attend school. If your child should become ill during the day, while attending NEIM, he/she will be isolated and allowed to rest on a cot in the office. The parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the child. If parent contact cannot be made, then the next emergency contact person will be notified to come and pick up the child. We ask that you try to pick up the child

within one hour of receiving the notice. Appropriate health records will be kept while waiting for the child to be picked up.

### **Medications**

Whenever possible, we request that medication be given at home. If a child needs to receive medication during the school day, the following procedures must be followed.

- Your child must have a completed Medication Request form on file before NEIM staff may administer medication.
- All medications must be given directly to a staff person by the parent/guardian.
- All medications given to the school MUST have a physician or other health care prescriber's instructions printed on them and be in their original containers.
- Non-prescription medicine will be allowed at NEIM only if clearly labeled in the original containers and accompanied by a written note signed from the child's doctor or parent with clear instructions on the dosing of the medication.
- A qualified staff member will administer medication and complete the log on the Medication Request form at the time of administering the medication. Any staff administering medication will have attended the Medical Distribution training offered through Winneshiek County Public Health each year.
- All medication will be stored away from the reach of children.

### **Medical Emergencies**

Every effort will be made to notify parents immediately in case of a medical or dental emergency. The school will administer emergency medical and/or dental care and/or treatment as required until professional assistance is available. Parents agree to pay all costs and fees associated with any emergency medical and dental care for the child. Families will be required to complete the Medical and Dental Emergency authorization form upon enrolling their child.

In the event that a child should require emergency medical/dental care, NEIM staff will carry out the following steps:

1. Administer basic first aid as needed to the child
2. Remove the child from the area, only if it does not further injure the child.
3. Make an emergency phone call to parent/guardian as directed on the child's emergency medical/dental card in the child's file.
4. In the event that no emergency contacts can be reached, NEIM will call the family's preferred medical or dental center as listed on the emergency medical treatment authorization form.
5. If a child requires immediate emergency services 911 will be called immediately following step 1.
6. NEIM staff will ensure that other children are tended to as needed.

### **Dental Emergencies**

In the event that a dental emergency should arise, the emergency dental contact information will be used to contact the dentist listed on the emergency card.

Staff will carry out the following steps:

1. Determine if 911 services are required.
2. Administer basic first aid, only if it does not cause further injury to the child.
3. A broken tooth will be washed with clean water and placed in a plastic zipping bag with cold milk. The bag will be placed on an ice pack and delivered to the dental office with the child. If the child is calm enough, the tooth, once cleaned with water, can be placed back into the socket while traveling to the dentist office.
4. Parents will be contacted immediately after it is determined that the first aid needs are met.

### **Accidents**

NEIM staff members are trained in Red Cross First Aid and CPR procedures. In the event of minor injury (scratches, abrasions, etc.), first aid procedures will be administered to the child as needed. The injury and first aid procedure administered will be documented and reported to the parent or guardian in writing. In the event of serious injury, the parent or guardian will be contacted immediately. Every effort will be made to reach parents or guardians in an emergency situation. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the school will contact the authorized person(s) or health provider/facility listed on the Emergency Release Information form. The school retains the right to contact local paramedics and/or use ambulance transportation as deemed necessary.

### **Strangulation Prevention**

Eliminating strangulation hazards helps keep children safe. All strings and cords long enough to encircle a child's neck will not be accessible. Window blinds and draperies will not have looped cords and tension or tie-down devices will be installed to hold cords tight. Dramatic play items that have handles or straps will be removed or shortened and ties, scarves, necklaces and boas for dramatic play will only be used by children under the age of three when directly supervised. NEIM does not allow pacifiers of any kind. Parents may be asked to remove hood and neck strings from all children's clothing and lanyards used by NEIM staff are breakaway only.

### **Infectious Disease Control - Universal Precautions**

All staff will be trained in a one-hour course annually in the proper handling of body fluids, which may be considered infectious. Each classroom will have a supply of nitrile non-powdered gloves for staff to use in the event that a clean-up of bodily fluids is necessary.

### **Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse**

All NEIM staff are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse. All staff will maintain updated certifications on the procedures for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect and are required to follow these procedures.

### **Grievance Protocol**



If you have a concern about any aspect of our programs, we ask that you contact the Head of School, Rachael Buresh, or NEIM's Board President, Scott Searcy. We encourage you to voice your opinions frankly and constructively.

While we all strive for a harmonious environment, we recognize that from time-to-time conflicts may arise. Our expectation is that personal differences will not be allowed to alter professional conduct during school hours or detract from our primary mission - the education of our children. Adult Participants are expected to perform their duties and always interact with cooperation and courtesy regardless of conflicts. If the situation involves a violation or potential violation of NEIM'S Sexual or Other Abuse Policy or Harassment/Discrimination Policy, you should follow the reporting procedures set forth in the applicable policy. When a misunderstanding, conflict or disagreement occurs which does not involve a violation of NEIM'S Sexual or Other Abuse Policy or the Harassment/ Discrimination Policy, you are urged to first try to work things out directly with the individual involved. If you are unable to resolve your differences directly with the individual, or are uncomfortable doing so, you should take the matter up with the Head of School or Board President. We recognize however that there may be instances when having a review process could be helpful to be sure that all sides of an issue have been examined.

The review process is not intended to be used for daily operating decisions, academic-related decisions or to challenge school policies. In all cases, it is expected that the complainant will have worked through the normal process of conflict resolution following the lines of communication as outlined above prior to requesting a review.

Complaint Review process:

1. Submit a written, signed, and dated statement to the Head of School or Board President stating specifically what the issue is, including facts, dates and names, your understanding of the current status of the matter and your requested solution/result. No oral or unsigned requests for review will be considered. Joint requests and requests on behalf of others will generally not be allowed.
2. If the subject of the request is deemed appropriate for, a Review Committee will be appointed by the Head of School or Board President to consider the request. This committee may consist of members of the staff, administration, and board of directors when deemed appropriate.
3. The Review Committee will review the information submitted and may contact the complainant and the other individual involved if the committee determines that additional information and/or interviews would be helpful to a full understanding of the issues.
4. The Review committee will recommend a resolution of the request to the Head of School or Board President, whichever convened the committee. Once approved by the Board, the resolution will be communicated to the complainant in writing. All such decisions are final.

### **Active Supervision**

Active Supervision requires staff to focus attention and intentionally observe children at all times with face-to-name recognition. Staff positions themselves so children are within sight and hearing at all times. Staff anticipates children's actions and is vigilant about child safety indoors

and outdoors, during special events and transitions, and when children arrive at or leave the center.

## ENVIRONMENTS

1. Centers, classrooms, playgrounds, and bodies of water will be set up to optimize child supervision at all times.
2. Centers, classrooms, and playgrounds will be clutter-free and provide clear play spaces.
3. Classroom doors will be shut when children are present.
  1. When leaving a room after scanning for children, staff will close the door by pulling or pushing with their hands.
4. Exterior doors will be locked and always monitored.
5. Playground gates will be closed and always latched.
6. When children use a restroom, they will always be within sight and hearing distance of the staff.
7. Staff purses (or other personal belongings) may not be stored anywhere in the classrooms or accessible to children.
8. No adult conversation or sharing of personal information during class time. Staff should be actively involved with the children throughout the day. Please keep this in mind when talking with parents and other professionals. Prepare all materials that you will need throughout the day ahead of time. Focus all your attention on the children during class time rather than completing staff duties (cleaning up, paperwork, phone calls, organizing activities, etc.)
9. When around bodies of water, staff will be within arm's length to access the child.
10. Staff's priority for child safety will be evident at all times:
  1. Staff will not engage one another in conversations that distract them from applying daily Active Supervision techniques. (For example, personal conversations, sharing confidential information, discussing behaviors, etc.)
  2. Staff will respectfully redirect parents, visitors, volunteers, and other staff who distract them from applying daily Active Supervision techniques.
  3. Staff will not make or receive personal phone calls or use cell phones or Bluetooth devices when children are present.
  4. Staff will not permit personal visitors into the classroom during school hours.

## POSITIONING

1. The Lead Guide will complete a diagram of the site playground and divide it into two to three zones depending on the playground size. Staff will position themselves in their zone to actively supervise every child in their zone.
2. The zone diagram and the Classroom Attendance Binder will be posted in the classroom.
3. Staff plan which zones they will supervise in each environment and anticipate the need to communicate with one another across zones to ensure child safety.
4. Staff move within their zones and interact with children during free play while always keeping a direct line of supervision.
5. The staff stays close to children who may need additional support.
6. During naptime, staff must position cots to ensure that children can always be seen.
7. Staff should remain next to the classroom door until it is completely shut.

## SCAN AND COUNT/ATTENDANCE

1. Staff will continuously scan the entire environment and watch/count children frequently using face-to-name recognition to ensure their safety.
2. Staff will only release children to adults listed on the Authorized Pick-Up list.

## SIGHT AND HEARING

1. Staff will always account for all children in their care:
  1. Sight
    1. Lighting will be bright enough to see the children clearly, even during nap time.
    2. Staff will move when needed to ensure a direct line of sight.
  2. Sound
    1. Staff will listen for sounds or the absence of sounds that may signify a reason for concern.

## ANTICIPATE BEHAVIOR

1. Staff will use their long-term knowledge (e.g., interests, abilities, activity level) of children and developing information (e.g., illness, allergies, lack of sleep, or food) to anticipate their behavior and actions.

### 1. EXAMPLES

1. Holding a child's hand that is known to run off.
2. Knowing staff roles when a child becomes ill in the classroom.
3. Knowing the behavior plan for aggressive children.

## ENGAGE AND REDIRECT

1. Staff will positively engage and redirect children when they are unable to solve problems on their own while using Conscious Discipline techniques.
  1. Time out will not be used in any circumstance.
2. Staff will teach children the appropriate and safe use of materials and equipment.
3. Staff will create and post Classroom Safety Rules in their classroom environment.

## TRAINING

The Head of School will train staff annually at the orientation meeting. The training will consist of the six strategies for Active Supervision in keeping children safe. The six strategies are Set-up of the environment (the staff set up the environment so that they can supervise the children and be accessible at all times), Position of the staff (Staff plan where they will position themselves in the environment to prevent children from harm), Scan and count (Staff are always able to account for the children), Listen ( Staff listens for specific sounds or the absence of), Anticipate children's behavior, (Staff use what they know about each child's individual interests and skills to predict what they will do), Engage and redirect (Staff use what they know about each child to help redirect or engage).

## **Meals and Nutrition**

As per our requirements for licensing through the Department of Human Services, NEIM participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

All students will bring their own lunch. While not mandatory, we encourage parents/guardians to purchase organic products when possible and choose products that do not contain high fructose corn syrup or artificial flavorings or colorings. A microwave oven is available for warming up food, and a refrigerator for keeping foods cold. Milk is available for all children at lunch time. Please prepare fruits, eggs and vegetables at home, as much as possible. Ex. hard-boiled eggs should be peeled, fruit peeled and sliced as needed. Provide your own table service with these lunches, which includes a container for whatever the food is, plate/bowl, silverware.

Lunches sent from home must meet the CACFP guidelines and contain items from 4 main food groups. CACFP guidelines require that at lunch, children have access to a minimum of:

- 1 serving of milk (NEIM supplies pasteurized cow's milk)
- 2 servings of fruits and/or vegetables
- 1 serving of grain or bread
- 1 serving of meat or alternate protein

Food Group	CACFP examples of appropriate serving sizes for children ages 3-6
Dairy	1 serving = 1/2 cup milk
Fruits and Vegetables	1 serving = 1/2 cup fresh fruits or vegetables, 1/2 cup pure juice
Grains and Breads	1 serving = 1/2 slice bread, 1/3 cup dry cereal, 1/2 cup noodles or grains
Meat and Proteins	1 serving = 1.5 oz. meat, poultry or fish, 1.5 oz. cheese, 1 egg, 3/8 cup beans or peas, 3 Tbsp. peanut or other nut butter, 3/4 oz. nuts, 6 oz. yogurt

Exceptions to CACFP nutrition guidelines may occur only in cases of food allergies, medical conditions, or religious practices. To help NEIM comply with licensing regulations, parents must provide written documentation to NEIM stating the reasons for the food exceptions for their child.

If the lunch of a child under the age of 5 does not meet the nutritional guidelines of CACFP, NEIM will provide the missing food item(s) in order to provide the child with adequate nutrition for that meal. NEIM staff members are required by law to notify the parent or guardian of a child if they observe non-nutritional lunches regularly being sent with the child.

Please ***do not*** send cookies, desserts, candy, or junk food in your child’s lunch. NEIM promotes healthy food choices for everyone and it can be difficult for children to understand why they cannot have certain foods in their lunch when they observe another child with sweet treats in theirs.

**Live 5-2-1-0**

Is a health focused initiative that is nationally recognized. It is a proven, scientific method that helps keep kids healthy by focusing on the importance of good habits. We start by encouraging the kids to eat and play the right way. Try to eat **5** servings of fruits and veggies a day, **2** hours or less of screen time, **1** hour or more of physical activity and **0** sugary drinks and more water. NEIM does its best to educate the children on the **5** strategies.

**Hand Washing Practices - QPPS 5.8**

Frequent hand washing is key to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Guides teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Each sink displays posters of children using proper hand washing procedures. NEIM follows these practices regarding hand washing.

Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored, all staff, volunteers, and children require hand-washing when hand-washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others and staff assist children with hand-washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands upon arrival for the day, after diapering or using the toilet, after handling body fluids, before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking, after playing in water that is shared by two or more people and after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals.

Adults also wash their hands before and after feeding a child, before and after administering medication, after assisting a child with toileting, after using the restroom personally and after handling garbage or cleaning.

In situations where sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

### **Toileting Policy**

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the following procedures are in place:

1. Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area, i.e., the bathroom adjacent to the classroom with a fold down changing table. Food handling will not be permitted in the diapering area.
2. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards: Standard 5, Criteria 7:

-Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.

-Staff check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every 2 hours. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.

-Staff change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility. At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.

-Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.

-Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can). Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children. The container will be clearly labeled to show its intended use.

-Diapering and gloving posters will be posted in the changing area showing procedures through the use of visuals and words. These procedures are used by the program administrator to evaluate teaching staff that change diapers.

3. Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.
4. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an “accident” or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child’s name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

### **Cleaning and Sanitization - QPPS 9.11**

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately. Toys that have been placed in a child’s mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and disinfected after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom.. Toys and surfaces will be disinfected using a non-toxic solution of one tablespoon household bleach to one quart of tap water made fresh daily. To disinfect, the surfaces will be sprayed until glossy. The bleach solution will be left on for at least 2 minutes before it is wiped off with a clean paper towel, or it may be allowed to air dry. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child’s mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be laundered before another child’s use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used. **QPPS 5.24**

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials, and information required by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents.

Routine cleaning will be supervised by the guides and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table in Section 111, page 47 of the QPPS manual. A checklist will be completed as indicated in the table.

All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer’s label. Non-toxic substances will be used whenever possible.

### **Ratios**

NEIM complies with the Iowa state regulations for minimum ratios of staff to children. At most times, NEIM maintains a much higher staff to child ratio than required by state guidelines, allowing a great deal of personal attention to children when needed.

<u>Ages of children</u>	<u>Minimum ratio of staff to children</u>
3 yrs.	1 caregiver to every 10 children
4 yrs.	1 caregiver to every 10 children
5 to 10 yrs.	1 caregiver to every 15 children

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are an important part of a child's life. Each child's birthday or half birthday is celebrated in a special way at the NEIM Children’s House and Upper Education. The celebration involves the child holding a small globe and taking a turn around the

sun(represented by a small yellow candle) for each year of life. This physical act represents the number of years they have been a part of this Earth! Parents will be asked to join the group on their child's birthday or half birthday and to present a completed "Celebration of Life" timeline for the group. Photos of the child at various ages are encouraged. The children love to share with one another the stories of their lives with visual representation.

With the growing number of diet restrictions and allergies we recommend that the child who is celebrating their birthday not bring food treats. Please consult with the Head of School if you have questions.

### **Field Trips and Off-Site events**

Northeast Iowa Montessori School (NEIM) organizes field trips and off-site events to enrich students' educational experiences while prioritizing their safety and well-being. These policies and procedures outline guidelines for planning, conducting, and supervising such activities to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all participants.

#### **Planning and Approval:**

1. **Identification of Objectives:** Each field trip or off-site event must have clearly defined educational objectives relevant to the curriculum.
2. **Risk Assessment:** Before the trip, a comprehensive risk assessment must be conducted to identify potential hazards and implement appropriate controls.
3. **Approval Process:** Field trips require approval from the Head of school and, if necessary, parental consent obtained through permission slips.

#### **Chaperoning and Supervision:**

1. **Chaperone Requirements:**
  - **Qualifications:** Chaperones must be approved by NEIM and undergo background checks as per school policy.
  - **Ratio:** Maintains a sufficient ratio of chaperones to students to ensure adequate supervision and safety.
  - **Roles and Responsibilities:** Chaperones are responsible for the safety and behavior of students under their supervision, adherence to school rules, and emergency procedures.
2. **Supervision Guidelines:**
  - Chaperones and teachers must always maintain visual and auditory contact with students during the trip.
  - Establish designated meeting points and times for accountability throughout the trip.

#### **Transportation:**

### 1. **Mode of Transportation:**

- **Commercial Vehicles:** Use reputable commercial transportation services that comply with local transportation regulations and maintain appropriate insurance coverage.
- **Seat Belts:** Ensure all passengers, including adults and students, use seat belts or appropriate safety restraints during transit.

### 2. **Procedures for Commercial Vehicle Use:**

- **Driver Requirements:** Drivers must possess a valid commercial driver's license (CDL) and adhere to all traffic laws and regulations.
- **Vehicle Inspection:** Conduct pre-trip inspections to verify the condition and safety of the vehicle before departure.

## **Emergency Preparedness:**

### 1. **Emergency Contact Information:**

- Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers for parents/guardians, school administrators, local emergency services, and healthcare providers.
- Provide chaperones and staff with copies of emergency contact information and procedures.

### 2. **Incident Response:**

- Designate a primary contact person responsible for coordinating emergency responses during the trip.
- Implement procedures for handling medical emergencies, including access to first aid supplies and communication with emergency medical services.

## **Communication and Documentation:**

### 1. **Parental Communication:**

- Provide parents/guardians detailed information about the trip, including itinerary, transportation details, emergency procedures, and contact information.
- Obtain signed permission slips from parents/guardians for each participating student.

### 2. **Documentation:**

- Maintain accurate records of permission slips, emergency contact forms, student attendance, and any incidents or accidents during the trip.
- Conduct post-trip evaluations to assess safety measures' effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.



## **Review and Updates:**

NEIM Head of School will review these policies and procedures annually to ensure they remain current and effective in addressing safety concerns and regulatory requirements. Based on feedback, incident reviews, and changes in educational practices or regulations, updates may be made as needed.

## **Elementary Going Out**

Extended research within the community

## **Parent Education**

Parent education events will be offered throughout the year. We encourage you to explore the NEIM website [www.neim.us](http://www.neim.us) for more information about our program and links to valuable resources.

## **Weather**

In the case of inclement or questionable weather, we will follow the decision to hold, cancel, or delay the start of school, **based upon the Decorah Public school district**. These cancellations and late starts will be announced on KDHK 100.5 FM, KVIK 104.7 FM radio and websites. Television stations are KCRG and KWWL. On days school is announced as starting 2 hours late, NEIM will start at 10:00am. NEIM will not dismiss early or cancel school due to heat as NEIM is comfortably air-conditioned, therefore we will not dismiss early due to heat.

## **Blizzards**

In the event of a blizzard such that staff and/or children are unable to return home for the evening, all persons will be provided food, water and a place to sleep. Quiet games and stories will be read to entertain the children. Children will be allowed to sleep on their rest mats with their blankets. Upper Education children will sleep on the carpeted areas of the classrooms and make it as comfortable as possible. Staff will sleep in the same area as the children to provide supervision as needed. Utilizing snacks from the storage cupboards, food will be provided to all persons. Water is available for washing so that proper personal hygiene can be made available to all.

## **Tornado/Fire**

Tornado and fire drills will be practiced monthly as required by the state. Signs indicating correct evacuation routes will be posted in the classroom. Please talk with your child about these drills at the beginning of the school year to help answer any questions they may have and to alleviate any fears they may have about this. Each classroom will practice these drills on their own, announcing to the children that this is just a practice. However, NEIM is required to practice some drills which are unannounced, to indicate what it would be like if the drill were real. Guides will talk with the children about this early in the year. This is a policy regulated by the state.

## **Referrals and Services**

NEIM believes that families should be supported in making decisions about the services that their children may need and will provide access to services available in the community for extended needs (i.e. hearing/vision screening, speech services, etc.). Through the child empowerment agency, HAWC, and Northeast Iowa Community Action, we will do everything we can to help families find the services they need to achieve support for their families.

## **Licensing**

NEIM is currently licensed by the Iowa Department of Human Services to provide full or part time participation and child care, in compliance with the Iowa Administrative Code 641, Chapter 109.

## **Insurance**

Northeast Iowa Montessori holds an insurance policy necessary for basic liability insurance coverage.

## **Agencies involved with NEIM**

***Department of Human Services (DHS):*** This agency is a state agency that provides licensing for child care centers and preschools. Our license is reviewed every two years by DHS.

***Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R):*** This agency sets standards that childcare centers voluntarily follow to demonstrate increasing levels of excellence. The

***Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS):*** This is a system developed through CCR&R for quality assurance in preschools. Since we have a preschool curriculum in place at NEIM, we follow the QPPS standards developed by the Department of Human Services.

## **Home School Assistance Program (HSAP)**

The Decorah School district provides a certified teacher to families who choose to homeschool their children. This program checks in with NEIM Elementary students as part of a requirement of the Department of Human Services. The Elementary Guide also holds an Iowa teaching license.

**IQ4K - Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K®)** is Iowa's new Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for DHS licensed Child Care Centers and preschools, registered Child Development Homes and programs operating under the authority of an accredited school district or nonpublic school. IQ4K provides five levels of quality (building blocks) that programs can achieve and continue to improve on. By implementing Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), IQ4K® allows programs to assess their current grade across all areas of programming and devise a structured plan to increase the overall level of program quality.

***We are glad you are a part of Northeast Iowa Montessori School!***