

STERLING EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

PARENT HANDBOOK



Sterling Early Childhood Program

GOAL

The goal of the Sterling Early Childhood Program is to provide high quality early childhood education in a positive and nurturing environment for all children. This inclusive preschool program serves children of all races, ethnicities, and abilities whose parents desire a preschool experience for their child. District 33 does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, marital status, age or handicap in admission or access to, or treatment of, or employment in its programs and activities. All information is confidential. Preschool serves as the first step to help your child grow into a life-long learner and responsible citizen.



Sterling Early Childhood Program

Who may attend?

- *Children who are eligible for kindergarten may not attend Sterling Early Childhood Program.
- *Sterling Pre-Kindergarten pre-registration is open to all 3 and 4-year-old children. The Sterling Board of Education determines entrance criterion annually.

Where is Sterling Early Childhood located?

250 Main Street, Sterling.

When is Preschool?

Classes are held 5 days per week for a minimum of 450 hours over the school yr.
We have one session: 8:00 – 3:37. Families may request half-day for their child.
We may not be able to honor all or any parent requests.

What will my child learn?

The Sterling Early Childhood program uses Creative Curriculum, a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate, that addresses all areas of development, and is aligned with the standards for learning set by District 33 and the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines.

We measure the quality of our program through self-assessment procedures using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale as well as independent evaluations, completed by the Nebraska Department of Education.

We will measure child outcomes and progress using Teaching Strategies GOLD, an authentic measure that uses daily observations of children, which are used to guide your child's learning.

What services does the Sterling Early Childhood Program provide?

Each class is taught by a teacher who is certified to teach young children and to provide special education services. Support to the teacher and the children is provided by one paraprofessional and other support staff which includes but is not limited to supervisors, elementary principal, superintendent, special education providers, speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, district special education director, and a school psychologist.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Absences	5
Arrival & Departure times.....	5
Attendance.....	5
Birthdays.....	5
Birth Certificates	5
Calendar.....	5
Clothing	6
Conferences	6
Discipline	6
Dismissal	6
District 33 Alerts.....	7
E-mail	7
Emergency Information	7
Emergency Closings.....	7
Family.....	7
Fire Drills	8
Field Trips	8
Food Allergy	8
Health	8
Illness	10
Immunizations.....	10
Library Time.....	10
Mandatory Reporters	11
Medications.....	11
Newsletter.....	11
Oh, Wow!.....	11
Outside	11
Pictures.....	11
Prescription Medications.....	11
Questions	12
Restrooms	12
Snack.....	13
Supplies	13
Toys.....	13
Notice of Nondiscrimination	14
Complaint Procedures	14
Receipt of Preschool Handbook Form	16
Sterling Public School Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act	17



ABSENCES - If your child is absent or ill, it is necessary for you to **call 402-886-4761 ext. 100** and inform us of your child’s absence and the reason for it. The secretary at this number will let the Early Childhood teacher know your child will be gone. This is for your child’s safety. If a child must leave early for a doctor’s appointment, go to the office to sign him/her out and the secretary will call him/her to the office.

If your child is not in preschool and the teacher has not been informed of the absence, school personnel will make a reasonable effort to contact the parents or emergency contacts to ensure that your child is safe and where they are supposed to be.

If a child needs to leave early or come late, they need to be signed in or out at the office. Children will then be dropped off or picked up in the office. All half-day children will be picked up in the office.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

Full Day—8:00 a.m.- 3:37 p.m.
Half-Day—8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE — A key factor in making each child’s school experience a success is regular school attendance. However, attendance for our preschool program is not mandatory. Parents/guardians should notify the school before or as early as possible on the morning of the child’s absence or late arrival.



BIRTHDAYS - Birthdays are special occasions for young children. We will do special, in class, celebrations for each child on his/her birthday. Party invitations will not be allowed to be handed out in school unless they are for the entire class. Birthday treats, if sent, must be purchased and not homemade.

BIRTH CERTIFICATES – A certified copy of your child’s birth certificate is required to be provided to the school within the first week of class. A copy will be made and the certified copy will be returned to you. Failure to provide this document will lead to your child not being allowed to continue their enrollment in the program.



CALENDAR - A calendar has been developed that has all of the important dates for the Early Childhood Program. Any changes to the calendar will be communicated with parents throughout the year.

CLOTHING - Your child will spend a great deal of each day on the floor inside, playing outside, painting, and just being very active. Please dress your child for this type of activity each day. Flip-flops aren't allowed during preschool for safety reasons. If you wish, a pair of tennis shoes can be kept at school for your child to change into for the day.

We will play outside each day unless there is precipitation falling, or the temperature is dangerously hot or cold. Your child will need snow boots that he/she can easily pull on and off, shoes to change back into, warm clothing, hats, and mittens when winter arrives. We would ask that you send some type of jacket each day in the fall and spring so your child is prepared for outdoor time.

We know accidents happen to all children. With this in mind we would ask that you send an extra change of clothes to be kept in his/her cubby at school. The wet clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag in your child's backpack. Please replace the change of clothes the following school day.

CONFERENCES - Parent/Teacher conferences are held at school twice per year. Conferences are held in the Fall and Spring. The school will send home notes to let you know when your conference is scheduled. We will discuss your child's accomplishments, strengths, and overall progress. Please feel free to schedule additional conferences at any time throughout the year if the need arises.



DISCIPLINE - Our classroom is a small community where teamwork and good relationships are expected. We will spend time learning class procedures and practicing them. Each child is expected to act within our standards of behavior. To establish good order and help the children learn self-control, they will be guided to respect themselves and their companions through specific directions, positive reinforcement, suggested new activities, and responsible actions.

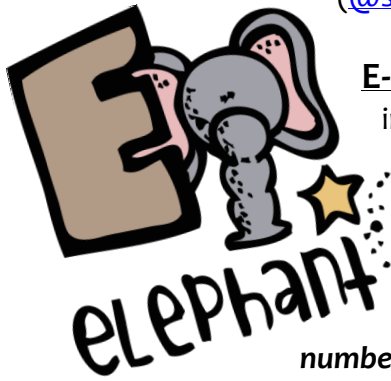
We will talk about what this rule means and what we need to do to follow the above rule. Children who have troubles following this rule will have natural consequences for their behavior.

We will work to establish a relationship with you so that we can call and let you know what is occurring with your child.

DISMISSAL — If your child is not picked up after class has dismissed, efforts will be made to contact the parent, or emergency contacts. Children will not be released to people that are not on your child's emergency contact sheet. If the person is unknown to staff, he/she will be asked to show identification. **It is VERY important that the preschool teachers and the office have current phone numbers of parents and emergency contacts.**

DISTRICT 33 ALERTS- To provide you the best in school communication for school activities and important school messages, District 33 utilizes Power School and an Automated Messaging Service. Refer to handout on page 20.

If you would like to follow us on Facebook, please visit the following building's Facebook pages: STERLING PUBLIC SCHOOLS ([@spsjets](#)) and STERLING PUBLIC SCHOOLS- PRE-KINDERGARTEN ([@sterlingpublicschoolsprek](#)).



E-MAIL - You can contact your child's teacher via their email address: (first initial.last name@sterlingpublicschools.com) which is checked on a daily basis. If you need to discuss something urgent, please call the school or send a note.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION - Please update emergency contacts promptly. *If your home or work phone number changes, or your contact numbers change, PLEASE inform the office as soon as possible so you can be located quickly if an emergency occurs.*

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS -When school is closed, starts late, or closes early because of inclement weather, information will be shared through the following sources:

- Alert Solutions - phone call, email, or text message from school
- School Webpage and School Facebook page
- KLKN TV - Channel 8 in Lincoln
- KOLN TV - Channel 10/11 in Lincoln
- KETV - Channel 7 in Omaha



FAMILY - Families play the central role in their child's development. Engaging families into their child's preschool experience is essential to maximize learning. We will strive to actively partner with parents and guardians. There will be many opportunities for families to work with their preschooler throughout the year. Some ways that we like to build the family-school relationship include but are not limited to the following:

- Communication—we will communicate with you via notes, e-mails, phone calls and conversations.
- Family activities—flyers will be sent home throughout the year to inform you of family activities that will happen at school.
- Early Childhood Advisory Committee - a group of parents collaborate with preschool staff and community providers that meet together and discuss current preschool happenings and events that are relevant to EEC. Two meetings are held each year.

FIRE DRILLS - Fire drills are held on a monthly basis throughout the year. All children will participate and are expected to exit quickly and quietly to their designated exit. We will practice and become familiar with procedures before our first scheduled drill. Sometimes these drills cause anxiety for kids, so we spend a lot of time talking about why we do fire drills. We learn that we do them so that we are safe in case there is a real fire.

FIELD TRIPS - The Pre-Kindergarten children will have field trips to various points of interest throughout the year. A permission slip with trip information is included on the registration form. Please sign and return this slip promptly.

Parents are invited to help with supervision on these trips as needed. Field trips are special times for the children. Having a parent or family member go along makes it even more special. We ask that younger siblings not attend the trip with the preschool child and parent.

FOOD ALLERGY - If a child has identified food or drink allergies, or medical conditions that require a modification in diet, the school may provide food and drink that takes this into account. For the school to provide dietary substitutions in snacks, a doctor's note is required stating the allergy or dietary requirements.



HEALTH - Health conditions that could affect your child's safety or well-being at school may be shared with school staff on a need-to-know basis. Examples of health issues that could be shared include diabetes, seizures, peanut allergy, asthma and medications that might have a side effect at school (drowsiness, behavioral changes).

If you do not want Sterling Elementary to share your child's health conditions with school staff without prior written consent you must notify the building principal or his/her designee.

Normal good health practices should be used at all times. The school's goal is to keep your child in school while not putting other children at risk. Children feeling uncomfortable or not well to the extent that the child is unable to accomplish normal activities should not be in school.

First aid will be administered by school personnel with first-aid training whenever possible. If a serious illness or injury takes place at school, the parents will be notified. The Rescue Squad will be called upon parents' request for transportation of a child with a serious injury or illness or if the school believes it is a serious injury.

Children that are ill will not be sent home alone or without parent notification. It is the parents' responsibility to assume the care for their child and make arrangements for care in their absence. If a parent cannot be reached at home or work, the child's emergency contact person will be contacted to assume responsibility. When parents or contacts cannot be reached, the child will be isolated and made as comfortable as possible. Children with health concerns should be evaluated individually to determine if school attendance is appropriate.

The following Nebraska State Health Guidelines will be used:

- Children with a temperature of 100 degrees or more should not be in school. A child may not return until they have been without fever without medication for 24 hours.
- Children with serious communicable/infectious diseases must have a doctor's permission slip to return to school in accordance with State Health Guidelines.

Diseases included are:

- Hepatitis A
 - Tuberculosis
 - Measles
 - Mumps
 - Rubella
- Children with chicken pox will be excluded from school for no less than 6 days (day of onset of specific symptoms is counted as day "0", the day after is day "1") after the appearance of the first crop of vesicles, and the child is without fever and the vesicles are dry.
 - Children with some communicable/infectious diseases cannot remain in school.
Examples of these diseases are:
 - Streptococcal Infections (strep throat, scar Latina)
 - Pinkeye (conjunctivitis)
 - Scabies

A minimum of 24 hours exclusion and proof of treatment will be required before a child having this type of disease can attend school.

- Children with some diseases must have a doctor's permission slip or evidence of treatment (proof of medication) to re-enter school.

Examples of these diseases include:

- Impetigo
 - Ringworm
- Head Lice, Nits, and Bed Bugs – Children identified as having head lice, nits, and/or bed bugs will be excluded from school and not permitted to ride the bus until they receive appropriate and successful treatment. They will not be permitted to return to school or ride the bus until the district finds that no live lice, nits, and/or bed bugs are detected.
 - Children with an unidentified rash who are without fever (under 100 degrees) and feeling well, may stay in school. When a rash is observed, parents must be notified of the rash. Rashes persisting longer than 3 days require proof of medical evaluation. Some rashes may require immediate exclusion and proof of medical evaluation.
 - Children will be sent home if they are vomiting or have diarrhea regardless of whether or not they have a temperature elevation. A child may not return to school until 24 hours symptom free.
 - In the event it becomes known that a child is infected with a chronic infectious disease not commonly associated with casual transmittal (i.e. hepatitis, rheumatic fever, mononucleosis and HIV) and any changes in the education program of a child is needed, this will be handled on a case-by-case basis, relying on the best scientific and medical advice available.



ILLNESS - The question of when to keep your child home from school is often a difficult one, especially when decisions must be made first thing in the morning. It is important, however, to keep your child home if he/she is ill. This helps to make them more comfortable and prevents others from becoming ill. Children function more effectively in the classroom when they are healthy. Please remember that your child may not come to school with a temperature. Children may not come back to school until he/she has been fever free, without medications, for 24 hours. Please see health issues listed – Page 8.

Immunizations - Children in Nebraska may only enroll in and attend school if they are protected against communicable diseases and conditions such as measles, mumps, rubella, poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus, by immunization prior to enrollment (Revised Statute, Chapter 79-217). The following are the vaccines children need prior to attending preschool for the 2017-2018 school year:

- 4 doses of DTaP, DTP, or DT vaccine,
- 3 doses of Polio vaccine,
- 3 doses of Hib vaccine or 1 dose of Hib given at or after 15 months of age (Hib not required after child reaches 5 yrs. of age),
- 3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine,
- 1 dose of MMR or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age,
- 1 dose of varicella (chickenpox) or MMRV given on or after 12 months of age, written documentation (including year) of varicella disease from parent, guardian or health care provider will be accepted.
- 4 doses of pneumococcal or 1 dose of pneumococcal given on or after 15 months of age (Pneumococcal not required after child reaches 5 years of age).



LIBRARY TIME – Children will have library one time per week where they will have story time and be able to check out a book. It's important for the book to be returned each week.



MANDATORY REPORTERS - The law requires that every member on staff at the Sterling Early Childhood Program report any sign of child abuse or neglect. This includes proper safety restraints, or leaving younger children in vehicles while picking up your preschooler. If staff sees abuse or neglect they are required under state law to report.

MEDICATIONS – Medication products will be used at the discretion of trained personnel. - Over the counter medication products may be used in the school office for personal hygiene, skin care, first aid, or for therapeutic purposes. These products may be used without specific consent and are provided by the school.

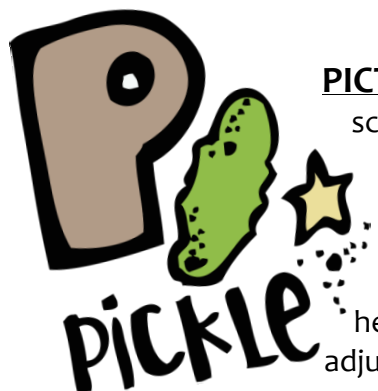


NEWSLETTER - Newsletters will be sent home electronically or in paper to keep families informed about what is happening in class. The school also provides a monthly newsletter to all parents.



OH, WOW!!!! - You will be constantly amazed at the changes your child will be making this year. We will be learning and growing DAILY! Preschool is the key to kicking off your child’s learning career. It is the year all of their learning beliefs are set in stone. Please help us in making this a very fun, beneficial, exciting, and positive year!

OUTSIDE - Children will go outside as long as the weather is appropriate for outdoor play. Please make sure your child has appropriate clothing for cold and warm weather play (coats, ear/head covering, mittens or gloves, and boots when necessary).



PICTURES - Sterling Elementary contracts annually to have pictures taken of school children early in the school year. Information regarding prices, times and dates are distributed by notes from the school.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS - The administration of medication at school is strongly discouraged except when necessary for the child’s health or education. The dosage intervals of many medications can be adjusted so the times for taking medication come outside school hours. When

possible, interval adjustment should be considered before administering medication at school. All medications administered by school district personnel shall be administered in accordance with Medication Aide Act. (Board Policy 6815)

- A. **Authorization for Prescription Medications** - Prescription medications which must be administered during school hours may be administered when the following are on file at school:
 - 1. A caretaker’s signed and dated authorization/permission to administer the medication during school, which included the reason the child is receiving the medication. (Note: all references to “caretaker” in this policy shall also include a parent, foster parent, family member or legal guardian; it shall not include a friend or child provider).
 - 2. The medication is in its original packaging and is labeled as dispensed by the prescriber or pharmacist. The label must name the child and identify the medication, administering physician, strength, dosage, time interval and route to be administered. Two labeled containers may be requested: one for home and one for school. If needed, the physician may be contacted for clarification on medication administration.
- B. **Authorization for Non-Prescription Medications** - If a regular education child must take non-prescription medication during school, procedure 1 above is to be followed before administration, and the medication must be provided in its original container.
- C. **Authorizations** - Medication authorizations must be renewed annually and updated immediately as changes occur.



QUESTIONS - We want to make sure that you have a positive year at the Sterling Program. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact:

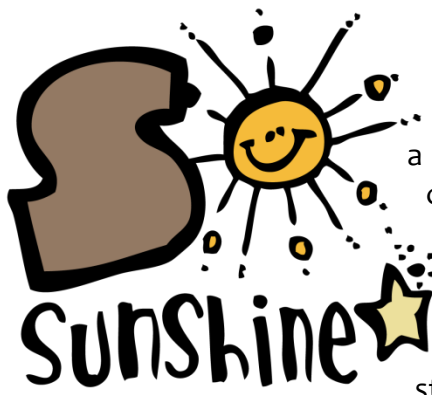
Katie Marshall, Preschool Teacher
(Kmarshall@sterlingpublicschools.com)

Danielle Pleiss, Preschool Teacher
(dpleiss@sterlingpublicschools.com)

Scott Harrington, Principal or Dottie Heusman, Superintendent,
(sharrington@sterlingpublicschools.com or dheusman@sterlingpublicschools.com)



RESTROOMS - We encourage children to use the restroom and have adults in the room remind children as well. Please continue to work on restroom skills: flushing the toilet, getting dressed and washing hands. We will be working on this throughout the year.



SNACK - Children have the chance for a milk break and snack when the class wakes up from their afternoon nap. We ask that you send a one-month supply of snacks for your child to keep at school. They can be pre-packaged (crackers, raisins, granola bar, etc.) or snack portions packaged by you at home in small baggies (cereal, trail mix, gold fish crackers, etc.). When their supply of snacks begins to run low a note will be sent home notifying you to send more.

Each child has a milk card, worth \$10, set up by the kitchen staff and purchased through your child's lunch account. Once the milk card is full (20 cartons) the card will be replaced and another \$10 taken out of your account, but only if there is enough money in the account. If your child doesn't have a milk card, is allergic to milk, or doesn't like milk, they can drink water.

Each child needs to bring a water bottle to keep at school. It will stay in their cubby and be refilled for them so they can get a drink whenever they need to. The water bottles will be sent home each Friday to be washed and we request that you send them back each Monday.

SUPPLIES - A suggested supply list will be provided to all families. Special requests may also be made by the classroom teacher for special projects (milk jugs, paper towel tubes, etc.). If you cannot help with these projects, that does not reflect or affect your child at preschool. A new addition this year is a pair of shoes for children to wear in the gym.

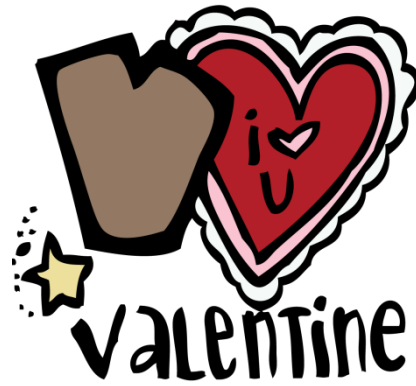
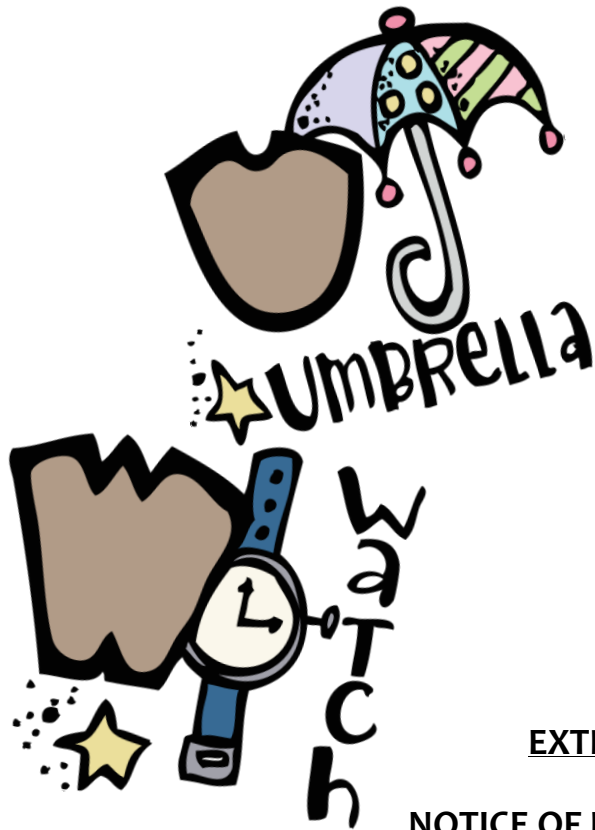
Signed Release for Pictures and Video of Your Child

Pictures (digital) and video of our children, activities, and classroom will be taken and used for various projects from time to time. Pre-Kindergarten children delight in seeing pictures of themselves and these pictures can become a great teaching tool.

These same pictures are positive additions to articles posted on the districts website or submitted to the local paper. You will be given a permission form allowing your child's picture to be taken and to be used as part of an article either online or in the paper, or within the classroom for the class books and other projects. Please indicate on the form your choice in this matter and return it to your child's teacher as soon as possible. Thank you.



TOYS - Toys may be brought to school if used for a show and share assignment. Toy weapons shall not be allowed in the preschool setting at any time; please do not allow your child to bring any toy/item that could be perceived as a weapon. Federal law requires the school to expel any child who brings a dangerous weapon to school.



EXTRA POLICIES

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

School District 33 does not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, race, color, religion, veteran status, national or ethnic origin, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical condition, or other protected status in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The Sterling Superintendent has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies, including Federal Title IX and Section 504 compliance procedures, for students, employees and others:

Dottie Heusman, 250 Main Street, Sterling, NE 68443

For further information about anti-discrimination laws and regulations, or to file a complaint of discrimination with the Office for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education (OCR), please contact the OCR at 601 East 12th Street, Room 353, Kansas City, MO 64106, (800) 368-1019 (voice), Fax (816)426-3686, (800)537-7697 (telecommunications device for the deaf), orocr.kansascity@ed.gov.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Children (or parents on behalf of a child) or employees who suspect that they have become the victim of a discriminatory act, intentional or unintentional, because of a school employee or policy should:

1. Discuss the grievance with the teacher or the building principal within ten (10) school days of the alleged situation.
2. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant should contact the superintendent of the schools and submit the nature of the grievance in writing to the superintendent of schools within ten (10) school days of receiving an oral response

from the principal or teacher. The superintendent of schools will, within ten (10) school days of receiving the written grievance, interview the complainant, investigate the nature of the grievance, and submit in writing to the complainant a proposed resolution.

3. Submit a written request for a board hearing on the grievance to the Board President within 10 school days of receiving the superintendent's response.
4. The board will convene a hearing on the grievance within twenty (20) school days of receiving a written request for a hearing and reserve the right to solicit evidence and testimony from all pertinent sources.
5. The board will submit a written resolution of the grievance to the complainant within twenty (20) school days of conducting the hearing. The decision of the board will conclude the grievance procedure.



For a school to provide meaningful, positive, learning experiences, the school must have a well-defined organizational program. The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize children and parents with the school system.

Please read this handbook. If you have any questions, please call (402) 866-4761.

Receipt of Preschool Handbook Form

Please sign below and return to school.

I hereby acknowledge with my signature that _____ received the
(Child's Name)
procedures and regulations outlined in this Sterling Early Childhood Handbook, and
that I, _____ have read and understand them.
(Parent/Guardian Name)

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

(Date)

Sterling Public School Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (1974)

According to the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act, Sterling School is required to inform parents/legal guardians that standard information in regard to your child can be published unless you wish to restrict information. Examples of publication include district music/sports programs, honor roll, bulletin boards, newspapers, newsletters, student directories, websites, award listings, and birthday/valentine lists. In addition, the press often covers special school events for the newspaper, television or website. If you choose to restrict your child's name or likeness, they will not be included in press coverage or publications, per Board of Education Policy #5017.

If you do not wish to have your child's information released, you may check and sign the exclusion form below and return it to the school your child attends. ***This form will be placed in the student's file and be in effect for the duration of your child's attendance at Sterling Public School.*** It will be up to the parent to contact the school building to redirect any of the items from the preference you have marked below. Thanks for your partnership in your child's education.

It is important to note that Sterling School makes every effort to safeguard the privacy of our students. We do not release student information for unofficial business. If this form is not returned, your student will be placed in the NO RESTRICTIONS category.

PLEASE PUT AN X IN FRONT OF ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CHOICES:

_____ A. No Restrictions: I do not wish to restrict the release of any directory information about my child and hereby give consent for publication of the below mentioned items.

_____ B. Restrictions: I hereby direct the school district **NOT TO RELEASE** the following directory information concerning my child:

 --**Student Name/Home Address/Telephone Number/Birth date** Restriction will *exclude* your child from class lists, music or sports programs, newsletter, newspapers, Valentine and birthday lists, bulletin boards, honor roll, award listings, student directories, scholarship listings, graduation listings, etc.

 --**Student Photo or Video Release** Restrictions will *exclude* your child from television, newsletter, newspaper, or website coverage of school events, field trips and classroom activities. (Does not include yearbook or photo ID)

 --**Student Work Display** Restriction will *exclude* your child's schoolwork or art from being posted on the web, published in the paper or on television, and District 33 school displays at public buildings.

Child's Name _____

_____ No Restrictions

School _____ Grade _____

_____ Restrictions

Parent's Signature _____

Date _____