



# NIS PARENT HANDBOOK

## **THE NEW INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOOL**

School Year 2024-2025

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\*An affiliate of the Kinexion network



## PARENT HANDBOOK

The New Interdisciplinary School (NIS), founded in 1976, is dedicated to providing an innovative and nurturing early childhood program for all children from birth to five years of age and their families. The NIS Program is designed to offer a safe, stimulating environment where children with disabilities and typically developing children can participate successfully together - having fun, making friends, learning - all experiences are designed to promote healthy and positive child development.

**NIS Special Education Program** is designed to meet each child's individual needs. Classes range from small self-contained groups to larger inclusion classes. Lesson plans reflect the goals on each child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and are aligned with New York State Learning Standards. Therapeutic support services are provided individually or in groups. Resources, education and counseling are available for all families.

**NIS Early Childhood Education Program** is based on sound principles of child development. Lesson plans are written to align with New York State Learning Standards. Classes may include typical and special education students. The following options are offered: UPK, Nursery School (Ages 3 - 5), Child Care (Ages 6 weeks to 3 years old) and Extended Child Care (Before and After Care).

**NIS Center - Based Early Intervention Program** has 8 students, 8 1:1 aides, and 1 special education teacher. Each two-hour session (2:45-4:45) will be tailored to meet the needs of each child, which may consist of individualized discrete trial sessions.

At NIS, we value the enriching learning experiences presented when integrating special education and typically developing children. We promote opportunities for special education children and students in our early childhood program to learn and socialize together.

NIS offers many outstanding enrichment programs. These include adapted physical education, music, outdoor classroom and enriched literacy experiences in our library. Community partnerships include; Longwood Library, Maryhaven Players, which provide stimulating experiences for the children. Throughout the year there are special events which families are typically invited to. These feature the curriculum theme of the month, such as "Learning about Authors" and "Winter Animals."

NIS is a community of people, who envelop each child with warmth, enlightenment and security. We recognize how difficult it is for parents to leave their young children and so our commitment is to create an environment where parents can feel confident that their child is lovingly and competently cared for.

## **Contacting NIS**

If you have any questions or concerns about our program, your child's development, or any other matter, please feel free to talk with your child's teacher/therapist or an administrator. A partnership between home and school is an essential part of your child's experience at NIS.

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## **COMMUNICATION**

At NIS we believe that home school communication is very important. We encourage parents to let their child's teacher know if there are significant changes in the home, your child's behaviors or medical needs. NIS has invested in the BLOOMZ communication app. All school and classroom wide notifications, including our monthly newsletter and school wide emergency notifications will be sent through BLOOMZ.

Teachers and therapists will use Bloomz or email to communicate with individual families. Be aware that teachers and therapists are not free to take calls, or read and respond to Bloomz messages during class time. If you are in need of an immediate response, please call the front office and speak to an administrator at

632-924-5583. Teachers and therapists will only be able to read and respond between the hours of 8-8:45 and 2:30-3:00.

Individual conferences are held in December, Written progress reports are completed for CSPE children in November, February, April & June. UPK and Nursery children's progress reports are completed in November, March & June.

## **Protecting Children**

Our primary goal is to foster and protect the health and safety of children in our care. All staff members are mandated reporters and are required to file a report if child abuse or maltreatment is suspected. Any cases of suspected abuse are reported to NYS Office of Children and Family Services. NIS can provide support if any parent is concerned about managing their child's developmental and behavioral needs.

Abuse or maltreatment expressed through language or behavior on the part of a staff member will not be tolerated. Parents who have a concern are encouraged to immediately communicate with a NIS administrator.

## **Nondiscriminatory Policy as to Students**

The New Interdisciplinary School enrolls students of any race, color, gender, disability, national and ethnic origin with access to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available at the school. NIS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, ability, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational or admission policies.

## **Confidentiality Statement**

At NIS, only members of the staff working directly with your child can have access to your child's records. All records are kept in locked cabinets and files are not removed from the school. Please read the FERPA notice on page 15 for more details regarding student records.

Written permission from the parent is required for access to student records with the exception of the following:

- Representatives of NYS Office of Child and Family Services
- Compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Accrediting organizations in order to carry out their accrediting function
- Appropriate parties in a health of safety emergency
- School District Personnel

NIS is regulated by NYS Department of Education, Office of Children and Family Services, and has contracts/agreements with Suffolk County and school districts to provide educational programs. Therefore, these agencies have access to your child's educational records and reports. This may include site visits and record review.

## **Behavior Management Policy**

NIS is committed to providing a safe school environment where students receive the highest quality education services. Responsible and respectful behavior by students, staff, parents, and visitors is essential to achieving these goals.

NIS has an extensive array of services, supports and resources to ensure student growth, self-expression and individualized developmental progression.

- NIS uses the following proactive responses to potential disruptive students' behavior.
  - Incredible Years: Evidence based student, staff and parent training/teaching, modeling and reinforcing positive social behavior for children. Our Incredible Years program is a program wide positive behavior support system.
  - Classroom based positive behavior support plans utilization an array of techniques which may include: modified taken economies, redirection, proximal praise and differential reinforcement of behavior.
  - Therapist consultations
  - Team meetings
  - Build positive, supportive relationships between staff and each child, children and children, staff and families, and families and children.

A crucial aspect of a nurturing environment is the assurance of everyone's safety. In the event that a child presents as an immediate danger to themselves or others, the staff will intervene to prevent injury to all involved. Only appropriately trained staff, using NIS approved emergency intervention techniques, will be implemented. If an emergency intervention is used with your child, you will be notified via a phone call and written documentation.

## **Child Tracking Devices**

As an educational institute providing care for children we understand the liberty parents wish to exercise with their child's safety and the use of electronic surveillance. HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act), FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and the New York State Education Department require us to have safeguards in place to ensure the privacy of our students. In order to maintain the highest level of student confidentiality and our support for parental use of electronic surveillance devices, the following policy has been implemented:

- All tracking devices accompanying our students must contain only tracking features; audio or visual features are not permitted to accompany our students due to above noted confidentiality requirements of our program.
- Parents who place tracking devices with their children are required to alert NIS administration so we can ensure this device complies with noted confidentiality guidelines.

## **Health Policies and Procedures**

- All children are required to have an Annual Physical Exam.
  - You will be notified at least one month prior to needing a new medical form.
  - Newly enrolled children cannot come to school until their medical and immunization are on file with NIS.
- To protect the health of all students and staff, please keep your child home if they show any signs of illness.
- Please inform the School Nurse or your child's teacher if your child is taking prescription medication.
- If your child or his/her siblings should contract head lice, ringworm, or any other contagious illness please let us know so we can monitor the class and school building.

## **Illness Policy**

**As Per The New York State Office Of Children & Family Services:**

Children who are showing the following signs of illness must be excluded from attending the program:

1. Symptoms of illness that prevent the child from fully participating in school activities - This may include unusual tiredness, severe coughing, extremely runny nose (not allergy related).
2. Fever - child may return when fever free for 24 hours without the aid of fever reducers such as Tylenol, Motrin or Advil.
3. Persistent, frequent cough or difficulty breathing that interferes with the child's activities.
4. Diarrhea defined as an increase in the number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern with increased stool water and/or decreased form (diarrhea that cannot be contained within diapers).
5. Vomiting: unless the vomiting is documented to be non-disease related and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
6. Rash until all lesions have dried and crusted.
7. Chicken pox-6 days after onset of rash or until all lesions have dried and crusted.
8. Strep throat/scarlet fever-until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
9. Impetigo-until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
10. Ringworm-until 48 hours after treatment has been initiated.
11. Scabies-allowed to return to school 24 hours after first treatment.
12. Head Lice-child and their belongings including backpack, clothing and bedding must be treated. Child must be nit free to return to school.
13. Conjunctivitis (pink eye): cannot return until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated unless otherwise stated with a doctor's note.
14. Mouth sores associated with an inability of the child to control saliva.
15. Pertussis (whooping cough)-until 5 days of appropriate antibiotics has been completed.
16. COVID-19 - NIS will follow local, state, and federal guidance as related to COVID-19.
17. Any disease or illness deemed to be infectious requires an absence from school and clearance by the health care provider defining when the child may return to their program.

*Please be aware a physician's note, indicating diagnosis and treatment may be requested by the program before a child can return to school.*

***\*\*A child can also be excluded from Child Care for failure to comply with the NY State Immunization Laws. Please refer to paragraph on page 8 for list of required immunizations.***

### **Medication Guidelines**

In accordance with New York State Law there are procedures that must be followed in order to administer medication in school.

1. A permission form must be completed giving the Nurse or Medication Administration Trained (MAT) staff member authorization to administer medication to the child. This form must be completed by a Physician and parent.
2. All medication should be given to the school nurse or administrator. Please **DO NOT** place any medication in the child's lunchbox or backpack. The medication must be sent in the original container clearly labeled from the pharmacy with the medication information and child's name.
  - **Medication cannot be transported on the bus.**
  - **Medication cannot be added to a child's drink or food as it is a safety hazard for the classroom and against NYS regulations.**
3. A new permission form will need to be completed every 6 months for all medications.
4. An Individual Health Care Plan must be completed for children with special health care needs such as seizure disorder, diabetes or asthma. A physician must sign this plan.
5. **An allergy plan must be completed for children with any allergies. The plan must be completed by the parent and healthcare provider. Please see Allergy paperwork in our welcome folder.**

### **Immunizations**

Each child must have the following immunizations before turning 4 years old:

- 4 doses Diphtheria and Tetanus (DTaP/DTP)
- 3 doses Polio (IPV/OPV)
- 1 dose Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)
- 3 doses Hepatitis B
- 1 dose Varicella (chicken pox)
- 1 to 4 doses Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)



1 to 4 doses Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV)

**NYS requires all student to be up to date with all immunizations.**

**\*\*A child can also be excluded from Child Care for Failure to comply with NY State Immunization Laws.**

If a child's immunizations are delayed for medical reasons, the doctor must submit documentation stating the medical reason for delay. All exemptions must be approved by the administration team.

It is also recommended by the NYS Department of Health that Lead Screening be performed for all children at ages one and two years old.

### **Accidents/Injuries**

Every precaution is taken to ensure your child's safety while in our Care. If an injury occurs, you will receive an illness/injury report that has been signed by the nurse and/or an administrator. In the event that a serious injury or illness occurs, NIS will provide first aid and call 911 for medical assistance. A parent or guardian will be contacted immediately by telephone.

*Please be aware a Physician's note, indicating diagnosis and treatment may be requested by the program before a child can return to school.*

### **Procedures for Caring for Children with Symptoms of Illness**

1. The nurse is called to see child and assess child's condition.
2. Child is brought to the Nurse's office if illness is suspected.
3. If the nurse determines a child is too sick to benefit from school or is contagious you will be contacted.
4. Parent is called, and the child must be picked up immediately.
5. Child is made comfortable, away from the other children, until the parent arrives to take the child home.
6. Any illness or complaint will be entered into the daily health check log.  
NOTE: NIS has a waiver from NYS OCFS for stock medication. We can administer one dose of Tylenol or Benadryl with verbal permission. A medication permission form must be signed by the parent.
7. It is important to maintain up to date emergency contacts. If a parent/guardian is unable to be contacted or unable to pick up a child, emergency contacts will be called.

## **Doctors Notes**

A Doctor's note is required if your child was sent home due an issue such as a *rash, injury, incident requiring medical attention on an emergency basis, illness, or communicable disease.*

*If a child is recovering from an injury, illness or medical procedure, a doctor's note stating that it is safe to return to school is required. The Doctor's note must indicate any restrictions and precautions. It must also indicate whether your child can participate in the following activities; gym, playground recess, occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech therapy. Your child will not be able to participate in above services or activities until clearance is received.*

## **Daily Health Check:**

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services mandates that we, as a child care facility, check each child daily for illness or injury. This system was put in place in the interest and well-being of children. Each day a staff member observes your child for any signs of illness or injury and notations are recorded in a binder/folder kept in the classroom.

## **FOOD**

If your child attends school for a full day they should be sent with their lunch and drinks each day. We are aware that children have preferred food items, however staff cannot prepare or heat any food. All cooking and preparation should be done at home. Please pack foods that need to be served warm in a thermos container. Please pack appropriate utensils if necessary. NIS is a NUT free school so please pack your child's lunch accordingly.

- a. All Sippie cups, utensils and food items sent from home must be labeled with child's first and last name.
- b. Infant Parents - Bottles must be prepared in advance and labeled.

## **Tips to Prevent Choking in Young Children**

NIS follows guidelines issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics and state health officials to help prevent choking hazards. In order to understand their rationale for these guidelines, it is helpful to know that a young child's windpipe is about the size of his or her little finger or nostril. We share this important

information with parents in order to help you with decisions regarding food and toys sent from home.

Certain foods **will not be allowed** to be brought to school:

- Popcorn
- Hot dogs/Sausages
- Grapes
- Hard candies
- Nuts and seeds
- Carrot Sticks
- Celery

Other foods should be served with caution:

- Meat should be cut or shredded into small pieces and be easily chewed .
- Shred hard, raw vegetables.
- Remove skin completely from oranges, potatoes and chicken.
- Remove pits from fruits.

Some household items can be hazardous and should be kept away from children and are **not permitted to be brought into school**:

- Latex balloons
- Coins
- Marbles
- Toys with small parts
- Toys that can be compressed to fit into child's mouth
- Small balls
- Batteries
- Plastic bags

**\*\*NIS is a Peanut/Tree Nut Free School!**

## **Parent Programs at NIS**

One of our primary objectives is to create a partnership with each parent to enhance their child's development at home, school and community. It's essential that parents learn as much as possible about development, behavior management and early literacy and learning. At NIS, we welcome suggestions and information that will allow us to

learn more about your child. There will be ongoing contact and feedback to you during the school year. We use a team approach in working with each child and as the parent you play an essential role as a team member.

### **NIS Parent Council**

One of the founding principles of NIS is parent involvement as part of their child's team. The Parent Council gives parents the opportunity to...

- ❖ Meet other parents
- ❖ Share ideas and information
- ❖ Give feedback
- ❖ Help through fundraising activities

Grandparents and other family members are welcome to participate. We encourage you to become an active member of the NIS Parent Council. For more information, please contact Susan Cali at 631.924.5583, ext. 128 or via e-mail at [SusanC2@niskids.org](mailto:SusanC2@niskids.org).

### **Children's Personal Supplies:**

Please send your child to school with the following:

1. A **change of clothing** marked with your child's name in case there is an accident at school.
2. A **backpack** (without wheels) to bring home all the wonderful projects made at school.
3. Children wearing diapers - Please send in a weekly supply of **diapers** and **wipes**. Early Intervention Families should send diapers and cream daily.
4. Appropriate **outerwear** for outdoor play. Please ensure your child has the clothing and outerwear needed for the weather.
5. Students are encouraged to wear or bring **sneakers** to school daily.

### **Busing**

Suffolk County is responsible for transportation of all children. Suffolk contracts with Swissport for transportation management services. Swissport's contact information is 631-737-0600. See busing insert in folder.

- If you submitted the paperwork for your child to take the bus, you will be contacted by the bus driver before school begins.
- For more information regarding busing, please see the Bus Service Procedures in your welcome folder.

## **Attendance**

Attendance at school is very important. Please make every attempt to schedule your vacations in accordance with the school's calendar. A message (via e-mail or Bloomz) must be sent to your child's teacher when your child is absent from school or if you foresee your child being absent for an extended period of time. NIS must have on record the reason for the absence. A doctor's note to return will be required in certain situations. Remote services will not be given for absences or vacations.

## **Inclement Weather**

NIS will close or modify school hours when a determination has been made that the children and/or staff cannot be transported in a safe and timely manner due to weather conditions in our area. We make this decision with input from local school districts and the bus company.

NIS has the following options in the event of inclement weather that will apply to all students served at our site:

- 1) School Open (will not typically be posted)
- 2) School Closed
- 3) School Open - No Busing
- 4) Delayed Opening - No Busing

(Suffolk County will not allow a delayed BUS SCHEDULE for our program; any delayed opening will result in cancellation of ALL busing for that session.)

Please check the following locations for information regarding the status of NIS during inclement weather:

### **Bloomz App**

**NIS Webpage ([www.niskids.org](http://www.niskids.org))**

**NIS Facebook Page ([www.facebook.com/NewInterdisciplinarySchool](https://www.facebook.com/NewInterdisciplinarySchool))**

**NEWS12 Website (Preschool closings are not posted on TV)**

Please note that there may be times, though rare, when we are open with busing but your home school district has closed. In that case, the county will **NOT** send the bus to your home. You would therefore be required to transport your child if you want them to attend school on that day.

## **Important Reminders**

1. According to New York State Education Law, no child can attend school without the appropriate **immunizations**. Please send a completed **physical form**, along with an **immunization record**, on or before the first day of school.
2. You **must arrange for at least 2 local emergency phone numbers** to be listed at school. We must be able to reach someone by phone who can take responsibility for your child in case of emergency.
3. **NIS is a Nut Free School. Please do not send any food products that contain peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oil, almonds, walnuts, chestnuts, or any other tree nut.**
4. Preschool, Nursery and UPK Students ~ please have your child wear the name tag provided in your Enrollment Packet for the first day of school.
5. **We go outside daily**. Please ensure your child has the appropriate clothing, outerwear and shoes for outdoor play. We suggest sneakers be worn or sent to school daily.
6. To maintain the confidentiality of all of our children, **no recording of video or audio** are permitted in the school. If a tracking device has one of these features, it must be disabled (turned off) during school hours. Parents must sign an attestation acknowledging that they understand this.

## **Notice to Parents Regarding Student Records Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

FERPA is a federal law which gives parents and/or guardians certain rights in order to protect the privacy of student educational records. NIS is committed to working with every parent to respect these rights as follows:

- **The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after NIS receives a request for access.**

The parents /guardians must submit a written request to NIS identifying the records they wish to inspect. NIS will make arrangements for access and notify the parent as to the time and place where the records can be inspected.

- **The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent believes is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.**

Parents who wish to ask NIS to amend a record should write a request to the Director or Executive Director clearly identifying the part of the record they want changed and specifying why it should be changed. If NIS decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent/guardian of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent when notified of the right to a hearing.

- **The right to provide consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's records except to the extent that FERPA authorizes such disclosures. The exceptions which permit disclosure without consent include:**

**Disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests.**

A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school

board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of personally identifiable information, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist, a parent volunteering to serve on an official committee, or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

#### **Disclosure to officials of another school district**

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer. (Note: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent/guardian of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.)

#### **Disclosure to authorized personnel**

FERPA authorizes disclosure to representatives of the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities in connection with an audit or evaluation of education programs, or for the enforcement of compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs.

- **The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by NIS to comply with the requirements of FERPA.** The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

**Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202**