

Welcome to the

Chaplin

PreKindergarten

Family Policies and Processes

2026 - 2027

A NAEYC Accredited Program



***Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Handbook for Families
2026 - 2027***

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LIST OF RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Chaplin Elementary School

Website: chaplinschool.org

Superintendent: Mr. Andrew Skarzynski (860) 455-9306
Principal: Mr. Kevin J. Chavez (860) 455-9593
Nurse: Mrs. Margaret Scheiber, R.N. (860) 455-9593
Principal's Secretary: Ms. Brittany Mulvey (860) 455-9593
Pre-Kindergarten Teacher: Mrs. Carrie Grzywacz
Kindergarten Teacher: Ms. Katie Forostoski

Physical Education: Ms. Kyra-Faye Garrison
Art Education: Mrs. Lisa Viele
Music: Ms. Amber Edwards
Librarian: Mrs. Ann Kauffman
School Social Worker Mrs. Sandra Fine

Special Education Teachers: Ms. Molly Hallisey
Speech & Language Pathologist: Mrs. Brooke Nye
Occupational Therapist: Ms. Cindy Pelletier
Physical Therapist: Ms. Aleta Naujunas

Handbook Revisions

No handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about program policy or procedures. As circumstances, state mandates, or NAEYC requirements change, policies must accompany them, so this handbook is reviewed and revised as needed but no less than annually. The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind portions of the handbook when necessary and will always send notice to our families highlighting the changes. The handbook is intended as a guide to support successful programming for children and successful partnerships with families.

Mission and Vision Statement Chaplin Elementary School

At Chaplin Elementary School, our mission is to foster ALL students to become caring, competent, and responsible citizens through collaboration with everyone no matter their similarities and differences. We strive to empower students to achieve academic success and develop social-emotional skills necessary for mindfulness in all areas of personal development.

Our vision is empowered students who are guided by integrity, perseverance, citizenship, and thoughtful problem solving.

Definition of Family

In this handbook, we refer to family as parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest and responsibility of the child in our care.

Equal Opportunity

The Chaplin School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age or disability in providing education services. Kevin J Chavez has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The Chaplin School District does not discriminate on the basis of disability by denying access to the benefits of district services, programs, or activities. To request information about the applicability of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), interested persons should contact Mrs. Jocelyn Morse.

Entry & Enrollment

Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten serves resident children of Chaplin ages 3 to 5. Children can be enrolled in the school-day session or the part-day session. If a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) identifies your child as having special needs and determines that the Pre-Kindergarten is the appropriate program, placement is decided at a PPT meeting. The decision is based upon your child's special needs, and the appropriate session will be discussed at this time.

The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program follows the Chaplin Elementary School Calendar. School-day pre-kindergarten students attend school from 8:30 AM to 3:15 PM; part-day pre-kindergarten students attend school from 8:30 AM to 11:15 AM. All students have the opportunity to ride the school busses to school in the morning; however, we ask that you ensure that your child is ready to ride the bus safely without an adult sitting next to them. The school-day students also have the opportunity to ride the bus home at the end of the day. Students in the part-day session must have transportation provided to them at the end of the morning session.

Applications for enrollment in the Pre-Kindergarten component of Chaplin Elementary School are available by contacting the program at 240 Palmer Road, Chaplin, CT 06235. Guidelines for acceptance into the program are established annually by the PreK Team (program staff & administrators). The pre-k program is designed to provide services to children with special education needs within an inclusive setting. Priority will be given to students who are currently enrolled in the pre-kindergarten program, students with identified special education needs and those who will be entering kindergarten in the coming school year. The selection of students is made by program staff and administrators based upon previously determined criteria and the PreK screening session.

Notices will be sent out to currently enrolled families in early April.

After the start of the school year, additional placements will be made on a first-come basis after the child has turned 3 years of age.

Below are the Pre-Kindergarten Sign-up Procedures & Dates (dates are approximate):

Mid-March	Advertise Pre-Kindergarten program in paper
March 15	Advertise screening in local paper
April 1	Application packets available from school
April 1	Applications accepted for program
Early April	Notices sent out to current students in program
Week in May	Pre-Kindergarten Screening

Waiting List: Recognizing that there may be more applications than placements available, a waiting list will be utilized. The waiting list is not carried over from year to year.

Termination of Enrollment: The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for non-payment of fees, frequent tardiness or in special circumstances where it is not possible for the program to meet a particular child's or parent's individual needs. In all instances, we will work with parents and strive to find mutually agreeable solutions other than dismissal whenever possible. If termination of enrollment is due to special family circumstances, the program will assist the family in finding another program.

Pre-Kindergarten Registration Forms

Prior to admission the following forms must be completed.

- Proof of Residency (electric bill, mortgage or rent statement)
- The Health Assessment Record (ED 191) must be completed by you and your physician. The school nurse must review this form prior to attendance.
- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Income verification for the sliding fee scale (without this, the cost will be the full fee)
- An Emergency Card must be filled out and updated each September
- A Chaplin Elementary School Registration Form
- A Pre-Kindergarten Authorization to Release Form
- A Pre-Kindergarten permission form as needed for photographing, etc.

Updating Information

Although forms are updated each September, we kindly ask that you inform the staff and school office if there are any changes during the course of the school year in the following information: phone number, address, emergency contacts, health status and authorization to release form. Also, be sure to notify the staff if a family event has occurred that may affect your child's behavior.

Tuition and Payments

The first tuition payment is due on or before **August 15**. Payments each month are due on the **fifteenth day of the month**. Checks should be made **payable to Chaplin Elementary School**. Payments can be hand delivered to the school or mailed to the following address:

Chaplin Elementary School
240 Palmer Road
Chaplin, CT 06235
Attn: Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program

Pre-Kindergarten tuition is determined using a sliding scale and guidelines provided by CT Office of Early Childhood. Families that participate in the program must present income verification. After submitting the required income information, a tuition agreement of your monthly, and yearly tuition costs will be sent to you. This form must be signed and returned to the school with your first payment.

The monthly fee is 1/10th of the total pre-kindergarten tuition for the school year. Therefore, there will be no refunds for any portion of a month. No credits are given for sick or vacation days, or holidays. Closures due to inclement weather will be made up at the end of the school year. Families are asked to give two weeks advance notice if they are withdrawing their child from the program.

Nonpayment may result in a request for withdrawal from the pre-kindergarten. There will be a **\$35.00 fee** for any **returned check**.

Philosophy

It is our belief that family members are the child's first and most important teachers. The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten encourages families to become involved in all aspects of their child's learning process. The focus of our classroom is to facilitate each child's development (social, personal, cognitive, physical, and creative) in a process-oriented environment, with an integrated curriculum, where children make choices and act on them. We recognize that young children learn best through concrete experiences and active manipulation of materials and that children need to be provided with a balance of self-selected high interest experiences and teacher guided instruction. We believe that in order to encourage children's development of language, children should be immersed in a language rich environment where they are supported in their efforts to use ever expanding and increasingly complex language structures, communication and descriptive skills. Our program is an all-inclusive model, servicing children all along the developmental continuum, facilitating the development of friendship, self-esteem, social interaction, and the celebration of diversity.

Program Objectives

The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten will:

- utilize play activity for its value as an appropriate means of learning

- reinforce and utilize the child's prior knowledge to learn new skills and concepts
- provide a setting characterized by warmth, personal respect, positive support, responsiveness, and cooperation
- provide children with opportunities to:
 1. Exhibit curiosity, creativity, self-direction and persistence in learning situations; demonstrate awareness of feelings; demonstrate self-control through appropriate interactions with peers and familiar adults; use age-appropriate conflict-resolution strategies; and recognize similarities and appreciate differences in people.
 2. Explore materials using their senses; engage in child selected and teacher initiated fine and gross-motor activities; demonstrate spatial awareness; choose nutritious meals and snacks; and practice basic hygiene and self-help skills.
 3. Express wonder and ask questions about the natural world; practice problem solving skills; make comparisons and sequence things and events; share experiences, ideas and feelings by speaking; listen with understanding to directions, conversations and stories; and show an interest in reading and writing activities.
 4. Create works to represent their experiences, ideas, feelings and fantasies using different art media as well as through pretend play and musical activities; and respond to their own creative work or the creative work of others.
- assess children's strengths, needs and progress continuously through observation and data collection based on the Connecticut Preschool Framework
- report to families on children's progress through twice yearly conferences (November & March) and formal report cards in November, January & June
- create an environment where teachers work collaboratively with each other to meet the individual needs of children.

Curriculum

Curriculum content is generated by the needs and interests of the individual children within the group and developed according to the new *Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards* (CT ELDS) and the *Connecticut Documentation & Observation for Teaching System* (CT DOTS). Additional information is available on the Office of Early Childhood web site www.ct.gov/oec. Curriculum planning and instruction are guided by the following principles:

1. Early learning and development are multidimensional and interrelated. Curriculum addresses the following areas of development:
 - a. **Personal/Social** - sense of self as a learner, sense of responsibility to oneself and others, and effective functioning, individually and as a member of a group.
 - b. **Cognitive** (Logical Mathematics/Scientific Thinking, and Language and Literacy) - ability to think, reason, question and remember; engage in problem solving; use language to communicate, convey and interpret meaning; and establish social contacts.
 - c. **Physical** – gross motor control, balance, strength and coordination; fine-motor coordination and strength; participation in healthy physical activity; and practice of appropriate eating habits, hygiene and self-help skills.

- d. **Creative and Aesthetic Development** - use of different art forms as a vehicle for creative expression and representation; and development of an appreciation of the arts.
2. All young children are capable of positive developmental outcomes.
3. Children are unique and develop skills and competencies at individual rates.
4. Families are the primary caregivers and educators of their young children.
5. Children learn through play-based experiences that are child-directed, meaningful and relevant to their lives.

Essential Characteristics of Curriculum:

- Curriculum is consistent with our philosophy and addresses central aspects of child development.
- Curriculum provides a coherent focus for planning children's experiences. It allows for adaptations and modification to ensure access to the curriculum for all children.
- Curriculum guides teacher's development and intentional implementation of learning opportunities consistent with the program's goals and objectives.
- Curriculum can be implemented in a manner that reflects responsiveness to family home values, beliefs, experiences, and language.
- Curriculum guides teacher's ongoing assessment of children's progress.
- Curriculum guides teachers to integrate assessment information with curriculum goals to support individualized learning.
- Curriculum guides the development of a daily schedule that is predictable yet flexible and responsive to individual needs of children.
- Curriculum guides teachers to incorporate content, concepts, and activities that foster social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development.
- Curriculum integrates key areas of content, including literacy, mathematics, science, technology, creative expression and the arts, health and safety, and social studies.
- Curriculum guides teachers to plan for children's engagement in play that is integrated into classroom topics of study.
- Curriculum content is designed to achieve long-range goals for children in all areas and to prepare children to function as cooperative members of the school community.
- Curriculum addresses a broad range of content that is relevant, engaging, and meaningful to children.
- Curriculum incorporates a wide variety of learning experiences, materials, equipment, and instructional strategies to accommodate the broad range of children's individual differences.
- Curriculum builds upon children's unique experiences, learning styles and strengths to foster the acquisition of new skills and concepts.
- Curriculum allows for focus on a particular topic or theme while integrating across traditional subject matter.
- Curriculum engages children actively in the learning process. Children have opportunities to make meaningful choices.

- Curriculum emphasizes the value of social interaction to learning in all areas and provides opportunities to learn from peers.
- Curriculum is supportive of children's physiological needs for activity, sensory stimulation, fresh air, rest, hygiene and nourishment.
- Curriculum is flexible so that teachers can adapt to individual children or groups.

Assessment

The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program uses a variety of assessment tools. Preschool assessments are not about testing or checklists; they are conducted to understand the whole child to ensure that each child has the support they need. In conjunction with formal and informal assessments, we monitor each child's developmental milestones, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for further screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. The information gathered on each child's developmental abilities allows us to modify and adjust what we are doing in the classroom to deliver the best individualized instruction to each child. Evaluations are communicated with parents periodically during the school year. Families are encouraged to share any concerns they may have about the assessment methods used, and how they can meet their child's needs.

Assessment is not only to find the needs of individual children- it also plays a key role in improving program outcomes. The information collected allows us the opportunity to monitor program effectiveness and identify trends. The staff is better suited to identify needs for specific professional development. It assists the staff in ensuring that the program is aligned with CT OEC and NAEYC learning standards. Student outcomes inform the staff about curriculum choices and areas for program improvement.

All assessments will be conducted by familiar staff, within familiar settings. Results of assessments will be kept confidential: only the family and teaching staff, who work with the child, and administration, will have access to children's assessment records.

Family Input: Families are encouraged to share their concerns or observations, pertaining to their child's skill development and goals they may have, with classroom teachers at any time. Any observations made at home about your child's skill development, interests or needs will help us with the assessment process. Family members partner with the teachers in the CT DOTS assessment process by completing Family Pages at the beginning of each trimester. Observations on the Family Pages provide essential input on their child's skills, behaviors and development at home and in the community. Family member's observations and goals will be added to the CT DOTS assessment tool throughout the year, and then formally documented on the written conference reports in December and March. Families will also complete questionnaires about their child's observed areas of strength, personal interests, as well as areas of focus prior to Parent-Teacher Conferences. Family members will collaborate with teachers at conferences to develop goals for their child at home & school and be provided with a written copy. Families are asked annually to complete the NAEYC Family Survey. The results of the survey are used to help set goals to improve the Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program. Survey results will be analyzed, and goals will be set to improve the program. Family input is strongly encouraged.

Teacher Designed Assessments: Over the course of the year the Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten teachers and staff will use a variety of teacher-made assessments such as drawing prompts, rubrics, checklists, and anecdotal notes to establish baselines, monitor child progress and help guide instruction. These assessments are administered at the teacher's discretion.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) & Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social & Emotional (ASQ:SE-2): The ASQ-3 & ASQ:SE-2 are a set of developmental screening tools that are used to screen all Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten students within 3 months of their entry into our program. These tools provide for a quick overview of a child's development in the areas of sensory, language, cognitive, gross and fine-motor, and social-emotional skills. Family members play a crucial role in completing ASQ and ASQ:SE questionnaires by providing comprehensive, home-based observations of their child's development and behavior. Families will be provided with information about their child's results including areas of strength, areas of concern, learning activities to support their child's development and potential next steps for assessment.

Connecticut Documentation & Observation for Teaching System (CT DOTS): This is the primary assessment tool for assessing children's growth and skill development in the Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten classroom. The CT DOTS uses a combination of teacher observations, child work, and language samples to document each child's skill and developmental progress. This curriculum-embedded assessment tool is used throughout the course of the year to help guide and individualize instruction. The CT DOTS is also used with Pre-Kindergarten students qualifying for Special Education services within the first few weeks of entry into our program, and then again just prior to exiting. Results are sent to the state for the purpose of data collection.

Additional Assessment: Children receiving Special Education Services may receive additional standardized assessments if recommended at their P.P.T.

Serving Children with Disabilities

The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program is committed to serving children of all ability levels.

- When teaching staff suspect that a child has a developmental delay or other special need (physical, behavioral, or academic in nature) or displays an exceptional ability or talent, this possibility is communicated to families in a sensitive, supportive, and confidential manner and is provided with documentation and explanation for the concern, suggested next steps, and information about resources for assessment.
- Teaching staff will encourage and support families to make the primary decisions about services that their children need, and they will encourage families to advocate obtaining needed services.
- Any student displaying problems of a physical, behavioral or academic nature or children displaying exceptional ability or talent may be referred to special education. Referrals may be made by teachers, administrators, specialists, outside agencies, physicians, family members and students.
- The Chaplin Elementary School Planning and Placement Team (PPT) will develop an individualized education plan (IEP) for all students ages 3 – 21 in need of special education

and related services. The IEP is a written plan that will establish the scope of the special educating program and ensure the free, appropriate public education for school aged and preschool children requiring special education and related services. In order to ensure that IEPs are effectively addressed in the Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program, IEP goals and objectives will be established at Planning and Placement Team meetings with the teacher, family members, administrator, and specialist present. Specialists needing to serve a child and the teacher will have ongoing communication, updates, and consultation with each other and the family.

- Special Education support is provided to the pre-k based on individual needs. Services are provided on site, by the appropriate qualified staff. Students who receive special education services are monitored by a case manager who reports to the PPT the level and amount of support necessary to help the students be successful in the pre-k classroom.
- Students having a disability will have priority to enter into the Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program. The program will provide ongoing training to teaching staff regarding serving children with disabilities. Children with disabilities ready to transition to kindergarten will have a PPT prior to the end of the school year with the Kindergarten teacher present to ensure a smooth transition.

Pre-Kindergarten Schedule*

- 8:30 – 9:00 Outdoor Play
- 9:00 – 9:45 Arrival (*wash hands, morning jobs, bathroom*) & Purposeful Play Learning Centers (*play-based, child-initiated learning experiences in dramatic play, blocks, art, sensory, science, math & literacy centers*)
- 9:45 – 10:05 Snack & Book Look
- 10:05 – 10:15 Literacy Circle
- 10:15-11:00 Specials (*Gym, Health, Art, Music, Library*)
- 11:00 – 11:10 Literacy
- 11:00 – 11:10 Bathroom
- 11:10 - 11:35 Bridges Math Program (11:15 Part-day Dismissal)
- 11:35 – 12:05 Outdoor Play
- 12:05 – 12:20 Wash Hands, Book Look
- 12:20 – 12:50 Lunch
- 12:50 – 1:00 Bathrooms

- 12:50 – 1:20 Story, Calendar, Share & Yoga
- 1:20 – 2:05 Rest Time
- 2:05 – 2:50 Learning Stations (*teacher-led & student-led learning activities, with instruction in math, science & literacy*)
- 2:50 – 3:00 Second Steps Social & Emotional Curriculum
- 3:00 – 3:10 Outdoor Play
- 3:10 Dismissal

* This is only a sample and may be altered on a daily basis to accommodate individual student needs, specialized services, thematic instruction, and special programming.

Purposeful Play Learning Centers

Children learn through play-based experiences that are child-directed, meaningful and relevant to their lives. Play acts as the primary vehicle for children to learn social, emotional, cognitive, physical and executive functioning skills. Our daily learning experiences in each Purposeful Play learning center listed below incorporate an intentional, play-based curriculum where educators scaffold learning by observing, interacting, and supporting children's development across all domains.

Literacy Center: This center contains a books-on-tape listening center, ABC and writing materials, and a quiet reading space. In the quiet reading corner, children have the opportunity to relax and read. This area is equipped with child-size seating and a selection of books. Children who like looking through books and/or need a place to be peaceful will often seek this corner. Puppets, flannel boards, and a selection of puzzles are also available. Our writing nook allows preschool-aged children to investigate early forms of writing - experience stories through pictures, by retelling stories, scribble writing, and book making. Materials include a wide variety of paper, pre-made blank books, crayons, markers, scissors, tracers, magazines to cut and glue.

Dramatic Play Center: The dramatic play center provides opportunities for make-believe and role-play. Pretending to be people in situations they've experienced helps give children a sense of the adult world. It gives them opportunities to work together, express their feelings and ideas and use language to communicate their role and respond to others' needs and requests. Housekeeping materials and props, dress up clothes, baby dolls, stuffed animals, hats, masks, a wooden doll house, Fisher Price Little People, and puppets are some of the items included here.

Block Center: Pre-Kindergarten children use blocks to build structures that go up, out or around and in the process deal with the spatial and structural problems of balance and enclosure. They also deal with similarities and differences and create patterns in their structures. The Block Center provides adults with the opportunity to observe children exploring, building cooperatively, sorting, grouping, comparing and arranging objects and role-playing. A wide variety of materials are included in this area such as cardboard building bricks, duplo sized Legos, a wooden train set,

floor puzzles, wooden blocks, a wooden road and vehicles, magnetic blocks, Gears, Lincoln logs, and K'nex.

Sensory Center: This center provides opportunities for children to explore the principles of math and science firsthand. By sifting sand, scooping water, kneading play dough, snipping Styrofoam peanuts, and doodling in shaving cream, they improve their physical dexterity. They develop social skills by joining others in making a sandcastle. As they test various items in a tub of water, they learn scientifically which objects float or sink. A wide variety of



Music and Movement materials are also included in this center. Cooking offers a special treat for pre-kindergarten children, allowing them to do things adults do. As they measure ingredients, children learn about measurement and volume. While kneading dough, peeling carrots, or stirring pudding, children develop their physical skills and increase their vocabulary. In addition to the excitement of creating nutritional snacks with teacher guidance, the children learn to appreciate other people and cultures by making foods from various cultures.

Art Center: Exploring and using art materials allow pre-kindergarten children to express original ideas, improve their coordination, develop small muscle skills, and learn to recognize colors, shape design and textures. Materials include a wide variety of paint, collage materials, fabrics, clay cornstarch, chalk, markers, crayons, colored pencils, oil pastels, stamps, hole punches, scissors and tracers.

Math Center: Exploring activities through manipulatives lay the groundwork for abstract concepts such as comparing, classifying, and ordering. This center contains a wide variety of sorting materials, pattern blocks, sequence blocks, measuring cups, rulers, toy clocks, puzzles, and counting games, and our child-use computers.

Science Center: The science center is a fun place to explore natural phenomenon such as the metamorphosis of a butterfly, the lifecycle of a tadpole, why some objects sink and others float, weather & seasons, and sprouting plants. Children are given opportunities and guidance in how to make predictions and collect and record data in this center. This center also gives children the chance to experiment with simple tools such as pendulums, incline planes, balances, magnifying glasses, binoculars, and magnets. Magnets afford children the opportunity to explore the properties of polarization in a developmentally appropriate and fun way. Some magnetic materials include magnetic marbles and wands, magnetic pattern blocks, magnetic letters, numbers and shapes, and magnetic building blocks.

Calming Corner: The calming corner is a designated, quiet, and cozy space—separate from high-activity areas—where children can voluntarily go to self-regulate, process big emotions, and feel safe. It serves as a positive and proactive area with sensory tools and comforting materials such as fidget toys, stress balls, weighted lap pads, noise-canceling headphones, and books to help preschoolers transition from distress back to a calm, "ready-to-learn" state. Visuals such as emotion charts, breathing exercise posters, or timers to help children identify feelings and practice calming techniques are also available.

****In addition to thematic classroom learning centers, all full day children will receive some form of specialized instruction in physical education, music, library, and art.**



School Closing & Late Openings

If Chaplin Schools are closed, opened late (two-hour delay), or dismissed early due to inclement weather or other emergencies, the TV channels listed below are notified, and announcements will be made by these stations. For school closings and late openings, the stations will be notified by 6:15 a.m.; for early dismissal, the notification will be by 11:00 a.m., whenever possible. Announcements will also be made using the Parent Square Notification system. Each family may provide up to two phone numbers that will be contacted through this automated message system.



Television Station WVIT - Channel 30

Television Station WFSB - Channel 3

Television Station WTNH – Channel 8

All transportation will operate as close to two (2) hours late as the weather and roads permit. Following a late opening (except for further emergencies), full day students will be dismissed at the regular time of 3:15 p.m. School runs from 8:30 AM until 1:15 PM on scheduled early dismissal days.

In the event of a delayed opening, there will be no part-day session for the day.

Pre-Kindergarten Early Closings & Closures

The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten is staffed with appropriately credentialed teachers and instructional assistants. To ensure the program maintains and moves ahead in its ability to maintain state and NAEYC requirements, the Pre-Kindergarten will occasionally have early dismissals and program closures. Families will be responsible for providing transportation home.

These closings will allow staff opportunities to fulfill many professional responsibilities, including team meetings, NAEYC evaluations and professional development. Notification at the start of the school year, as well as reminders throughout the year, will be sent home regarding the Pre-K specific closings.

Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Policies and Procedures

Bus Transportation:

Bus transportation is provided on a space available basis for pre-kindergarten students. Bus routes will conform to C.E.S. K-6 enrollments and will not be modified from the regular bus route. Parents/guardians must accompany their pre-kindergarten student to the nearest regular bus stop until pick-up/drop-off.

Chaplin Board of Education Bus Policies do not allow walkers to ride buses or bus children to ride any other bus but their own. Any child must have a note of permission from his/her own family member to ride home with another adult.

While riding the bus:

1. Sit in designated seats towards the front of the bus;
2. Listen to the driver;
3. Stay in your seat;
4. Talk quietly and politely.



Arrival: Arrival time for both the morning and full-day sessions is 8:30 a.m. unless students are arriving on a C.E.S. bus, each child must be accompanied into the building by a staff member.

Staff members actively supervise entrances beginning at 8:30 AM. **FOR SAFETY'S SAKE, STUDENTS SHOULD NOT EXIT THEIR CARS BEFORE STAFF MEMBERS OPEN THE GATE TO THE PLAYGROUND.** School doors are locked until this time. Parent drop off in the Pre-Kindergarten loop is 8:30 AM-8:35 AM. Parents dropping Pre-K and/or Kindergarten students off in the morning are asked to use the loop at Silliman's Circle (near the Pre-K/K playground). Staff members will actively supervise the traffic and entrance. If you need to walk your child to the gate, we ask that you pull as far forward in the loop as possible.

Bus drop off time begins at 8:35, so the bus loop should be clear of parent traffic at this time. If you arrive later than this, please park in a parking space at the front of the school building and walk your child to the main entrance. The office will have an escort for your child to get to the Pre-Kindergarten class.

Anti-Idling Policy (CGS § 14-277(b)): CT's anti-idling policy prohibits school buses and other vehicles from idling for more than three consecutive minutes. Exceptions will be made for vehicles

with mechanical issues, cold weather (below 20°F), or when maintaining safe temperatures for students with special needs.

Tardiness (AFTER 8:45 AM): Upon being tardy, pre-kindergarten students must report to the school Health Room before being admitted to class. Office staff will call the pre-kindergarten room to have a staff member come and walk your child to class.

Attendance: Regular attendance is important for children to receive the maximum benefit from the program, to reduce separation anxieties, and to ensure program continuity for students and staff. **All children must arrive by 9:00 AM**, unless documentation of an appointment is provided to the school nurse.

We require that all children arrive by 9:00 AM for these reasons:

1. Separation from parents and transition to school is much easier for children when they are not rushed through it. If a child is having a difficult transition, teachers are able to support children and families before 9:00, at which the school day is in full swing. Teachers are more than happy to help you develop a consistent routine for arrival-please ask for their assistance.
2. At 9:00 AM, the teaching teams are fully engaged in supporting children's learning experiences. When children arrive late, teachers cannot help transition children without impacting the flow of the routine for other children.
3. Teachers are invested in engaging your children to maximize their learning experience. If a child is not here by 9:00 and ready to engage in the offered experiences they cannot take full advantage of the program that is offered.

Departure Full-day Pre-Kindergarten: Dismissal for students begins at 3:15 PM when our "parent pickup" students are called first. If you are picking up a child at dismissal, you should drive to the northwest/far end of the building and park near the playground area. As the main entrance is being used for bus dismissal, parents must use the outside entrance near the gym/cafeteria at the end of the day. All pick up students must be signed out by the adult identified by the parent or guardian prior to dismissal. School staff members will be on duty to assist students in connecting with their transportation. **PHOTO ID MUST** be provided when picking up a student. If your child is going to be picked up from school, please be certain to send in a note to the teacher, who will forward it to the office.

Children taking the buses will be walked to the bus by a staff member. Pre-Kindergarten students must sit close to the front of the bus at all times.

If you are picking up your child for early dismissal, please report to the main entrance to sign your child out. Office staff will call the specific room and your child will be asked to report to the office. **Please do not go to the particular classroom to pick up your child.**

PLEASE PLAN AHEAD: Please make sure that you have addressed childcare issues that might arise due to a late start or early dismissal. It is a good idea to set up a plan for an unplanned situation. Please notify the main office of any change in plans prior to dismissal.

Authorization to Release Form: Our pre-kindergarten Authorization to Release Form requires that you identify one person who will usually pick up your child. In the case of an emergency or unpredictable circumstance, the other individuals designated on this form will be allowed to pick up your child. The staff must receive written notice to whom you are allowing us to release your child. The designated person will be required to provide positive proof of identification (i.e., valid photo driver's license). Finally, the individuals authorized to pick up your child must be at least 18 years or older and will be responsible for your child once they leave the classroom.

Supervision of Children: All staff are responsible for making sure no child is left unsupervised. Using active supervision, staff position themselves so that they can always observe all children—watching, counting, and listening. During transitions, they account for all children with name-to-face recognition by visually identifying each child. Staff also use their knowledge of each child's development and abilities to anticipate what they will do, then get involved and redirect them when necessary. This constant vigilance helps children learn safely.

Toileting Independence: All children should be independent with toileting in order to attend the Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program. However, no child will be denied entrance to the program if they are not independent with toileting yet. Families will need to be actively engaged in the process, and it will be reinforced at the school. Families will supply the necessary toileting supplies, including pull-ups, wipes and extra changes of clothing. We encourage you to dress your child in clothing that makes independent toileting more successful (i.e. pants with elastic waistbands that are easy to pull up and down, and do not have any zippers, snaps, buttons, tights or belts, shoes that are easy to remove).

- To be considered toilet trained a child must be able to:
 - recognize when he/she needs to use the bathroom
 - independently pull pants up and down
 - independently clean themselves
- **Please note full-time enrollment is contingent upon independent toileting at school, regardless of toileting success at home.**
- Children enrolled in the Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program may use the bathroom whenever necessary.
- After a child uses the bathroom hand washing is required.
- Parents/Guardians and volunteers are not considered staff and may not assist children (other than their own) in the bathroom.
- When toileting accidents occur, staff will place clothing, soiled by urine or feces, immediately into a plastic bag and send them home that day to be washed.

Slips and Falls: Slips and Falls are a common cause of child injuries as well as adults in school settings. The staff in the Pre-School program understand that slips and falls may occur in any school setting, so we have taken the following steps to make the school environment safer and prevent falls.

- Floors
 - ✓ Keep floors clear of learning materials and other clutter.
 - ✓ Spills are wiped up immediately and a floor sign is placed in areas that have recently been mopped for cleaning OR large spills.

- ✓ Rugs in building entry areas have non-slip backs.
- ✓ Non-skid floor wax is used during yearly maintenance.
- ✓ All cords are kept from travel pathways.
- Lighting
 - ✓ All school settings are well lit.
 - ✓ Burned out lights are replaced immediately.
- Outdoors
 - ✓ Routine inspections help to maintain safety outdoors. This includes regularly raking loose-fill materials to keep depths even and checking for hidden debris, rocks, or damaged mats.
 - ✓ Shoelaces are checked before children go outside to play.
 - ✓ Parents are asked to ensure their children have appropriate clothing and footwear for playing (see Outdoor Attire)
 - ✓ Students are not allowed to play on wet or excessively hot surfaces that compromise grip.
 - ✓ Swing sets are monitored to ensure that there is a clear distance in front of and behind swings.
- Postings
 - ✓ “Six steps to reduce the risk of slips, trips, and fall” flyers are posted in areas that staff visit on a regular basis.

Nutrition Guidelines & Choking Precautions: Snack and lunch menus follow government child nutrition guidelines (USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program) for the amount and types of food provided to the children. Staff will not offer children food that may be a choking hazard such as hotdogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, chunks of raw carrots or meat cut into larger than bite-sized pieces. If these foods are sent to school from home, they must either be pre-cut into bite-sized pieces or staff will provide an alternate safe food item for your child.

Food Allergies: If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions and must be updated at least annually. Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

Snack: A snack and milk are provided each morning in our pre-kindergarten classroom. Snack is provided to families at no cost. A complete monthly snack menu created in accordance with the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program, is posted on the pre-kindergarten resource bulletin board. Examples of snacks that might be served include, but are not limited to: fresh fruit, vegetable slices and dip, crackers and cheese, dry cereal, granola bars, animal crackers, yogurt, applesauce, cheese sticks, and class made baked goods. Pre-Kindergarten staff sit and eat or converse with students during daily snack times. Should a change in the menu occur, parents are notified electronically the morning of the change.

Lunch: Lunch will be offered to those children who attend the full day session. Pre-Kindergarten staff sit and eat or converse with students during lunch time in the Pre-Kindergarten classroom. Children can choose a lunch from the school lunch program or bring a lunch from home.

Foods brought from Home: Any food brought from home needs to be labeled with your child's name and the date (labeling your child's lunch box or bag with his/her name and the date is enough – you do not need to label individual food items within the lunch box unless that item requires refrigeration). Food items requiring refrigeration include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, fresh fruit or vegetables, opened cans of fruit or pudding. Food items from home that need to be kept cold can be refrigerated until it is time to eat if a note is written in your child's home/school folder. Alternatively, families are encouraged to keep food items cool by packing them in an insulated lunch bag with a frozen gel pack or frozen juice box, and freezing sandwiches overnight.

School Lunch Program: All preschoolers are eligible to receive a free school lunch. Any food items offered on the school hot lunch menu that are considered choking hazards are not offered to Pre-Kindergarten students. When an item must be removed, the kitchen will replace that item with an appropriate alternative food item. Should a change in the menu occur, parents are notified electronically the morning of the change. Foods such as carrots and meat are pre-cut in the kitchen into bite-sized pieces.

Celebration Foods & Birthdays: It is the policy of the Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program that all foods brought in from home for celebrating birthdays or other special occasions must be a prepackaged food sent in its original factory-sealed container, or a whole fruit, in order to ensure food safety and avoid food allergy triggers. An alternative to sending in a snack to share is to send in a small gift such as stickers or a book donation. Please let your child's teacher know in advance if and how you plan to celebrate your child's special day.

Please do not send party invitations to school with your child. A class phone and address list will be sent home to help you distribute your invitations.

Rest: School-day children participate in a rest time each afternoon. Children are encouraged to sleep but non-sleepers may instead lie quietly on their cots. Rest cots are provided; however, your child might also wish to bring a sheet, small pillow or favorite stuffed toy from home. Any bedding provided from home will be returned to you at the end of each school week to be laundered. If you wish to provide a sheet for your child, a standard size crib sheet will fit his/her rest cot. Children will be provided a 45- minute rest. **If your child requires a longer sleep time, you may wish to enroll him/her in the morning session only.**

Extra Clothing: Your child will be involved in many hands-on activities. Messy projects sometimes require a change of clothing. An extra set of labeled clothing should be left in your child's cubby in the pre-kindergarten classroom. When sending in a fresh set of clothing please write a note in your child's home/school folder so that we can make sure it makes it into his/her cubby.

Lost & Found: It is recommended that the names of children be sewn or written into the garments that are brought to school, such as hats, coats, sweaters, raincoats, etc. Also put your child's name

on their lunch box and their backpack. This is a big help in enabling us to return lost property to the owner. If an item does go missing the Lost & Found is located in the school nurse's office.

Animals: No student shall bring any live animal to school without prior consent of the teacher and the principal.

Outdoor Play: The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program believes that outdoor play is important to the health and well-being of staff and children. Children have time daily to play outdoors except when weather conditions do not permit, or local public authorities do not recommend being outside. The temperature must be above 20°Fahrenheit, taking the wind child into account, in order for outdoor play to be acceptable. Teaching staff bring a fully equipped first-aid kit and walked-talkie outdoors whenever accompanied by children. When outdoor play is not possible due to the conditions outside, the program provides gross motor activities inside using equipment that meets national safety standards. Indoor gross-motor activities are supervised at the same level as the use of outdoor equipment.

When alerted to any environmental or air pollution, staff protect children by limiting outdoor and physical activities.

Pre-Kindergarten Classroom and Playground Rules: These social agreements are a starting point and may be stated slightly differently or added to each year as the Pre-Kindergarten students help to decide and write their own classroom social agreements.

- Treat others the way you would like to be treated
- Keep your hands to yourself
- Be kind/Be polite/Be a listener/Be a helper
- Try your best
- Go down the slide on your bottom only
- Pre-Kindergarten students must be accompanied by an adult when entering the school building.
- No flip-flops or heels on the playscape

Sunscreen: The Pre-Kindergarten playground provides a shaded spot to allow children a space to get away from the sun. School staff are not authorized to apply sunscreen to children. Families are asked to dress their children in sun-protective clothing or apply sunscreen to their children before coming to school when needed. Sunscreen or sun block with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 50 or higher is recommended.

Insect Repellent: School staff are not authorized to apply insect repellents to children. Families are asked to apply insect repellents to their children before coming to school when needed.

Outdoor Attire: Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and rubber-soled shoes or sneakers. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including sidewalk chalk, sand play, gross motor activities, and rolling in the grass, so they should be prepared to get messy. Sandals, flip-flops or heels are not appropriate for center and outdoor play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. Due



to the risk associated with such attire, children will not be allowed to play on the playground equipment. Proper attire will help ensure the safety and comfort of your child. Outdoor play is very important to children. Please be sure to dress your child properly for the weather/season (e.g. boots, mittens, hats, snow pants, etc.) To avoid overheating, sweating, and chilling, children should be dressed warmly yet not overdressed (layering is recommended). We attempt to go outside each day for recess, so appropriate clothing is essential. Children without snow pants and boots will not be allowed to play in the snow and must remain on the sidewalk.

Field Trips: Your child will have the opportunity to go on occasional educational, cultural, or extracurricular field trips. We encourage you to join your child on the trip! For field trips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must; sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

- A permission slip will be sent home to parents/guardians in advance of any field trip informing them of:
 - Location of the field trip
 - Date and time of the trip
 - Special provisions needed for the child
 - Cost (if any) for their child to attend the field trip
 - Option to Chaperone
- Parents/Guardians must return the signed permission slip in order for their child to attend.
- Chaperones must:
 - Be able to actively supervise children and keep their phone in do not disturb mode.
 - Complete attendance chart before, during and after transport for children assigned to group using attendance chart provided at the start of the field trip.
 - Arrive at school 15 minutes prior to the scheduled departure of the bus
 - Be able to remain for the entire field trip
 - Not bring younger siblings
 - Pay any applicable field trip fees
- The teacher will carry the stocked first aid kit provided by the school nurse.
- The teacher will carry a working cellular phone and provide the office with the cell phone number in case of an emergency.
- If transportation problems occur, the school will be contacted, and the bus company will provide a new bus according to contract.

Some field trips we organize are to the grocery store, Chaplin Library, the Chaplin Fire House, the Chaplin Post Office, local businesses, Hurst Farm, Buell's Orchard, The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, local nature trail and petting zoo, and others – only a sampling of field trips that are taken each year.

Guidance & Discipline:

We believe that the foundation of an effective early childhood program must be built on supportive relationships between teachers, children, families and other professionals who promote prosocial behavior and actions for all children. Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten believes that all children should experience success in a setting that provides children with opportunities to

explore their environment within consistent, age-appropriate limits. By respecting and recognizing each child as a unique individual with a unique set of needs, the staff in our program will use the **Pyramid Model, Second Step and Mindfulness/Yoga**, classroom preventive practices, specific adult-child interactions and classroom design to support the growth and development of social/emotional learning.

The staff value our families as partners in teaching children about socially appropriate behaviors. As your child's most influential teacher, we will invite you to work with us throughout the school year. As we understand these issues are sensitive and respect all the different parenting styles among our families our goal is to develop an individualized behavior plan of support.

Promoting positive relationships among the children helps to bring awareness to their sense of self, their self-confidence and create a sense of safety in the context of social relationships. Fostering trusting relationships between education staff and children is important if we are to effectively teach social, emotional and behavioral development. Staff will follow social/emotional curriculums that provide research-based strategies for teaching specific social skills.

Positive Behavior Supports are integrated into the daily schedule to provide children many opportunities to practice and learn: how to get along with others, conflict -resolution skills and how to be a "Bucket Filler". By focusing on a monthly core value, we model and acknowledge student actions that represent the value at their developmental level. The whole school participates in a monthly "CES Talks" which allows the students to collaborate on positive actions they can take to be a good friend.

We are proactive in our approach and utilize positive reinforcement and restorative practices to support appropriate behaviors. To do this, our staff is trained to use various techniques including redirection, praise, and explicit feedback on use of appropriate strategies. We offer a "calming area" to help the student access strategies that they can aid them in being self-aware of their behaviors. This includes sensory toys, strategy cards, stimulus shelter, and de-escalation strategies. The calming area also provides an opportunity for children to be supported through conflict resolution by staff as needed. Classroom staff uses this space to help children process their feelings and sensory overload. The child may return to the group when they are ready to, as exhibited by a calm body.

Staff will also:

- Act as positive role models for children
- Try to understand why a child is behaving a certain way with a trauma- informed care -lens.
- Always respect children's feelings
- Reassure the disciplined child that he/she is liked- it is the behavior that we need to manage
- Be trained every year in their role as a mandated reporter of suspected abuse and neglect

<u>NAEYC Standard 1.E – Addressing Challenging Behaviors</u>

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. Each student has the right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive help and support of caring adults

Chaplin Pre-K uses the following Positive Guidance Techniques to

Respond to challenging behaviors

- Calling attention to desired behaviors rather than negative behaviors. We will use this technique unless safety is involved.
- Redirection/Distraction: We offer alternatives to children engaged in undesirable behavior by suggesting a new activity, engaging the child in an activity with a teacher or another child, or encouraging independent play. The child may be given choices, so they feel successful in moving to another activity.
- Verbal Intervention: The teacher explains to the child (at child level) the inappropriate behavior and shows him/her the appropriate way to handle the situation with words.
- Logical Consequences: The teacher helps the child understand the logical consequences of his/her actions.
- Sensory Break: The child is offered the calming area from the group to allow him/her to relax and calm the body and brain and to help him/her not be influenced by peers. Staff will redirect the child to another activity and/or calming area to help regulate their emotions. The child will have access to calming techniques and sensory tools.
- The social consequences of the behavior (hurt feelings, sad friends, interrupted play, etc.) will be addressed and discussed with the child after he/she has calmed down and can reflect on what happened.
- Continuous supervision by staff during this time is required to de-escalate and reduce the intensity of a conflict or potentially aggressive behaviors.
- During the incident with the child the staff will stay supportive and state what they see. “I see you are angry.” And offer better choices and solutions, redirection and setting clear limits, while still using positive guidance.
- If the child is unable to calm down or help themselves stop destructive or challenging behavior, staff intervene immediately to protect all the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions.
- If a child continually displays any behavior or action which jeopardizes their personal safety, other children and staff a call will be made to the Special Ed. Consultant and management team who will advise staff on the next steps to follow.
- If a child’s behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child’s individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

Chaplin Pre-K will use the following Supportive Behavior Steps before a decision to exclude is considered.

- We will observe and record the child's challenging behavior and which strategies did or did not work.
- Parents/guardians will be asked to participate in a family conference in which a Supportive Behavior Plan will be developed. The supportive behavior plan will outline the challenging behaviors, the positive guidance techniques staff will use to develop skills, and how families will be involved in the process. The meeting will allow a free exchange of ideas on the best techniques for teaching new skills and any additional information that should be added to the plan.
- Our staff may suggest outside resources to families and will work with any outside resources for further guidance in responding to the child's learning needs.
- If the challenging behavior continues, we may have to shorten their child's day.
- If the behavior continues throughout the course of the plan, depending on severity, we may revise the current plan, start a progressive guidance action plan, or move to disenrollment.
- Exclusionary measures are not considered until all other possible interventions and resources have been exhausted, and the program and family have a mutual agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child.
- If exclusionary measures must be taken, the program will offer assistance to the family in accessing other childcare or professional services as an alternative placement.

This Discipline Policy does not include any circumstances when it is permissible for staff to use any form of physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. Appropriate use of restraint for safety reasons is permissible.

This Policy also Prohibits Practices in the following items:

- - **Physical Punishment:** shaking, hitting, spanking, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair, ears. Also, requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.
 - **Psychological Abuse:** shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening children, ostracism, withholding affection, food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care and embarrassment.
 - **Coercion:** rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body parts) forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, (except when such restraint is necessary in an extreme emergency to protect the health and safety of the child or other children and staff from harm), or physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning-up).

Confidentiality: It is the intention of the Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program to respect the privacy of children, their families and our staff, while ensuring that high quality early childhood care and education is accessible in our program. Families can share their information in confidence that it will only be used to enhance the welfare of their children. Educational records will be kept for each student, which reflect the physical, emotional, social, and academic aspects of a student's development. We will respect the confidentiality of these records in the following ways:

- The principal is the responsible custodian for school-based student records.
- All records are kept in an orderly way in files and filing is kept up to date.
- Staff will not discuss personal information given by families with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person.
- Student Teachers/Interns, and volunteers, when they are working or observing in our school, are advised of our confidentiality policy and required to respect it.
- Records are released to another school or institution only with written consent.
- Information and records may be shared with members of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) as deemed appropriate by the principal. Under these circumstances, the child's family will be informed that a report is being presented to the authorities.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the people directly involved in making personnel decisions.

Individual Student Records: These include registration and admission forms, signed consents, and correspondence concerning the child or family, reports or minutes from meetings concerning

the child from other agencies, an ongoing record of relevant contact with families, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.

Confidential Folders: Kept for students receiving Special Education Services. These contain official copies of IEP or 504 Plans.

Both student records and confidential folders are confidential and are stored in locked cabinets in the school office. Families have a right to access their child's official student record or confidential folder unless prohibited to do so by a court of law. Families may only access the student records or confidential folders of their own children. Information from a child's student record or confidential folder, however, cannot be shared with other outside parties or intuitions without prior written family consent.

The Cumulative folder: Observations of children in the school setting, samples of their work, summary developmental reports and records of achievement may be accessed, and contributed to, by staff, the child and the child's family. They are kept in locked cabinets in the classroom. These cumulative folders are available on a needs basis to school personnel immediately involved in the education of the pupil or having responsibility for some specific aspect of the school system's programs directly affecting the student (i.e. classroom teachers, specialist, special education service providers, school social worker, and principal). Families may only access the cumulative folder of their own children.

Access to Records: All student records are available for review by parents or legal guardians, or by students attaining age eighteen, with an appropriate school system employee present to interpret testing data or other information in the records. Parents, guardians, or eligible students may have a third party of their choosing participate with them in such a review. Requests for such review should be directed to the school principal and will be honored within three school days of the receipt of same. After such a review, parents, guardians, or eligible students (eighteen or older) may request copies of documents.

Release of Information in Student Records: Upon enrollment in any other educational institution or school, the cumulative records are transferred to this institution or school upon written request for records from the receiving school. The transfer of any confidential folder data to other public institutions or schools requires the written informed consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student.

Notification of Rights under FERPA: The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal statute. The purposes of FERPA are twofold: to ensure that families have access to their children's educational records and to protect the privacy rights of families and children by limiting access to these records without parent/guardian consent. FERPA affords families and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's educational records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days of the district receiving the request for access.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student's educational records that the family or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading.
 3. The school must have written permission from the parent/guardian or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record.
- FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest;
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring;
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
 - Accrediting organizations;
 - To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, the school must tell families and eligible students about directory information and allow families and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them.

School Health:

The primary function of the school health personnel is to assure a safe and wholesome school environment and to implement measures to insure children and staff the best possible services and programs. The focus of school health is to promote health practices, provide assistance with outside resources, i.e. enrollment in HUSKY and to prevent situations that impede learning or threaten health and safety in accordance with State Health guidelines as directed by the State Department of Health and our Medical Director.

Health Service Staff:

Our school has a Registered Nurse and a Medical Advisor.

Cumulative Health File:

A health record including copies of physical examinations, immunizations, screenings and emergency information is kept for each student throughout his/her school career.

Medications and Special Health Needs:

The School Nurse can only administer prescription and /or over the counter medications during school hours if accompanied by a form signed by the primary care provider or dentist (This form will be provided to you upon request). This medication must **NOT** be brought to school by students and must be in original bottle with pharmacy label. Tylenol and Motrin may be given for conditions set forth by Medical Advisor after parents/guardians have completed a permission form sent home at the start of the school year.

Registration:

Please be advised that when registering your child, the following medical information is required:

- Current immunizations
- Recent physical exam completed and recorded on Yellow ED191 form (Within 12 months of start of school)
- Information regarding any medical concerns

Conditions for Exclusion from School:

The main indicator of whether a child should be in school is their ability to take part in the routines and indoor and outdoor activities that occur throughout the day. Parents will be called to pick up their child if the child is not able to participate in all aspects of the Pre-K program.

Children are not allowed into the classroom under the following circumstances:

1. Temperature of 100 or above and/or symptoms such as lethargy or irritability, excessive tiredness, headache, vomiting, etc. Children need to be fever free, without the use of a fever

reducing medication or multi-symptom cold reliever, for 24 hours before returning to the program.

2. Discolored drainage from the eye (in case of diagnosed conjunctivitis, children may return after being on medication for 24 hours and eyes are clear). Some doctors are choosing not to treat conjunctivitis. Children must be symptom free to return to school if not treated.
3. Suspicious rash or lesions (does not include allergy rashes, prickly heat, poison ivy, or diaper rash). Children with suspicious rash or lesions must return to school with a note from a physician, clearing the child of communicable illness.
4. If a student or school employee has been diagnosed with a bacterial infection, we require they receive a 24-hour course of antibiotics and be symptom free before they return to school.

Children may not attend school if they have:

1. Chicken Pox – lasts approximately 7 days. All lesions must be crusted and dry (non-draining).
2. Impetigo
3. Ringworm
4. Scabies
5. Coxsackie Virus
6. Pin Worm – will be excluded from classroom until 48 hours after medication is given.
7. Diarrhea
8. Vomiting within 24 hours (does not include spitting up).
9. Strep throat – A throat culture should be done on children with persistent sore throats. Children with diagnosed strep throat must remain at home for a minimum of 24 hours after medication is started.
10. Head lice – Parents of children with head lice infestation are asked to inform the school so that preventative procedures may be employed for children and staff. If a case of lice is confirmed at the school, the parents of that child will be asked to bring their child home and apply treatment immediately. The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten has adopted a “No Nits” policy for readmission into school. This means that total treatment must include the removal of lice eggs following the pediculicide application. Although this is a tedious task, it ensures thorough treatment, prevents needless retreatment, and contains the spread of head lice to other children in the classroom.

Parents must notify the school nurse immediately if a child has been diagnosed with any communicable disease. Children who exhibit signs or symptoms of communicable illnesses must be restricted from the classroom until the symptoms have resolved or, when appropriate, have been treated with antibiotics for at least 24 hours prior to return to the classroom. Children must be free from diarrhea, vomiting, and/or fever for at least 24 hours, without medication before they may return to the classroom. Your child may, however, be sent home if the staff notes an elevated fever, or if your child has become lethargic, irritable, or is unable to participate in the program.

Additionally, the teaching staff in your child’s classroom must be informed if the following has occurred:

- If your child has been ill during the weekend, as the staff may be less concerned if they observe that your child has diminished stamina- knowing that it is likely to be related to your child's recovery.
- If medication has been administered in the morning before coming to school. This information is important if a situation occurs involving side effects or adverse reactions during school hours.
- Children requiring acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or other antipyretics to maintain functionality throughout the day are considered too ill to be at school.

When a child becomes ill during the day:

The school nurse and Pre-Kindergarten staff are trained to recognize the symptoms of common childhood illnesses. They will evaluate the health of the children upon arrival to the school and throughout the day. In the event that children become ill during the day, they may be isolated and cared for away from other children. Parents(s)/guardian(s) will be called to pick up their child. We depend on parent(s)/guardian(s) to be as prompt as possible in responding to these requests. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot be located, we will proceed to the Emergency contacts. If after ½ hour we are unable to reach parents/guardians or designated Emergency Contacts, the school nurse will make the determination to call 9-1-1, depending on the health situation of the child. The school nurse and staff make the final decision as to when a child needs to be sent home or may return to school. This decision will be based on the best interests of the child and all other children in the program.

In the event that a child is under-immunized and a vaccine preventable illness occurs in the program, the child will need to be excluded from the program until one of the following occurs:

- the child is vaccinated and documentation is provided
- the Department of Public Health declares that the illness has passed, and it is safe for the child to return.

In Connecticut, an annual flu shot is required for children aged 6 months through 5 years attending licensed childcare, preschool, or group daycare, with proof due by December 31.

Child Abuse: Mandated Reporters: Teachers, principals, coaches, instructional assistants, and other professional school staff including social workers, psychologists, and licensed nurses are obligated by law (C.G.S. 17a-101) to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or if a child is placed in imminent danger of serious harm to the Connecticut State Department of Children and Families. Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect and staff receive yearly training in their use.

Reporting child abuse and neglect is a responsibility that is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about suspected abuse or neglect, a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Child abuse is defined as any physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means or injuries that are not in keeping with the explanation given for their cause. Improper treatments, such as

malnutrition, sexual molestation, deprivation of necessities, emotional abuse, cruel punishment, or neglect, are also considered child abuse.

Safety Procedures

Safety measures are integrated into our daily routines. All doors are locked during the school's operating hours. The main entrance has a buzzer entry system, and all visitors must report to the office upon entry to sign in. Please be prepared to present identification and the purpose of your visit. Any adult staying in the building must sign in and sign out and wear a visitor pass visibly.

Fire drills, evacuations, and lockdown procedures are part of a school safety plan and are required by state law and conducted monthly. Practice for the entire school population provides safety protocols to call upon in the event of emergency situations. Children are taught safe ways to act at home and in school.

Emergency response plans: Our priority is the safety and well-being of every child. Our staff is trained in pediatric CPR/First Aid. Students and staff participate in monthly emergency drills to ensure a calm and quick response to any situation. Our staff is trained in the following procedures:

In the event of a fire or the detection of smoke within the building:

- Immediate Action: The fire alarm will sound, and all children will be led by teachers to our designated outdoor area.
- Evacuation: Staff will take attendance sheets and emergency contact binders to ensure every child is accounted for.
- Response: The fire department will be notified immediately via 911. The fire department will determine if/when the building is safe for re-entry or if the school will follow dismissal procedures.

In event of a lockdown due to an intruder or activity involving police:

- Secure Perimeter: All exterior doors and windows will be locked.
- Indoor Safety: Children will be moved to a reinforced interior area of the building, away from windows.
- New training allows teachers to make the decision to evacuate the building if they feel it offers the most safety to the children.
- Administration and law enforcement will unlock classroom doors when the building is deemed safe.
- Families will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so via Parent Square, the school communication system.

In the event of an evacuation to an off-site location if the building is deemed unsafe for occupancy (e.g., major structural damage, chemical leak, or extended power failure in extreme weather), families will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so via Parent Square.

To ensure children are released only to authorized individuals, we follow a strict Reunification Protocol:

- Photo ID Required: No child will be released without a valid government-issued

ID that matches our emergency contact records.

- The Check-In Gate: Parents must report to the "Check-In" station.
- Sign-Out: Once the ID is verified, a staff member will escort your child to the "Release" station to meet you.

Note to Families: Please ensure your emergency contact list is updated quarterly. We cannot release a child to anyone not listed in our records, regardless of the circumstances.



Chaplin Elementary School

Mr. Kevin J. Chavez
<http://chaplinschool.org>

240 Palmer Road
Chaplin, CT 06235
Phone: 860-455-9593
Fax: 860-455-0742

8/24/2024

Dear Parents:

Should an emergency or disaster situation ever arise in our area while school is in session, we want you to be aware that Chaplin Elementary School has made preparations to respond effectively to such situations.

Should we have a major disaster during school hours, your children will be cared for by school staff. Chaplin Elementary School has submitted a detailed emergency operations plan, formulated to respond to all hazards, with The Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

Your cooperation is necessary in any emergency.

1. Do not come to the school or telephone the school. Telephone lines may be needed for emergency communication. If necessary, you will be notified, through our Blackboard Connect by phone, text, and email, of a reunification location.
2. In the event of a serious emergency, students will be kept at a designated reunification location until they are picked up by a responsible adult who has been identified as such on the school emergency card which is required to be filled out by parents at the beginning of every school year. Please be sure you consider the following criteria when you authorize another person to pick up your child at school:
 - He/she is 18 years of age or older.
 - He/she is usually home during the day.
 - He/she could walk a distance if roads are closed to automobiles.
 - He/she is known to your child.
 - He/she is both aware and able to assume this responsibility.
3. Turn on your radio for emergency announcements. If students are kept at school, radio stations will be notified. In addition, information regarding day-to-day school operations will be available by calling the District Office.
4. Impress upon your children the need for them to follow the directions of any school personnel in times of an emergency. Please be patient and understanding with the student release process.

When the dangerous incident has subsided, an all-clear notification will be sent out to all families.

Please discuss these matters with your immediate family. Planning ahead will help reduce concerns during emergencies.

Sincerely,

Kevin J Chavez
Principal
Chaplin Elementary School

Parent Communication and Involvement

The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten Program is committed to welcoming children and their families, and to maintaining close communication between home and school. Teaching staff will use a variety of formal and informal methods to communicate with families about the program philosophy and curriculum objectives, educational goals and effective strategies that can be used by families to promote their children's learning. Policies and procedures will be shared verbally and in writing with families of enrolled children in languages that families use and understand or through translation.

Communication: Two-way communication can be maintained with your child's classroom teacher through notes in your child's home/school folder, phone conversations, and email. Additional information about classroom activities, expectations, and individual child updates will be written in the pre-kindergarten newsletter, posted on a parent communication app, and found on our classroom website. A link to the pre-kindergarten classroom can be found by going to our school website www.chaplinschool.org and clicking the "Classrooms" tab.

- **Home/School Folder:** Each child will be given a home/school folder to hold important papers. He/she should bring that folder to school every day, and it should be checked at home each evening for notices. Included in the home/school folder will be a parent-teacher communication log. This is where you and your child's teacher may write any informal notes pertaining to your child's day such as that your child didn't sleep well the night before, or that he or she has sneakers in their backpack for Gym class. Your child's classroom teacher will also use this space to respond to your notes and questions, or share information about an activity your child enjoyed, ask a question to clarify a story your child shared, or to let you know your child didn't like the snack offered that morning. Please date any notes you write on the Parent-Teacher communication log. Notes from home, not requiring a written response, such as "please refrigerate Sally's tuna fish sandwich" will be marked to indicate they were read by a teacher.
- **Phone Conversations:** 860-455-9593. Please feel free to talk to your child's teacher about any questions or concerns you might have, ideas you would like to share, or anything else you think he/she should know. If your child's teacher is in class when you call, he/she may need to return your call. The best time to reach your child's classroom teacher in person is between 12:00-12:30, before 8:30 a.m. or after class hours 3:15 – 3:40 p.m. This procedure will enable us to focus our attention on the children when they are here.
- **Email:** Teachers can be reached by e-mail. To send an e-mail to any staff member, type the first letter of their first name and their last name followed by @chaplinschool.org. For example to email the Pre-Kindergarten classroom teacher type in cgrzywacz@chaplinschool.org.

Open Door Policy: The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten has an open-door policy. Please feel free to visit the program at any time during regular school hours. Although we actively seek family participation, we ask you to keep in mind that one of the primary purposes of any Pre-Kindergarten program is to ease the child's transition from home to school. If your child would be upset by your presence in the classroom, we will happily work with you to find alternative ways to volunteer.

Family Fridays: Family members are invited to join their PreKkindergartner for planned classroom activities. Examples of monthly activities include a get-to-know each other playdate with popsicles on the playground, performances, thematic activities, and free choice exploration of classroom materials. Family Friday participants may be parents, older siblings, grandparents, or aunts/uncles. If a family member over the age of 18 is unable to attend to participate with your pre-kindergartner, a special family friend, neighbor, or babysitter may come in their place. Family Friday dates will be set and announced several months in advance so that parents/guardians have ample time to request time off and/or make childcare arrangements for younger siblings.

Classroom Volunteering: Adult family members are invited to volunteer virtually in our classroom. Opportunities to read to small groups of children, give presentations on educational topics or lead a learning center activity will be incorporated into the weekly schedule. Please let your child's classroom teacher know so a mutually agreeable time can be found for you to volunteer virtually.

Conferences: Individual conferences are scheduled twice annually for students. Families may request an additional conference at any time. Should the classroom teacher have a concern or question about your child, he/she will request a meeting with you. Families will receive a written report after Conferences in December and March, outlining what was discussed: i.e. their child's developmental progress and any goals and plans that were made.

Report Cards: Pre-Kindergarten report cards are issued in December, March and June. A written progress report is reviewed at Parent-Teacher Conferences in December & March. Report cards are based on the State of Connecticut's Early Learning & Development Standards. The report card highlights 30 performance standards from four domains: Personal & Social, Physical, Cognitive and Creative Expression. Each of the 30 performance standards has 4 benchmarks which form a continuum of skill development for children ages 2.5 yrs. to 6 yrs. The Pre-Kindergarten Report Card indicates which benchmark a child is currently performing at for each performance standard.

Families with children receiving Special Education Services will additionally receive goal progress reports twice yearly and a summary of progress at an annual review from their child's Special Education Service provider.

Negotiating difficulties and differences that arise in interactions between families and program staff: If a family member disagrees with how a teacher works with a child or there are differences with the teacher, families are requested to first discuss the issue with the teacher. If the family is not pleased with the outcome of a parent/teacher conference, he/she should contact the school principal, Kevin Chavez, at 860-455-9593 or kchavez@chaplinschool.org. Every attempt will be made to solve the problem in a positive way for the benefit of children, families and staff.

Eastern CT Early Start Collaborative: The Eastern CT Early Start Collaborative is part of a state-funded initiative that works to provide access for young children to high quality, accredited childcare programs. It brings together elected officials, school management staff, school social worker, parents, community health care providers, librarians, and childcare representatives. This committee works to collaborate on community programs and services such as family engagement,

education on raising children, health and nutrition services, providing family literacy programs, establishing a sliding scale for families participating in school readiness programs such as Chaplin's Pre-Kindergarten Program, promoting enrollment of children from different racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds, transitioning children to kindergarten and conducting an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the program.

Family members of Chaplin Pre-Kindergartners and community members are encouraged to join the Eastern CT Early Start Collaborative. The Collaborative meets at EASTCONN.

The Chaplin Preschool Program has collaborative agreements with EASTCONN's Adult Education Program, the Chaplin Public Library, Generations Health Care and the many services provided within Chaplin Elementary School. Please contact the CES Main Office if you have any questions about the various programs that we can assist you with.

Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO): The Chaplin Board of Education believes that family-school collaboration is essential to providing the best learning environment for our children. Participation in parent organizations is one of the best ways to support your child's education. Your participation is encouraged.

Board of Education: The Chaplin Board of Education meets on the second Wednesday of each month except for the month of July. Meetings are held in the CES Library at 6:30 P.M. The public is welcome to attend.

Transition to Kindergarten

The Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten programs will work throughout the school year to facilitate the transition of students from Pre-K to Kindergarten. Students in both programs will take part in a weekly "Community Time"; where Pre-Kindergarten students and Kindergarten students get together to take part in a variety of activities and interact with staff that the Pre-Kindergarten students will work with in Kindergarten. Pre-Kindergarten families who have students entering Kindergarten in the fall will be invited to a Kindergarten Family Orientation night in June. Families will be able to hear from the Kindergarten teacher(s), the Reading Interventionist, Math Specialist, Speech & Language Pathologist, the School Nurse, the School Psychologist and the CES Principal.

At the end the school year, you will receive a questionnaire asking your intentions for either pre-kindergarten or kindergarten enrollment for the following school year. Pre-Kindergarten student records are automatically transferred to Kindergarten for advancing students at the end of the school year. No further registration steps are necessary.

Evaluating and Improving our Program

The Chaplin Pre-Kindergarten is a continuously evolving program, which needs your feedback to improve and to evaluate our program. The staff is committed to continually improving and modifying the program to better meet the needs of our students and their families.

Pre-Kindergarten staff members are involved in ongoing professional development to continually improve the quality of the program. Professional development activities are both school-based and occur outside of school. Training in Intentional Teaching using the new CT Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS) is an example.

In April, families will be provided with the annual NAEYC program evaluation. The evaluation instrument will assist Chaplin Elementary School in evaluating the Pre-Kindergarten Program. Evaluation results will be provided to the Office of Early Childhood on the annual report for the School Readiness Grant. Evaluation results will be presented to the School Readiness Council as well. Results of the program evaluation are available to families upon request.

LIST OF RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

We are committed to helping families at the Chaplin PreK reach their full potential. We can help you to find job training and other programs to meet your goals as well as services offered through the public libraries.

Some locations in the area:

Mental Health:

Professional Resource Group PC
207 Storrs Road
Mansfield, CT
860-456-4604

Physical Health:

Mansfield Pediatrics LLC
12A Ledgebrook Drive Unit 2C
Mansfield, CT
860-450-7227

Dental Health:

860-875-9000

Local Public Education:

Chaplin Elementary School
240 Palmer Road
Chaplin, CT

Parish Hill High School
Chaplin, CT

Internet Resources:

www.ct.gov/dss

Connecticut Department of Social Services website

Resources through the State of Connecticut:

Connecticut Birth to Three Program

Service and Support Office

1344 Silas Deane Highway

Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Toll Free: 866-888-4188

Fax: 860-571-6530

The Husky Plan: Health care for uninsured children and youth

To request an application, submit an application or
for questions about application processing:

HUSKY Plan

P. O. Box 280747

East Hartford, CT 06108

For inquiries to the Department of Social Services (administering agency):

HUSKY Plan

c/o Department of Social Services

25 Sigourney Street

Hartford, CT 06106-5033

State Nutritional Assistance Programs

Nancy Carrington, Executive Director

Connecticut Food Bank, Inc.,

150 Bradley Street,

P.O. Box 8686

New Haven, CT 06531

Tel. (203) 469-5000, Fax (203) 469-4871

<http://www.ctfoodbank.org/>

Ms. Gloria McAdam, Executive Director

Foodshare, Inc.

450 Woodland Avenue

Bloomfield, CT 06002-1342

Tel: (860) 286-9999, Fax (860) 286-7860

<http://www.foodshare.org/>

United Way of Connecticut Info Line

Toll Free: 211

Telephone source for information about community services including child care, referrals to human services and crisis intervention.

WIC – State Nutritional Program for Women, Infants and Children

Call 1-800-741-2142