



## **NHE KINDERGARTEN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. When does the school day begin?**

- The first bell rings at 7:50 am and the “tardy” bell rings at 8:00 am.
- Children can arrive as early as 7:30 am, but will be directed to the cafeteria or the library, where they will be monitored by staff members until 7:50 am.

### **2. When is school dismissed?**

- School is dismissed each day at 3:00 pm.
- See Question # 6 for more dismissal information.

### **3. May I walk my child to his/her classroom in the morning?**

- You may walk with your child to his/her classroom the first two days of school.
- Beginning the third day of school, you will be asked to hug and kiss your child in the "Hug Zone" at the front door of the school. From there, your child will walk into the building independently. There will be plenty of NHE staff members to assist the children if needed.

### **4. What if my child cries when I drop him or her off?**

- The Northwood Hills staff is highly experienced in making sure your child feels comforted and secure on the way to his or her classroom.
- If your child cries when you drop him or her off, it is in everyone’s best interest to remind them that you love them and then send them on their way.
- In most cases, the crying will have stopped before you even get back to your car.
- The longer you stay, the more upset your child will become.
- If your child does not calm down within a reasonable amount of time, we will contact you.

### **4. Should I come to the classroom to pick my child up in the afternoon?**

- No. Kindergarteners are dismissed through the regular dismissal procedures (see Question # 6).

### **5. Who may pick up my child from school?**

- Parents, guardians, or designated after-school childcare facilities may pick up a child from school, unless previously discussed with the teacher or front office staff.
- Additionally, the emergency contacts you list on your child’s emergency card may pick up your students with proper identification.

### **6. How are students dismissed from school?**

- Students have three options at dismissal time:
  - Car Riders – These students wait in the school until their ride arrives in the carpool lane. Placards will be given out so that staff members can call your student to the front when you arrive. When the child’s name is called, they will walk out the front door and they will be escorted to their car.
  - Walkers – These students will exit out of “A Hall” doors with a KN teacher. Then, depending on what you have designated with your child’s teacher, they either wait until a parent walks up to get them or they walk home.

- PACE or Daycare – These students are escorted to the appropriate place within the school.
- Please keep in mind that the first week of dismissal takes longer than usual, as everyone is trying to learn routines. By the second week of school, dismissal is usually complete by 3:12 pm.
- These procedures have been put in place to help ensure the safety of our students.

#### **7. Does my child need a backpack?**

- Yes, most kindergarten students carry a regular size backpack.
- Each day, a “B.E.E. book (Bring Everything Every day) with a behavior log and other important information will be sent home with your child. *Please check your child’s B.E.E. book daily*, initial the behavior log, and return the folder with your child the next day.

#### **8. Does my child need to bring his/her own lunch or can we purchase from the cafeteria?**

- Your child may either bring a lunch or purchase a lunch from the cafeteria.
- Please send items that are **easy to open** in your child’s lunch.
- Upon enrollment, all students are issued a personal identification number (PIN) to be used in the cafeteria. The PIN is unique to each child, and each child should memorize this number. Both your child’s teacher and the cafeteria staff have a list of PINs should your child forget. Parents may pre-pay for meals online (paypams.com) or by stopping by the cafeteria and funding his/her child’s account.
- After going through the cafeteria line and obtaining his/her food, the student will enter his/her PIN into a keypad at the cash register. A debit will be made to the student’s PIN account. If you choose to send money with your child each day, the money will be sent to the cafeteria prior to the kindergarten lunch period and added to your child’s account.
- A la carte items, including juice, ice cream, chips, packaged snacks etc. are available for an additional charge.
- Free and reduced price lunches are available and may be applied for by filling out the appropriate forms, issued upon enrollment. Students participating in these programs are treated exactly as paying students when going through the lunch line (i.e. they still have a PIN to enter and appropriate discounts are applied automatically).

#### **9. May I eat lunch with my child?**

- You may eat lunch in the cafeteria with your child. You must first sign in as a visitor inside the office and obtain a visitor’s badge. You and your child will sit and eat at designated guest tables, usually on the stage of the cafeteria.
- You may bring food in or purchase food from the cafeteria. You cannot debit your child’s pre-funded PIN account to buy your own lunch, so you should bring cash for your adult meal. That account is strictly for the child to whom it is issued.
- Your child is expected to walk in line with his/her class to and from the cafeteria.
- Please keep in mind that if you would like to conference with your child’s teacher, times should be arranged outside of lunch times.
- The NHE staff strongly encourages that parents **not** eat lunch with their child the first week of school, especially if your child has exhibited separation anxiety during the mornings. It is better that the child eats at the class table to meet new friends and learn the cafeteria procedures.
- The teachers will eat in the cafeteria with the students the first week of school, so these days are especially important for the child to eat with the class.

#### **10. What is the best way to communicate with my child’s teacher?**

- Daily folder
- Email
- Phone message on teacher’s line

- Communication is key and the NHE staff is here for you, too. However, please be understanding that teachers may only have limited availability at certain times a day. Please expect a response within 24 hours.
- If you need immediate assistance, please contact the front office.

#### 11. Does NHE have a dress code?

- The RISD School Board Policy states that a dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, instill discipline, avoid safety hazards, and teach respect for authority. Students at Northwood Hills Elementary are encouraged to take pride in their personal appearance. Cleanliness, neatness, modesty, safety, and effect on the learning environment are the criteria which should dictate choice of school dress and grooming. Please be aware of the following dress code standards which are in place for all students:
  - All skirts, shorts and dresses must be at least fingertip length.
  - Shorts are to be properly hemmed or cuffed. Cut-off jeans or boxer shorts are not permitted.
  - Pants, trousers, shorts, and similar clothing must be properly fitted and worn at the waist. Clothing should not be excessively large, worn, or longer than the heel.
  - Midriff tops, spaghetti straps, or see-through blouses will not be worn.
  - Girls' tank tops must have straps at least 2 adult fingers wide. No undergarments should be visible.
  - Hats, caps, or other types of headwear may not be worn inside the building
  - Boys may not wear sleeveless shirts.
  - Athletic shoes are expected for P.E. days and are also the most appropriate shoe for every school day. Backless shoes are not permitted for safety reasons.
  - Clothing shall not be worn that promotes gangs, lewd, offensive, vulgar language, or violence.
  - Clothing shall not be worn that promotes tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other prohibitive substance.
  - Any type of clothing or jewelry that might disrupt the learning environment will not be permitted.
  - If a teacher feels that a student's dress is inappropriate according to the dress code, the parent will be contacted and asked to bring a change of clothes.
- Fridays are designated as "NHE spirit days." Students are encouraged to wear NHE shirts on these days.
- Please dress your Kindergartener in clothes that allow him/her to take care of his/her own needs. For example, Velcro shoes, pants they can button on their own, easy to zip jackets, etc.
- It is recommended that you pack an extra set of clothes for your child to keep in his/her locker or backpack in case of spills or accidents. Please have all items labeled with your child's name.

#### 12. What school supplies will my kindergartener need?

- Pre-packaged school supplies are available from our PTA during "Meet the Teacher." If you purchase a pack, these packages contain all the necessary supplies and will be delivered directly to your child's classroom teacher. This is a cost effective and easy way to obtain your supplies.
- *This is the recommended way to purchase supplies, as most supplies in kindergarten will be shared amongst the classroom.*
- If you do not purchase supplies from PTA, you may purchase items from a local retailer. Supply lists are available in the school office or through the RISD website (risd.org).
- *Please do not label any purchased supplies with your child's name as the supplies will be shared amongst the classroom.*

### **13. Can I help volunteer at NHE or in the classroom?**

- Yes! We are proud of the rich tradition of parental involvement at NHE. In fact, our PTA regularly earns the Platinum award for the highest level of volunteer hours.
- A NHE volunteer form, which lists several different volunteer opportunities within the school, will be sent home soon after school begins.
- Per RISD policy, all volunteers in RISD schools must complete an online volunteer application and background check at <http://www.risd.org/group/community/VolunteerOpportunities.html>.
- The background check must be completed and cleared if you would like to participate or volunteer during school parties, special events, and field trips.

### **14. What is a room mom?**

- Each kindergarten class will have 1 or 2 room moms. The room moms will be the liaisons between the kindergarten teacher and the parents of the kindergarten students.
- Room moms assist with coordinating class parties, field trips, and any other needs the teacher may have.
- You can sign up to be a room mom at “Meet the Teacher”.

### **15. How will I get other communication home?**

- Every Tuesday, a large folder containing general school information will come home with your child. Please take the time to look carefully over the information contained in this folder. Sign and return the folder to school with your child every Wednesday.
- Shortly after school begins, you will receive an NHE Handbook and an RISD Student/Parent Guidebook and Student Code of Conduct. These tools will be useful references for all of your detailed questions.

### **16. When is “Meet the Teacher”?**

- Meet the Teacher is usually held the Friday before school starts. This is when you will meet your child’s teacher, designate how he/she will be getting home, and see the classroom for the first time.
- Teachers will call their students Friday morning to let them know they are in their class.
- At Meet the Teacher night, you will also be able to sign up for volunteer opportunities, join PTA, and purchase school supplies.

### **17. Do KN students take naps?**

- KN students in RISD do not take naps. Instruction is rigorous and teachers include varied learning styles in every lesson to help students stay engaged and participatory.

### **18. Do KN students get a snack during the day?**

- Yes, snacks are handed out each day at a designated snack time.
- Your child’s teacher will send home directions for supplying and providing snacks at the beginning of the school year.

### **19. What steps does NHE take to help ensure the safety of my child?**

- NHE and RISD consider student safety a top priority. The full NHE safety plan will be outlined in the handbook sent home the first few days of school. The major points of this plan include:
  - All visitors must report to the front office, sign in, and have an ID scanned in order to receive a visitor badge and be granted permission to enter the building.
  - All exterior doors remain locked at all times. Visitors to the front door must be granted access into the front office door. Other doors can only be opened with a district issued employee badge.
  - Only parents with an approved background check can volunteer in the class or assist during special events, such as parties and field trips.

- Safety drills (fire, tornado, evacuation, and lock-down) are practiced at NHE on a regular basis.
- NHE is equipped with multiple interior and exterior cameras.
- All classrooms have an emergency phone.
- Our full time nurse, Laurie Jones, is available for routine and emergency care.

**20. What happens if a child already knows a concept that others in the class are still learning?**

- One of the core philosophies at NHE is that all students deserve to advance at least one academic year for each year they are in school.
- Teachers at NHE differentiate instruction on varied levels for our students. If a student is assessed and he/she has mastered a current skill, then he/she pushes on to the next skill.
- Teachers also use small group instruction to provide lessons specific to students' levels. For example, KN students who already recognize letters and sounds will be instructed in a small group to work on blending sounds and making words while other students are working on independent centers. The students would then switch and a new lesson level could be provided to a new group. This strategy is used in all core curricular areas.

**21. Is NHE a bilingual school?**

- Northwood Hills is not a bilingual school, meaning that we deliver instruction in English only.
- If a student qualifies, ESL (English as a Second Language) services are provided to students in small groups outside of the regular classroom setting.
- We are lucky enough to have some bilingual staff members who help us communicate with parents as needed.

**22. Are there any after school care options for my child?**

- NHE has an after school program called PACE. More information is available in the office.

**23. How can I get connected with other families?**

- Future Falcon events are a great way to get to know other families and students before the school year starts.
- We encourage parents to attend school events, such as PTA meetings, to meet other families. Volunteering at school is also a way to get connected with other parents.
- Information on extracurricular activities (such as Scouts, sports teams, clubs) will be sent home at the beginning of the year.

**24. How do I request a specific teacher?**

- Teacher requests are not accepted or granted at NHE.
- Classes are formed in an effort to balance gender, ethnicity, abilities, personalities, strengths, and weaknesses. Therefore, it is imperative that you provide as much information as possible on the Kindergarten Questionnaire (in the KN round-up packet).
- If your child has any special needs that you would like for us to be aware of when placing him/her in a class, please either include this information in the KN Questionnaire, or attach a separate page with your enrollment paperwork. Examples include:
  - Extreme shyness
  - Extremely outgoing
  - Has not been around children his/her age before
  - Extremely sensitive
  - Learning concerns
  - Learning advanced