

Tri-Center Elementary



**Student Handbook
2025 - 2026**

TRI-CENTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**33980 310th Street
Neola, Iowa 51559**

**Elem. Telephone: (712) 485-2211
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Tri-Center Website: www.tctrojans.org**

2025-2026

ADMINISTRATION / FACULTY / STAFF

Angela Huseman	Superintendent
Jami Bertelsen	Elem. Principal
Sherry Wilson	Elem. Counselor
Lynsey Flemming	Preschool
Susie Fah	Preschool
Amy Wingert	Preschool
Megan Severn	3-Year-Old Preschool/Tiny Trojans
Angela Kozeal	Kindergarten
Wendy Wellman	Kindergarten
Emily Gunderson	Kindergarten
Kelli Finken	First Grade
Taylor Wedemeyer	First Grade
Judy Wiggins	First Grade
Megan Hough	Second Grade
Kiley Ryan	Second Grade
Karly Chmelka	Second Grade
Madilyn Minnehan	Third Grade
Jennifer Jensen	Third Grade
Kacey Ryan	Third Grade
Leigh Ann Petersen	Fourth Grade
Emily Hack	Fourth Grade
Abi Petersen	Fourth Grade
Justin Milliken	Fifth Grade
Beth Nielsen	Fifth Grade
Marquel Renberg	Fifth Grade
Liz Lyons	Art
Becky Thomas	P.E.
Claudia Baker	Music K-5
Machenzie Hoffman	Special Ed./Resource
Audree Redinbaugh	Special Ed./Resource
Wendy Matson	Title 1
Derek Sonderland	Title 1
Kiley Jenson	Elem. & MS TAG
Amanda Stamp	School Nurse
Jennifer Watson	Elem. Secretary
Connie Wilke	Custodian

**Tri-Center Community School's Mission:
"Committed To Maximizing Student Potential."**

Tri-Center Community School Belief Statements:

- All students can learn and succeed, although in different ways and at an individual pace.
- Learning should take place in real-life contexts and should reflect the interrelated nature of the subject area. Using resources in the community can help students understand how present learning is connected to future work experiences.
- Learning should be approached as a life-long, continual process.
- In order to function in a global society, students need to understand individual and cultural diversities.
- It is the responsibility of everyone associated with the school to develop a climate that fosters positive self-concepts and self-esteem.
- Learning occurs best in a safe, clean, attractive, and comfortable, non-threatening environment.
- Students learn best when their unique personal, social, and academic needs are met by caring teachers and administrators.
- Excellence will be achieved by hiring, nurturing, and retaining innovative teachers who are leaders in their field.
- Learning occurs best when students are involved in a variety of academic and extracurricular activities.
- Self-discipline, personal responsibility, respect, and a commitment to a strong work ethic will be encouraged, expected, and exemplified.
- Family and community support enhances the learning process.
- Functional families are an integral part of student achievement.

Tri-Center Community School District Goals

- Align Curriculum (Pre-K through 12)
- Promote Community Involvement
- Refine Classroom Instruction
- Improve Student Achievement
- Strengthen Life Skills

Tri-Center Community School's Student Achievement Goals:

- Respect self and others
- Communicate effectively
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Use resources effectively
- Problem-solve
- Be lifelong learners
- Demonstrate responsibility
- Live and work cooperatively
- Set and implement realistic goals
- Meet Tri-Center academic standards/requirements

This handbook is an extension of board policy and is a reflection of the goals and objectives of the board. The board, administration, and employees expect students to conduct themselves in a manner fitting to their age level and maturity and with respect and consideration for the rights of others. Students are expected to treat teachers, other employees, students, visitors, and guests with respect and courtesy. Students are not to use abusive language, profanity, or obscene gestures or language. Public displays of affection are limited to handholding only.

This handbook and school district policies, rules and regulations are in effect while students are on school grounds, school district property, or on property within the jurisdiction of the school district, while on school-owned and/or school-operated buses or vehicles or chartered buses, while attending or engaged in school activities, and, while away from school grounds if the misconduct directly affects the good order, efficient management and welfare of the school district or involves students or staff. School district policies, rules and regulations are in effect 12 months a year. A violation of a school policy, rule or regulation may result in disciplinary action and may affect a student's eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities, whether the violation occurred while school was in session or not.

Students are expected to comply with and abide by the school district's policies, rules and regulations. Students who fail to abide by the school district's policies, rules and regulations may be disciplined for: conduct which disrupts or interferes with the educational program; conduct which disrupts the rights of other students to obtain their education or to participate in school activities; or conduct which interrupts the maintenance of a disciplined atmosphere. Disciplinary measures include but are not limited to, removal from the classroom, detention, suspension, probation and expulsion. Discipline can also include prohibition from participating in extracurricular activities, including athletics. This discipline imposed is based upon the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident and the student's record.

The school reserves the right to modify, eliminate or establish school district policies, rules and regulations as circumstances warrant, including those contained in the handbook. Students are expected to know the contents of the handbook and comply with it. Students or parents with questions or concerns may contact the office for information about the current enforcement of the policies, rules and regulations of the school district.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

These rights and responsibilities apply to all persons, students and staff at Tri-Center Elementary School during the entire school day, during travel to and from school, and while representing Tri-Center at school activities.

1. The right to develop one's own personality (so long as it does not interfere with the rights of others) without disrespectful criticism or pressure from others.
2. Freedom from physical and mental abuse such as name-calling, intimidation, or harassment.
3. Freedom from being set apart or mocked because of race, sex, religion, physical strength, size, features, friendship groups, age, culture, handicap, financial status, clothing, classroom performance, etc.
4. The right to privacy and freedom from being harassed inside and outside the classroom, the right to be treated respectfully.
5. The right to an education; teachers should be free to teach and students free to learn without being interrupted by inconsiderate or unruly students.
6. The right to have personal and school property respected is a part of human rights and responsibilities. Our school community should be a safe place for property as well as people.
7. The right of our personnel and volunteers supervising school areas to receive our cooperation.

8. The right of those who clean and maintain our school to receive our cooperation and assistance.
9. The right of those who prepare and serve our food to receive our respect, cooperation and gratitude.
10. The responsibility to see that one's actions represent the qualities and standards that Tri-Center strives to build and maintain.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

NONDISCRIMINATION/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Tri-Center Community School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment) marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact the district's Equity Coordinator, Chad Harder, Secondary Principal, Tri-Center Community Schools, 33980 310th Street, Neola, IA 51559, 712-485-2211, charder@tctrojans.org.

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Children enrolled in the Tri-Center Community School District shall have an equal opportunity for a quality public education without discrimination regardless of their race, creed, sex, marital status, national origin, or disability. Equal opportunity, in compliance with state and federal laws, shall apply to the programs and activities offered by the school district. Any questions regarding compliance with equal educational opportunity should be directed to the superintendent or designee.

SCHOOL HOURS

Elementary classes begin at 8:05 am and conclude at 3:20 pm. Students are not to arrive at school prior to 7:50 a.m. If it should become necessary for a student to come to school before the designated time, the student will report to the Tri-Center Before/Aftercare program, and parents will be responsible for paying the weekly bill. The buses usually begin arriving around 8:00 a.m. Anyone visiting the school must enter the main office, sign in, and receive a visitor pass. All other entrances will be locked.

POLICY ON ABSENTEEISM

The State of Iowa law mandates 180 days or a minimum of 1,080 hours of school attendance. The Tri-Center School District asks that when your child is unable to be at school, please call the school by 9:00 a.m. to explain the reason for the absence. A telephone call will be made to your home if we do not hear from you. A doctor's note to explain prolonged or frequent absences may be requested. When absences are frequent and/or unexcused, a home visit may be made. When you know ahead of time specific dates when your child is going to be absent, please inform the school. Arrangements will be made to send homework home in advance of such absences. All work missed during any absence is to be made up. However, it is best for a student's school achievement to be in school each and every day.

Any student who accumulates five or more unexcused absences from any class or classes may be removed from that class. Excessive absences from school or class are referred to as chronic absenteeism. Should a student be absent (excused or unexcused) ten times per semester, s/he would be considered chronically absent and, therefore, may be subject to removal from a class or classes. Parents will be notified of the fifth, eighth, and tenth absences. Upon the tenth absence, the student shall be required to meet with the guidance

counselor and the principal to discuss the student's grades, effort, and possibilities of remaining in class. If, however, the student continues to be absent after such a hearing, s/he may be called before the county attorney and/or the Board of Education. A student who arrives after 8:05 is tardy.

Perfect Attendance

"Perfect Attendance" means that a student is at school all day, every day, for the entire school year. This means that a student has no tardies, early sign-outs, or full or partial absences (excused or unexcused) on their record.

ASSIGNMENT NOTEBOOKS

These are provided by the district to students in grades three through five. They are an excellent way for parents to see homework assignments and upcoming tests. They also give you a direct link of communication with your child and the teacher.

BIRTH CERTIFICATES

A copy of a student's birth certificate must be presented upon enrolling at school. A hospital certificate does not constitute a legal birth certificate.

BIRTHDAYS

Having a birthday at school can be very special. Many students bring treats, but they should be sure to bring enough for the entire class. Treats should be taken to the teacher upon arrival so they can be placed out of the way until an appropriate time in the day can be utilized for them to be shared. Parents coming to eat lunch with their child are not to bring extra food for other children. **Invitations to parties cannot be distributed to other children at school.** The only exception is when ALL students of the classroom or grade level are invited.

BOOKBAGS

Every student needs a book bag to transport books, papers, and other materials back and forth from home to school. They should be clearly labeled with the student's name. We recommend that they be waterproof as well.

BUS EXPECTATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

For safety reasons, bus safety rules must be followed. Please discuss with your child proper behavior on the bus.

As with any school function or activity, students are expected to behave in an appropriate manner. Children riding the school bus are under the authority of the driver. Students who ride to school on a bus are expected to ride home on the bus unless they have a written note from their parents or guardian. The drivers will not discharge riders at places other than their regular bus stop without permission from the rider's parents.

- Obey the driver and bus rules at all times.
- Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- Keep head, arms, body and feet inside the windows.
- Keep hands and feet out of the aisles.

- Do not scuffle, yell, throw objects, litter, destroy school or personal property of others, or create disturbances deemed unsafe by the driver or proprietor.
- Use appropriate language at all times. Use of abusive, profane, or obscene language and gestures is prohibited.

Students who choose to disobey these rules may be issued a Bus Conduct Report. The principal and/or transportation director reviews and communicates these reports to the student's parents. When a student has been issued his/her bus conduct report on the third offense, transportation privileges may be denied and will resume at a time determined by the principal. Depending on the severity of the incident, transportation privileges may be denied immediately after the first offense. The bus driver also has the right to deny transportation to a student who is endangering others at any time.

Misbehavior on the bus: Penalty is at the discretion of the principal and/or transportation director, depending on the circumstances. It may include removal from the bus for 1 to 90 days or permanent removal from the bus. Serious misbehavior on the bus may also be cause for punishment up to and including suspension or expulsion from school.

YELLOW BUS TICKETS

Students who are planning on riding a different bus than the bus they normally ride after school need to pick up a yellow ticket in the Elementary office. This ticket will need to be given to the bus driver of the bus that they are riding. The office will need a phone call, email or a note from a parent by 1:30 in order for the student to get the ticket to get on a different bus.

Buses will not drop students off at the NACC, at a friend's house, to a birthday party, to a ball practice, music or art lesson, cub/boy/girls scouts, church group meeting or any situation where they don't normally ride their bus to go home or to daycare. **No yellow bus tickets are needed for students to go home or go to their normal daycare.**

This procedure will help alert bus drivers to which students are different riders on their bus route.

CANDY AND GUM

Gum chewing will only be allowed in classrooms if the teacher gives permission. Treats can only be brought to school on birthdays and special days and must be given to the teacher until distribution time.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR PHONE

Please notify us when you have changes to your address. It is important for us to keep our records up to date. When you move out of the district, a form will be signed by the parents at the new school so that we can send official records to the new school district.

CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

We realize that placement is paramount to each student's academic and social success in school. Not only are we assigning a teacher to each student, but we are also creating student groups in which we hope learning can flourish. When making classroom assignments for children, we consider many factors for each child. Here is the process we use to determine class rosters.

During Grade-Level Teacher Discussions:

Goal 1: Determine academically heterogeneous groups for each classroom.

Process:

1. Analyze each student's academic progress and their interaction with the other children.
2. Heterogeneous groups are made with a discussion about what the teacher thinks is best for each child.
3. Make sure each class has students with high, average, and low abilities so students can learn from each other.
4. Considerations from IEP goals and SPED teachers are consulted and arranged for placement.

Goal 2: Consider a child's personality when making a classroom placement.

Reflection Questions:

1. Is the student shy, reserved, aggressive, outgoing?
2. Does the student have a personality conflict with any other student or teacher?
3. Does the student depend on another student for decision-making?
4. Are there combinations of students that may hinder learning for others?

Goal 3: Create a balance of student genders within the classroom.

A balance of girls and boys in the classroom creates a comfortable atmosphere for children during whole-group, small-group, and partner activities.

With all these factors considered, I trust our staff will be able to provide the best possible placement for your children to learn and grow in the next school year.

As a parent, there may be something about your child that we need to know when determining his/her classroom placement. Please write that information down and send it to the principal before the end of April each year. With all things considered, we hope to provide the best possible place for our children to learn and grow.

COUNSELOR SERVICES

A child can participate in three areas of the Guidance program. These areas are individual, with the whole class, or in small groups.

Individual Counseling: A student may be referred to the counselor by a parent a teacher or may come visit on their own accord. Usually, the counselor and the student talk on a "one-to-one" basis, trying to help the student with a particular concern.

Small Groups: Students are put in small groups of about three to five children. They usually share the same concerns or problems and can benefit from interacting with each other. This could be a group whose parents are divorced or who may be having trouble in school-related matters.

Classroom Guidance: Topics are covered with the whole class, which will benefit all the students. These can be topics that the teacher feels will benefit his/her students or can be ones that address the developmental needs of a certain age group.

If you would like to discuss something with the counselor, please call the elementary office.

CUSTODIAL PARENTS AND NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

We have some very tricky situations with regard to custody of children in this day and age and how it relates to children in school. It may seem a bit confusing. We need to have on file any court-ordered visitation, pick-up of a child, or release of academic information limitations that might be stated in a separation or divorce decree. If we do not have a record of this decree, we legally must grant those privileges to both the custodial and the non-custodial parent. If you have any questions, please contact the principal.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The rules and regulations of the Iowa Department of Health pertaining to the control of communicable diseases in schools are available from the school nurse. Children with any of these diseases should be under a physician's care. The school nurse should also be contacted. A special note from the nurse will be sent home when children have been exposed to a communicable disease at school.

DELIVERIES TO STUDENTS

Any deliveries must be brought to the office. Personal items, books, and lunches will be taken to the students as soon as possible. Balloons, flowers, and other gifts will be distributed at the end of the day.

DISCIPLINE

Effective discipline is necessary for quality education to occur. A goal of Tri-Center schools is to meet the needs of each individual student. To meet the goal, it is essential for the home and school to work closely together in promoting student self-discipline, responsibility, and appreciation of the rights of others. Please call the teacher or principal when you have unusual home conditions that may be particularly upsetting to your child. The information may help facilitate our understanding of problems that may arise.

Discipline begins at home. We want every child to behave in a manner that will let all students get the most from school. At school, we must see that students are not denied learning opportunities due to behavior problems in the classroom. The home and school working together on discipline will result in good behavior.

Disciplinary notices may be sent home to parents regarding a child's behavior.

DRESS CODE

While the primary responsibility for appearance rests with the students and their parents, the administration reserves the right to judge what is proper and what is not. Decisions will be made based on clothing that is sanitary, decent, safe, and not disruptive to the learning process. Your dress and general appearance are a reflection of you. The impressions you make are important to yourself and your school. If any staff member finds the student's attire objectionable, the student will have to change his/her clothes. If a change cannot be made, the student will be sent home to change. The following shall apply to all students:

1. Students must wear reasonable footwear and keep it on at all times during the school day.
2. Students must wear clean, recently washed clothing that fits properly and is not offensive to students and/or school officials.
3. All clothing that advertises alcohol, tobacco, or an illegal substance shall be prohibited.
4. Short shorts, halter tops, tube tops, spaghetti strap tops, ripped T-shirts, or any article of clothing that exposes the midriff or buttocks are not permitted.
5. Hats, caps, or sunglasses are not suitable attire unless special notice is given permitting students to wear such items.

6. Hairstyles must be in keeping with the ideals of cleanliness, neatness, and good grooming.
7. Clothing with large holes, rips, or slashes will not be allowed.
8. No Heelys or roller shoes are allowed at school.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Students who use or have possession of alcohol, tobacco, vapes, or illegal drugs or show evidence of being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on school property, at school activities, or on school vehicles will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

1st offense-The student shall be suspended from school for up to five days. A parent conference will be held, and the police authorities may be notified.

2nd offense-The student shall be suspended immediately and referred to the Board of Education for review and disciplinary action. Parents and police authorities shall be notified immediately.

****Students caught selling or distributing alcohol, tobacco, vapes, or illegal drugs on school property, on school vehicles, or at school activities shall be suspended immediately and referred to the Board of Education for review and disciplinary action. Parents and police authorities shall be notified immediately.**

DRILLS

Fire and tornado drills are held periodically throughout the year to prepare for an actual fire or tornado. Please stress the importance of these drills with your children. Lockdown drills are practiced through tabletop activities and/or an actual practice drill.

EARLY DISMISSAL

It is sometimes necessary to dismiss school early due to inclement weather. **Your child's teacher should be made aware of where your child is to be sent if school is dismissed early. Please inform the teacher of your wishes at the beginning of the year.** If school is dismissed early, an automated PowerSchool message will be sent to parents via text, email and/or phone message. It will be posted on our district's social media, and local television stations will carry the announcement. Please make sure your current phone numbers are on file.

If a child must leave school early (for a doctor's appointment, etc.), a written excuse or telephone call must be provided to the school. We cannot permit a child to just leave during the day. Each child is required to check out at the office upon leaving or entering the school building after school has begun.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Iowa law states, "No child shall be admitted to any public school for the year immediately preceding the first grade unless she/he is five years of age on or before the fifteenth of September of the current school year. There are no exceptions to this law.

EXCUSES RELATED TO ACTIVITIES

Students will be required to participate in outdoor recess activities unless they bring a written excuse daily. A student who is too sick to go outdoors for a few minutes is probably too sick to be in school. The principal may require a doctor's note if such requests are received more than a few days in a row. Physical education classes are a required part of the school curriculum. A written excuse will also be needed for a

student to be excused from physical education. The principal may require a doctor's note when the excuses appear to become excessive.

NOTES FROM HOME

A note/call from home is required if a child is to leave during the school day (i.e. doctor or dentist appointment, funeral, etc.). Keep the schoolteachers and office informed about things that are exceptions from your normal routine.

A note from home is also required if your child is going to ride a different bus than usual or to go anywhere than they normally go.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are well-planned educational experiences for students. These trips are meant to be extensions of classroom experiences. They do have educational value and are considered a day of school. Written permission is necessary for your child to be able to go on the field trip. Permission slips will be sent home prior to the trip. You may be asked to join the field trip activity to provide adult supervision.

FIGHTING

An in-school suspension or a suspension of up to three days from school may be given to students involved in fighting or physical contact on school property, during school activities, or on school transportation vehicles.

FIREARMS/WEAPONS POLICY

Any student who brings a firearm or weapon to school or to a school activity shall be suspended immediately and recommended for expulsion from school for one year unless the superintendent elects to recommend modification of the penalty on a case-by-case basis. In deciding whether to recommend that the board-adopted penalty not be applied to a student who brings a firearm to school, the principal, superintendent, and other appropriate individuals shall confer to consider the student's status, including age, grade, and special needs, and the circumstances under which the student brought a weapon to school, including the student's knowledge, purpose, and apparent intent.

The superintendent shall promptly notify and refer to law enforcement or juvenile authorities any student who brings a firearm to school. Students shall not possess toy weapons or "lookalike" weapons at school except with the knowledge and permission of a teacher, coach, or administrator, and then only for school or educational purposes. Violation of this policy shall result in confiscation of the "weapon" and detention or suspension, depending on the student's disciplinary history.

Any student who threatens another person on school property or at a school event with a dangerous weapon or an object that resembles a dangerous weapon, including but not limited to a toy pistol or rifle, squirt gun, cap gun, rubber knife, or plastic grenade, or who displays any object in such a manner as reasonably to place another person in fear for his or her safety shall be subject to discipline by the principal or superintendent including possible suspension and recommendation for expulsion.

HAZING

Swirlies or other forms of hazing will not be tolerated. Offenders will be subject to suspension.

GRADING SCALE

A+	99 - 100	C+	84 - 85	F	69 -Below
A	95 - 98	C	81 - 83		
A-	93 - 94	C-	78 - 80		
B+	91 - 92	D+	76 - 77		
B	88 - 90	D	72 - 75		
B-	86 - 87	D-	70 - 71		

HEAD LICE

Head lice persist as a problem for Iowa school-age children. Joanna Ibarra's paper entitled "Head Lice in School Children" remains a source of insight on how best to deal with head lice. After studying Ibarra's research, the Iowa Department of Public Health changed the treatment approach for head lice.

1. Routine school-based screenings have been discontinued. The parent is held responsible for doing the screenings. Parents should screen their children weekly for 15-20 minutes in good light. Parents should screen every evening if concerned. School staff members and parents should assume there are head lice in the community and schools at all times.
2. Any school personnel member may refer a child to the school nurse for an individual screen. All screenings will be completed in the child's privacy.
3. If head lice are found, the parent will be notified. The treatment protocol can be reviewed at this time. Although children are allowed to remain in school for the balance of the day, parents are highly encouraged to remove their child immediately! Letters may be sent home with other classmates to let parents know that head lice were found in their child's classroom. Names of the infested child are kept confidential.
4. Parents are encouraged to conduct the two-week shampoo and wet combing technique for lice removal and elimination. This technique has been proven effective, is the least expensive, and is the least toxic. Head lice shampoo is found at local pharmacies and some grocery stores. The shampoo is medicated, and you should always read the warning label on the package before using. Like any over-the-counter medication, you can consult your physician or pharmacist for questions or concerns.
5. Most of your time and energy should be spent removing lice and nits from the child's hair. To prevent re-infestation, it is recommended to launder bed linens, vacuum all upholstery & carpets and place all stuffed animals in a sealed, plastic bag for 2 weeks. Once lice are found on a member of the household, all members of the household should be checked routinely. Promptly treat everyone on the same day if they have it.
6. Parents, if you have found head lice on your child or treated your child for head lice, please notify the school nurse.
7. "No nit" policies have been discontinued.
8. When head lice seem impossible to treat, call your physician. They can prescribe head lice treatment products or validate the effectiveness of home remedies.

9. In the event that a child's head lice continues for a prolonged period or becomes a repetitive issue, Tri-Center Community School District reserves the right to keep the child out of school until free of head lice and/or nits. Tri-Center may also insist on a doctor's order before the child can continue to attend school. Should it become apparent that neglect is present, authorities will be contacted immediately.
10. Head lice infestation is a nationwide problem. Nits and lice are a challenge to conquer, but with the patience and persistence of the family, school can be lice-free. However, the problem must be dealt with, or it will not go away.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

If a student is homeless, please let us know so that we may help provide assistance.

Iowa Definition: Chapter 33, Educating the Homeless, Iowa Administrative Code

A homeless child of school age includes:

- A child between the ages of 5 and 21;
- A child who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence;
- A child who is living in a car, tent, or abandoned building or some other form of shelter not defined as a permanent home;
- A child who is living in a community shelter facility;
- A child who is living with non-nuclear family members or with friends (includes doubled-up families)

HOMEWORK

Assigned homework is an extension of the daily school program. We expect homework assignments to be completed and returned the following day. Homework may include completion of school assignments, work on basic skills, or make-up work. If you have any questions regarding homework assignments, contact the teacher.

IMMUNIZATION LAW

Each child must be immunized against tetanus, pertussis, polio, diphtheria, rubella, and measles before being admitted to school. Any student born after July 1, 94 must have Hepatitis B series to enroll in Iowa schools. One of the following must be secured and presented to the school upon entering:

1. Certificate of Immunization
2. Provisional Certificate.
3. Certificate of Immunization Exemption.

Children who have a Provisional Certificate must have the immunization completed within 120 days. Medical exemption can only be granted by a doctor. If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse.

TEMPERATURE AND INCLEMENT WEATHER

Students will go outside for recess unless it is raining or the temperature feels 10 degrees or below. Students are responsible for their own attire and will be outside for recess with what is sent with them from home. It is important to look at the daily forecast, as temperatures can vary greatly in the spring and fall.

During cold/winter weather, students must come to school dressed warmly, including gloves and hats. During wet or snowy weather, students must wear boots and snow pants. Students must have both snow pants

and boots on to play in the snow. If they do not have snow pants and boots on, they will need to stay on the cement where the snow has been scooped. An announcement will be made as early as possible when school is to be closed due to the weather. If school is canceled, a late start, or dismissed early, an automated PowerSchool message will be sent to parents via text, email, and/or phone message. It will be posted on our district's social media, and local television stations will carry the announcement. Please make sure your current phone numbers are on file.

INSURANCE

School insurance may be purchased at the beginning of the school year. An enrollment form will be sent home. There are various coverage packages offered for those interested.

KINDERGARTEN MEET-AND-GREET/PRESCHOOL STEP-UP

The kindergarten meet-and-greet is held in the spring. It is for prospective new kindergarten students and their families not currently enrolled in our preschool program. Our in-district preschool students have a kindergarten step-up day, during which they have the opportunity to meet and spend some time in the kindergarten classrooms with the kindergarten teachers.

LEVEL I INVESTIGATORS

The Tri-Center Level I Investigators responsible for investigating the abuse of students by employees are the high school, middle school, and elementary guidance counselors.

LEVEL II INVESTIGATORS

The Tri-Center Level II investigator responsible for investigating the abuse of students by employees is the Pottawattamie Sheriff.

LOST AND FOUND

Please put your child's name on all items going to school (including coats, hats, mittens, boots, etc.). Labeling items will help identify found items and settle questions regarding ownership. A lost and found area is located in or near the office.

LUNCHES

A hot lunch is made available to all students. One carton of milk is provided with each hot lunch. Each family is assigned a lunch account that should be maintained at a positive balance through regular deposits. If a family's account is at a negative \$5.00 balance, no breakfast is allowed. If a family's account is at a negative \$10.00, a student will be provided a peanut butter sandwich and a carton of milk. The account will be charged for the sandwich and milk. Applications for free or reduced lunches are available at registration. They can also be sent home upon request at any time during the school year. Those who may qualify are to fill out the forms and send them back to school for consideration.

Good behavior is expected in the lunchroom at all times. Good manners are a must. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Students are not allowed to drink soda in the lunchroom due to the fact that the Federal Lunch program does not allow it. Parents coming to eat lunch with their children are not to bring extra food for other children in the classroom. Depending on the amount of illness/sickness, there may be times the

CDC and Health Department recommend the school not allow visitors during lunch in order to keep our students and staff healthy and in school.

LIBRARY BOOKS

Students are given the opportunity to check out books weekly. Each student is responsible for returning books on time. Books not returned on time are subject to a fine. Books not returned will have to be paid for by the student.

MEDICATION

Students who have a doctor's prescription for medicine may receive it at school. However, all such medicine must be in a container marked with the pharmacist's label, clearly marked with the student's name and the amount prescribed. Such medication must be kept in the nurse's office, and the students will need to come to the nurse's office to receive the medication. To administer this medication, the school will need to have a school form signed by the family. These forms will be sent home to you at the beginning of the year.

MILK BREAK

Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade students have a milk break each day. This is "extra milk" and requires that you pay a one-time milk fee.

NEWSLETTERS

Announcements will be sent home occasionally with your child. Encourage your child to bring them home and share them with you.

NURSE

If you have a health-related question concerning your child and school, please contact the school nurse. Please remember the nurse will not diagnose illnesses.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

All matters pertaining to open enrollment in or out of the Tri-Center Community School District must be brought to the attention of the Superintendent of Schools. Certain specifications and deadlines are necessary to make open enrollment valid and state-approved.

PARENTS RIGHTS

As a parent, you may review your child's permanent school records. Please contact the school for an appointment to make such a review. School employees respect the privacy of student records. Only important factual information will be included in the permanent records. Board of Education policy limits access to that information. Permission by the parents is needed for such records/information to be given to outside district sources.

As parents, if you suspect abuse of your child by school personnel, you should contact one of the following persons: **Angela Huseman, Superintendent; Jami Bertelsen, Elementary Principal; Sherry Wilson, Elementary Counselor at the number 485-2211**

PETS AT SCHOOL

Permission must be obtained from the teacher and the principal before any pet is brought to school. Animals may not be brought on the school bus. An adult must bring the animal to school, show it to the class, and then take it home. Dogs and cats must have rabies vaccinations before being brought to school. Animals considered wild and illegal to be in your possession are not allowed at school. Any animal running loose around the school will be picked up by the animal control officer.

PICTURES

All students will have their pictures taken each fall. You will be informed of the date and picture packages available for purchase. You will need to decide which package, if any, you want to purchase and send the money to school. The picture company is in charge of all pictures and monetary transactions. Any questions will need to be directed to them. They provide a number on their brochure for you to call. Students must have the money before the pictures can be taken if a package is to be purchased.

Playground Expectations

The school playground has space for many different activities. Supervision is provided during recess times. Teachers will make students aware of the playground rules at the beginning of the year. In general terms, however, we do not allow roughhouse play at any time. Students are to respect the rights of others and play fairly and safely.

Students are expected to be dressed for the weather and go outside if they attend school. A doctor's note is needed if students are to stay inside due to illness, including a date that the child can return to recess. These expectations will be discussed and reviewed with the students throughout the school year. All playground supervisors are expected to consistently enforce these guidelines. Additional rules may be added if needed. Students who do not obey the playground rules may receive consequences that include but are not limited to loss of privileges, loss of recess time, contact with parents, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion.

1. Tackle football is not permitted on the playground, and no other games that involve rough play or inappropriate physical contact will be permitted. Students must be in control of their own bodies.
2. Students must get permission from a playground supervisor if they need to come into the building during recess.
3. Students are only allowed to play in areas designated by staff on duty.
4. There is no climbing on the fences, trees, railings, or playing outside of the fenced-in playground.
5. There will be no throwing or kicking of any objects other than play equipment. Balls may be kicked until they pose a safety issue.
6. Students should use playground equipment as it was intended, inappropriate use is not allowed.
7. When the whistle blows to end recess, students must stop playing immediately and line up at the appropriate location or entry. Once in line, students should remain orderly and enter the school in a quiet manner.
8. Inappropriate language is not permitted.
9. Skateboards, roller skates and/or electronic devices, including cell phones, are not allowed on the playground.
10. Boots and snow pants are required to play off the blacktop during snowy conditions.
11. Fighting using physical means, such as kicking, hitting, scratching, pushing, pinching, biting, etc. is not permitted.
12. Vandalizing school property while on the playground and/or school grounds is not permitted.

PRESCHOOL

The TC Preschool is a state-funded program for four-year-olds. If you would like enrollment information, please contact the office. If your child is five by September 15 of the current school year, your child will be a kindergarten student.

REGISTRATION FEES

Textbooks are provided at no charge. Each student is assessed a fee for workbooks or other materials. If you move out of the district, a refund is granted based on an approved schedule.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are sent home at the end of each nine weeks except at conference time, in which they are given to the parents. The grades reflect the progress and achievement your child has made. You are asked to review the report card and return it to school with your signature at the teacher's request. When you have questions regarding a grade given or about your child's educational progress in general, please contact the teacher.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

Referrals for psychological services can be made by teachers and parents through the principal. These services can include an evaluation of a child's abilities and/or learning difficulties with parental permission.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

Referrals for social worker services must be made to the school counselor or principal. A social worker is not an employee of the Department of Human Services. These services help students and families deal with family, social, or personal problems.

SHOES ARE REQUIRED

All children must wear shoes at school. This is for safety reasons, and it is also recommended by Fire Code Regulations. You can imagine students taking the time to look for and put on shoes when we need to evacuate for a fire. To ensure your child's safety in winter, see to it that they have shoes to wear at school besides boots for outside.

SMOKING/CHEWING

Smoking or possession of tobacco or vaping paraphernalia on school property, including school building grounds, on school transportation vehicles, in vehicles that are on school property, or at any school activity, home or away, is punishable as follows:

1st offense-One day in-school suspension

2nd offense-Suspension, either in school or out of school (number of days to be determined by principal)

3rd offense-Brought before the Board of Education for disciplinary action.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Resource programs are available in our building. A Teacher Assistance Team operates in our building to address the needs of some of our students. A student who needs special services is referred to the team, and recommendations are made for further action.

SPECIAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY AEA XIII AUDIOLOGISTS

An audiologist and audiometric check the hearing of each student during the year. If you wish to have your child's hearing tested, contact the office. There is no charge for this service.

SPEECH/LANGUAGE SERVICES

Referrals for speech and language services can be made by teachers and parents to the principal. These services include:

a) Identification of communication problems (examples: articulation, mispronouncing speech sounds, language, difficulty in understanding or using words, unusual voice characteristics, hoarseness, loudness, disfluency, repetitions, blocks or prolongation of words; b) Remediation of communication problems; and c) prevention activities.

STUDENT SEARCHES

In order to protect the health and safety of students, employees, and visitors to the school district and for the protection of the school district facilities, students and their belongings, and school-owned lockers and desks may be searched or inspected. Students and their belongings may also be searched when riding the school bus. A search of a student will be justified when there are reasonable grounds for the suspicion that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or school district policy, rules, or regulations affecting school order.

Considering factors such as the following may form reasonable suspicion:

- (1) eyewitness observations by employees;
- (2) information received from reliable sources;
- (3) suspicious behavior by the student; or,
- (4) the student's past history and school record, although this factor alone is not sufficient to provide the basis for reasonable suspicion.

A search will be permissible in its scope or intrusiveness when the measures adopted are reasonably related to the objectives of the search. Reasonableness of scope or intrusiveness may be determined based on factors such as the following:

- the age of the student
- the sex of the student
- the nature of the infraction
- the emergency requiring the search without delay.

A student's body and/or personal effects (e.g., purse, backpack, etc.) may be searched when a school official has reasonable suspicion to believe the student is in possession of illegal or contraband items or has violated school district policies, rules, regulations or the law affecting school order. Personally, intrusive searches will require more compelling circumstances to be considered reasonable. If a pat-down search or a search of a student's garments (such as jackets, socks, pockets, etc.) is conducted, it will be conducted in private by a school official

of the same sex as the student and with another adult witness of the same sex present, when feasible. A more intrusive search, short of a strip search, of the student's body, handbags, book bags, etc., is permissible in emergency situations when the health and safety of students, employees, or visitors are threatened. Such a search may only be conducted in private by a school official of the same sex as the student, with an adult of the same sex present, unless the health or safety of students will be endangered by the delay which may be caused by following these procedures.

STUDENT-TO-STUDENT HARASSMENT

Harassment, physical or verbal, and abuse are violations of school district policies, rules and regulations and, in some cases, may be a violation of criminal or other laws. The school district has the authority to report students violating this rule to law enforcement officials. Students who feel that they have been harassed should communicate to the harasser that the student expects the behavior to stop, if the student is comfortable doing so. If the student needs assistance communicating with the harasser, the student should ask a teacher, counselor, or principal to help. If the harassment does not stop, or the student does not feel comfortable confronting the harasser, the student should tell a teacher, counselor, or principal, and write down exactly what happened, keep a copy and give another copy to the teacher, counselor, or principal. Any student who is guilty of harassing may be suspended or possibly expelled from school.

TALENTED AND GIFTED SERVICES (TAG)

Gifted students need flexibility and independence within an appropriate structure to allow for the diverse needs of high-ability thinkers, researchers, and artists. We will provide opportunities to explore widely and delve deeply into interest areas. It is the desire of the Tri-Center Community School District to enable learners to develop to their potential, with self-direction and independence, toward becoming creative producers and life-long learners. For talented and gifted criteria and identification, please see our Tri-Center Talented and Gifted Program handbook.

TELEPHONES

Use of the school telephone by students is permitted only in case of an emergency. Please do not call your children during the school day. Emergency messages may be left with the school secretary.

Elementary School (Grades PK–5)

Instructional time in the elementary is continuous from **8:05 a.m. to 3:20 p.m.** During these hours, **students will not be permitted to have communication devices (phones, smartwatches, gizmo watches, etc.) in their possession.** Devices must remain in backpacks or lockers and powered off.

Violations & Consequences

In order to maintain consistency and fairness, we will be enforcing the following steps for students who do not comply with the cell phone and device policy:

- **First Violation:**

The device will be confiscated by staff and held in the office until the end of the day. The student may retrieve it at dismissal.

- **Second Violation:**

The device will be held in the office until a parent or guardian comes to pick it up. The student will also receive a verbal reminder of the policy.

- **Third Violation:**

The student will be required to check their phone into the office at the beginning of each school day for a period of time. A parent meeting may be scheduled.

- **Repeated Violations:**

May result in further disciplinary action, including detentions, loss of other privileges, or in-school suspension, depending on the frequency and context of the behavior.

Picture Phones: In the event a student is seen taking pictures, the student's parent will be asked to come to school to pick it up. Together, the building principal and the parent will review the contents of the picture files in order to determine if other school rules have been broken.

TESTING

Each year, our students take the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP), which is necessary for reporting student achievement. Book tests and teacher-made tests are also used to assess student progress. When testing occurs, please make sure your child is well-rested, properly fed, and encouraged to do his/her best.

TITLE 1

This program provides assistance to children in learning to read and strengthening reading skills. Students must qualify in order to be in the program. FAST (formative assessment for teachers), Iowa Assessment/ISASP scores and other Reading tests are used for criteria. The program is funded by the Federal Government. Please contact the school if you have questions about participation.

TOYS AT SCHOOL

Students are not to bring toys to school. There is always the risk a toy may be lost, broken, or “borrowed.” Teachers may occasionally request that children bring toys from home. A note will be sent home to inform parents of the request. Any articles brought by the students that are disruptive to the learning environment, including but not limited to hacky sacks, laser pointers, and yo-yos, will be confiscated.

TRANSFERS - WITHDRAWALS

Please let the school know if you are preparing to move. We need time to prepare information to be sent to your child’s new school. We can also help ease the transition of a student into a new experience.

VISITORS

All visitors at Tri-Center Elementary School **must** report immediately to the office. Visitors are to sign in at the office to receive a visitor pass. Those who do not must leave immediately. Do not bring a guest to school unless you have received advance approval. Parents are welcome to visit the school but must check in with the office upon entering the building. Depending on the amount of illness/sickness, there may be times the CDC and Health Department recommend the school not allow visitors during lunch in order to keep our students and staff healthy and in school.

VOLUNTEERS

We encourage and welcome parent volunteers at school. Volunteers can help in many ways (e.g., reading to children, listening to children read, shelving library books, and making materials for teacher use). If you are interested in volunteering, please call the school office.