



SEACOAST
**COMMUNITY
SCHOOL**

*Formerly known as
Community Child Care Center of Portsmouth*



PARENT HANDBOOK

*Nationally Accredited Early Childhood Program
Community School Inclusive Preschool Program
PEAK Before & After School Programs*

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*seacoastcommunityschool.org
a not-for-profit organization*

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Seacoast Community School: Executive Director

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Program Directors

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Introduction and Organization Information

The Seacoast Community School will make every effort to translate information for families in a language that they understand and to provide a translator to assist in communication upon request.

Please note that the Parent Handbook is considered part of your enrollment agreement, and that by enrolling into the program you are accepting the terms of the handbook. The Parent Handbook may be revised periodically and the new handbook would supersede the prior ones. The most current copy may be found on the School website.

History

Seacoast Community School, (“SCS”, or “The School”) is a private, non-profit organization that has been providing quality child care since 1967. Formerly known as Community Child Care Center of Portsmouth, our School has provided a loving, nurturing, and stimulating educational environment for thousands of children from the Maine and New Hampshire Seacoast. It has also provided excellent, developmentally appropriate early childhood education and is staffed with highly qualified professionals who motivate and challenge children to imagine, create, achieve, learn, and strive for personal success.

Mission Statement

The School’s mission is: To provide nurturing care and exceptional education for all children of the Seacoast.

Program Licensing Information

All programs are licensed by the New Hampshire Bureau of Child Care Standards and Licensing. The web site for the Bureau is www.dhhs.nh.gov/oos/cclu/. Parents can request copies of our licensing reports on this website. Copies of recent reports are also posted in our main office.

Non Discrimination Policy

SCS maintains a policy of non-discrimination in its practices of admissions, employment, and programming with regard to: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age,

disability, marital status, ethnicity. It is our practice to incorporate through our programming all races, traditions, cultures, ethnicities, languages, and family structures that reflect our enrolled families.

Non-Profit Governance and Support

The School is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who has the responsibility of hiring the Executive Director(s), and the responsibility of stewardship for the organization. *The Executive Director and Board of Directors raise the funds that are critical to the survival and continued development of the School.* Parents and community members are encouraged to seek information about fundraising activities. To hear more about our Board, our non-profit status and our fundraising activities please speak to the Executive Director or visit our website: www.seacoastcommunityschool.org.

Accessibility

The Community Campus is fully handicap-accessible. The School serves a number of children with varying degrees of disability, and staff works closely with parents and service providers to best meet the needs of all children. SCS staff works with agencies such as the Portsmouth Early Education Program, Families First, Richie McFarland Center, Child and Family Services, Seacoast Mental Health, and One Sky to provide for the special needs of families and children enrolled.

Seacoast Community School is a drug and alcohol free organization

This means all controlled substances, including smoke and secondary smoke are not allowed on our campus. Regarding third hand smoke, the NH Department of Health and Human Services also requires our staff to have smoke free clothing and to remove any contaminated outerwear before coming in contact with the children. We are requesting all adults entering our school to do the same. Our goal is to maintain the highest health and safety standards for all our children.

Collaboration of Services

SCS works in close collaboration with the Portsmouth Early Education Program (PEEP), Head Start, and the public school systems. Parents are asked to give permission for SCS to share information with these agencies and use them as a resource as needed to serve the needs of their child.

Area Agencies & Referral Information

On occasion, the staff may determine that a child or family needs some services that the School cannot provide. In these cases, teachers will consult with parents and their Program or Executive Director regarding referral options. Parents will be offered assistance in gaining access to the appropriate services. If a child's needs or behaviors require special attention that we cannot maintain, the School reserves the right to work with the family to find suitable alternative arrangements.

Observation & Research

As the School is a model child-care program, we anticipate requests to visit our School from outside agencies, child-care professionals, prospective parents, and students. All visits are screened, and made by appointment only. Visitors will be accompanied by a staff member. The School reviews all proposals, and if deemed appropriate and acceptable, parents of possible

participants will be informed. Parents have the right to deny permission to any and all projects that may occur.

Program Philosophy

At Seacoast Community School, we provide children with a safe, healthy, nurturing environment where they can develop and grow. Our primary goal is to enhance each child's self esteem. We believe that young children learn best through play. This creates a love of learning that will last a lifetime. Teachers strive to create a curriculum that addresses the social, emotional, physical, creative and cognitive needs of the developing child.

Social: Children develop social skills and self-expression through positive interactions with peers and adults. Children are encouraged to take pride in themselves, their family, and culture. Through positive experiences, children will be able to appreciate individual differences. These valuable tools enable the child to learn the importance of cooperation, sharing and standing up for the rights of others as well as their own.

Emotional: Children develop an awareness of their emotions through responsive adult interaction. Children learn to identify and express their feelings and perceptions. Teachers foster friendships and empathy among children. Children are given many choices throughout the day that promote initiative, autonomy, creativity and self-confidence.

Physical: Children develop their physical skills through play and planned activities. Teachers expose children to a balance of both indoor and outdoor activities that enhance their physical awareness. Children are encouraged and supported as they develop their large motor, fine motor and sensory perception skills. Children learn to explore the world around them through their senses.

Cognitive: Children's cognitive development is supported through play and planned curriculum. Teachers strive to create a stimulating environment that ignites children's curiosity and invites them to interact with materials and other people. Teachers provide children with varied "hands-on" experiences that promote the development of observation, problem solving and language skills. Children are recognized for their efforts, perseverance and creativity in finding solutions to real problems pertinent to their world.

Staff Qualifications

The School programs are staffed with teachers and support staff that meet or exceed the educational and experience requirements determined by the New Hampshire Bureau of Child Care Licensing and Standards. Each classroom is made up of a balance of qualified staff to provide quality programs and supervision during all hours of operation. The staff participates in ongoing professional development.

Statement of Confidentiality

All of the information on your child's registration forms, as well as any other information that is added to your child's file during his/her stay at the School, shall be considered privileged and confidential and will only be accessible to School staff. Personnel from the Division of Children, Youth and Family Services, the Bureau of Child Care Licensing and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) are required to have access to files for licensing or accreditation purposes and shall maintain the confidentiality of individual records. Any other requests for information from your child's file will not be released without parental consent. Records of all such releases will be kept in your child's file.

Responsibility to Report Child Abuse

The State of New Hampshire has a mandated reporter law that requires teachers and child care workers to report to the Division of Children Youth and Families when they suspect an incident of child neglect or abuse has occurred.

Programs

Infant/Young Toddler Program

Year round, Monday – Friday, 7:30 am – 5:00 pm

(We ask that all shoes be removed when entering the infant room)

This program provides care for infants from 8 weeks through two years old. The Shrimp and Seahorse Rooms are staffed with 2 teachers and have the capacity to care for 8 infants in each room per day. The Guppy and Periwinkle Rooms are staffed with 2 teachers and have the capacity to care for 9 young toddlers in each room per day. The School provides appropriate breakfast, lunch and snack when infants transition to table foods. These rooms provide daily notes to parents to share important specifics about their child's day. Our infants and young toddlers are provided with a safe, nurturing environment and exposed to developmentally appropriate experiences that will assist them in their growth and development. Parents are responsible for providing disposable diapers, wipes and an extra change of clothing including appropriate footwear for their child.

Older Toddler Program

Year round, Monday – Friday, 7:30 am – 5:00 pm

This program provides care for older toddlers from 2 to approximately 3 and one half years old. The Rainbowfish, Minnow and Jellyfish Rooms are each staffed with 2 teachers and have the capacity to care for 12 toddlers in each room per day. The Bumblebee Room located at the Gosling Meadows has the capacity for 6 children. The School provides daily breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack for children. The children are part of a carefully planned program that provides a nurturing environment and a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences for them each day. Parents are responsible for providing disposable diapers, wipes and an extra change of clothing including appropriate footwear for their child.

Preschool Programs

Year round, Monday – Friday, 7:30 am – 5:00 pm

Our preschool programs located at the Community Campus and the Gosling Meadows provide full day care for families. The full day classrooms at the Campus are staffed with two teachers and have the capacity for 18 children; the Meadows Preschool has the capacity for 14. The School provides breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Children participate in a carefully planned, developmentally appropriate program that includes a wide variety of activities, field trips and experiences. Parents are required to provide their child with one extra change of clothing including appropriate footwear in case of accidents or spills.

Seacoast Community School at Little Harbour

Half day preschool program is open from 8:30-12:30 during September through June. Follows school department calendar.

The program is located at Little Harbour Elementary School; they are an inclusive classroom in collaboration with PEEP (Portsmouth Early Education Program) of the Portsmouth School Department. The classroom is staffed with SCS, School Department staff members and special needs support professionals. They have the capacity for up to 16 children.

Assessment of Child Progress

All early childhood teachers are trained in the assessment practice of the program. Formal assessments and sharing of assessment results with families occurs twice a year. Informal ongoing assessment is conducted by utilizing observation boxes, notes, checklists and child portfolios. We encourage families to participate in their child's ongoing assessment. The Assessment Policy and Practice is available in each classroom.

Program for Elementary Aged Kids (P.E.A.K.)

After School Care – Monday – Friday after school release until 5:30pm at Little Harbour, Dondero, and New Franklin Elementary Schools in Portsmouth and Greenland Central School in Greenland: Please note that the New Franklin program is located at the Community Campus building.

SCS provides after school programming for Portsmouth's Little Harbour, Dondero and New Franklin Schools, and in Greenland at Greenland Central School. Children must be in grades K through 5 at the schools to attend. PEAK is open during most "no school" and "early release" days, delayed openings days, as well as during school vacations. (Please see our agency calendar for specific information.) Each PEAK site has a site director. Children participate in a carefully planned curriculum that includes enrichment, recreation and social opportunities. Snacks are served daily after school. On full days, breakfast is offered, but lunch must be provided by the family.

At the end of the school year, PEAK relocates and becomes a summer camp, or "Summer Peak", it is a separate enrollment and contract. Families have the opportunity to enroll in this program in January/February. Curriculum includes age appropriate activities and field trips. Breakfast and an afternoon snack are offered. Parents/guardians are responsible for sending lunch daily. Summer PEAK runs Monday through Friday, 7:30am-5:00pm.

Nutrition/Food Program Information

Meal Service

We participate in the USDA Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Meals served here meet the nutrition requirements established by the CACFP. We use family style meal service. Family-Style is a type of meal service that allows children to serve themselves at the table from common dishes of food, with assistance from teachers. Family-Style encourages staff to set a personal example and provide educational activities that are centered on foods. This approach allows children to identify and be introduced to new foods, new tastes, and new menus while developing a positive attitude toward nutritious foods, sharing in group eating situations, and developing healthy eating habits. Children are encouraged to try all foods offered but are never forced to eat these foods nor is food at the School ever used as a reward or punishment.

To avoid incidents of choking SCS will avoid the following foods such as: Hot dogs; whole or sliced into rounds, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter, or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

The School's nutrition programs are used to ensure the integrity of the nutrition the children are receiving, therefore we ask that no candy (hard candy, lollipops, candy bars, etc.) should be brought into our programs. We request that food brought from home and shared among children for special occasions be whole fruits and vegetables or commercially packaged.

Policy on Special Diet Restrictions

If a child has special dietary needs, including food allergies, we must have a completed “Special Dietary Medical Statement Form” on file in our office that has been filled out and signed by your child’s physician. The School will accommodate your child’s need.

If your child has special dietary needs due to religious or philosophical beliefs or your child has food intolerances we will also need the “Special Dietary Medical Statement Form” filled out and signed by a parent. When possible, we will make substitutions to the menu to meet the needs of your child.

If you require that we keep a record of what your child is eating each day, please reach out to us and we can accommodate that request.

Birthday Celebrations

These are special days at the School and we enjoy celebrating them with the children. We recognize that on a child’s birthday parent(s) may want to provide a snack for that day. We encourage parent involvement and parent(s) are always welcome to share in the celebration. Please coordinate a time and a healthy snack with the teacher(s). These parties need to remain simple so as to not to interfere with the daily routine, and to keep in mind any allergies children in the classroom may have.

Transition Information and Classroom Placement

Our largest enrollment is in June and September, with re-enrollment process in early spring. Our goal is to place children in classrooms for a minimum of one year. A child will transition when he or she is developmentally suited for the next age group and as availability occurs. When a child is ready to transition we provide opportunities for children to visit with the new teachers and classrooms to aide the transition process. The transition from early childhood to school age programs occurs when a child reaches the age of public/private school age eligibility. Conversations take place between parents/guardians, and the program directors to ensure that the child’s needs are met. Parents are welcome to meet the teachers and/or visit the classroom that their child will be entering. Children enrolled in our programs will have priority placement.

Teacher and Class Requests Policies

A family may request to have their child assigned to a specific class/teacher if:

- It is determined that a student’s particular learning style necessitates such a placement.

A family may request to have their child not assigned to a specific class/teacher if:

- It is determined that the student or family has had experience with the teacher/class in the past.

Scheduling requests of classes or teachers will not be granted based on:

- Hearsay about particular teachers, classes, or other students.
- Requests to be in classes with friends.
- Unfounded assurances made by classroom teachers or staff
- Parent status in donor or volunteer positions at the school. i.e. Board or Parent Committee
- Solely on status as an employee

Please talk to the Program Director at any time if you have questions or concerns about transitions.

Communication with Families

Open Door

We believe that communication is vital to a great working relationship. We also believe that families know their child best. We welcome families to come into our programs at any time to observe and be a part of our classrooms. Each teacher has a school email address to enable families to have open communication. Teachers are also available at drop off and pick up.

Assessments/Parent Teacher Conferences

We offer parent teacher conferences twice a year to discuss your child's development. Teachers will discuss your child's developmental abilities, likes and dislikes as well as any concerns. Parents/guardians are welcome and encouraged to request a conference at any time during the year to discuss questions or concerns. Parents are asked to participate in the ongoing assessment of their child's development.

If a serious matter arises throughout the year that you would like to discuss, you can set up a phone meeting with your teacher or via email. If the problem still isn't resolved to your satisfaction, you can reach out to our Early Childhood Program Director, Alicia Tonelli. At times, a family still may not feel satisfied with the answer they are receiving; they can then contact our Executive Director, Peter Gilmore.

Parent/Guardian Pockets and Communication

Each child in every classroom has a parent pocket that is located near the door of the child's classroom. Although this pocket serves many purposes, picture holder, treasure keeper, rock collector, the main purpose is parent communication. Many things go out to parents/guardians via email or Brightwheel, however there are some notices that we feel are best communicated by utilizing the parent pockets.

Programming Practices

Nap Time in our Programs

Our School follows the New Hampshire Bureau of Child Care Licensing Rules concerning nap and rest. We provide an opportunity for at least one hour of rest, relaxation, or sleep depending on each child's needs. We provide individual mats and sheets and maintain constant supervision of sleeping areas at all times. Children may bring a child-size blanket that we ask parents to take home and wash weekly. We encourage children to bring a cuddly toy for nap-time. In accordance with State Licensing Guidelines, classrooms with ages 2+ years at naptime may occasionally be reduced in staffing.

Clothing & Appropriate Seasonal Apparel

We encourage parents/guardians to have children wear play clothes that they can easily manipulate and that are easily laundered. We ask for one complete change of clothing to be at the School at all times. Please make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather at all times. Remember, we do try to go outdoors daily. Winter: Snowsuits, boots, gloves/mittens, and a hat. (Please remember to bring in either slippers or sneakers/shoes for inside wear.) Summer: Swimsuit, towel, and a change of safe shoes appropriate for active play. Fall/spring: light jacket or sweater. Please make sure that all items of clothing are labeled.

Outdoor Play

Daily outdoor activity is very important for young children. It is our belief that children need fresh air and movement daily for general well-being and healthy development. At the Community Campus we have 4 acres of trails and wildlife as well as outdoor classrooms and onsite playgrounds. We do not take children outdoors in inclement weather (i.e. extremely cold (5 degrees) windy weather, freezing rain, excessive puddles, ice, etc). We ask that parents/guardians

provide appropriate outdoor, head to toe clothing. If the classroom teachers choose to go outside, and it is below 20 degrees, it must be sunny and the group will stay out for no longer than 10 minutes.

Toys

Children love bringing in special toys and items from home to share with their friends. Children can have difficulty sharing their special toys from home, and items can get lost or broken. We ask that toys are brought in from home only when there is a special classroom activity and the teachers have requested a toy (for example for Teddy Bear Picnic Day). A nap time companion – i.e. stuffed animal, soft doll or special blanket is always welcome. Please keep in mind that the School does not allow action figures or violent toys or games.

Unacceptable items include but are not limited to: toys, games, action figures, etc. which express themes and acts of violence from TV shows, movies, weapons, magazines, comics, books, video games and internet sites. This includes any real or toy weapons of any type or the threat to bring a weapon to the School to harm another child or staff member.

In the event an unacceptable toy or a weapon is brought to the School:

- 1) Staff will remove the item from the classroom.
- 2) Parent or guardian will be notified.
- 3) Incident report will be completed by the staff and placed in the child's records.
- 4) In the event of a real weapon being brought or a threat made to bring a real weapon to the School, police will be notified.
- 5) Child may be temporarily suspended or permanently expelled from care at the discretion of the Program Director and/or the Executive Director(s).
- 6) Repeat offenses will be grounds for expulsion from care.

Media Use in Classroom

Our School's Media policy was developed in order to allow teachers the opportunity to use multi-media materials/equipment to enhance the quality of our programming.

Video (There will be no viewing of TV shows) Video viewing, when it occurs, is a planned part of the theme based with a direct tie-in with the curriculum. Teachers provide an introduction prior to viewing and follow-up activities after viewing. Teachers actively talk about the video and pose questions to the children about what they are viewing. Teachers will always have another choice available to children not wishing to view the video.

Music Teachers will be responsible to monitor content and sound level in the classroom. Music that can be played at any time includes: nature/weather (rainfall/whale song, etc.), classical, tapes made especially for children, jazz, multicultural/world music, and acoustical.

Field Trips

All field trips are announced in advance. We are pleased to be able to provide field trips as part of our curriculum and encourage children to be curious, learn and explore. We travel in insured vehicles and follow the New Hampshire seat belt law. If your schedule allows, we welcome and encourage your participation on such trips, just let your child's teacher know to expect you. Occasionally an extra fee may be charged for these trips. Field trip permission forms must be signed in order for your child to attend.

Walking Trips

One aspect of our program involves time outside of the classroom. We enjoy walking the beautiful trails of our Campus site, and on occasion, PEAK may walk to local areas of interest. We will request parents to sign a permission slip on an annual basis to go on our nature walks and picnics on the Community Campus grounds. PEAK teachers will request separate permission for specific off-site visits to local areas of interest. Please check with staff concerning the expected time of departure and arrangements will be made to catch up with the class should your child not arrive in time for the walk.

Bus Trips

In addition to walking trips, each preschool, kindergarten and PEAK child may attend trips that require transportation by vehicle. We also ensure that the trips meet our safety standards. Weather conditions, staffing requirements and transportation availability may cause the postponement or cancellation of planned trips.

Frequency of Bus Field Trips:

Classrooms may choose to take 2-4 field trips per month with the approval of their Program Director. No field trips will occur during the first two (2) weeks of the school year. Summer PEAK programs can schedule up to three (5) bus trips per week.

Behavior/Safety Concerns on Field Trips

In the case that a Teacher and Program Director(s) have a concern that a child may not be safe on the trip due to serious behavior issues, alternative arrangements will be made.

Positive Discipline and Behavior

All children are capable of becoming responsible, valuable, and loving persons. We work with children to acquire confidence, problem solving skills, social skills, coping abilities, independent thinking, and high self-esteem. Our staff encourages and nurtures the basic skills and habits that are critical for success in our society. This includes caring for his/her physical well-being, for the well-being of others, and the well-being of their physical environment. All of our programs follow the PBIS Cool Rules: we are safe, we are kind and we work together, as well as the Pyramid Model.

We know that positive early school experiences and warm, nurturing relationships with teachers are critical contributors to children's ability to cope with stress and trauma. It is always our goal to keep children in our care and we will work with families to the fullest extent to prevent expulsion from our school. We ask that parents inform teachers if their child has recently had a life change or event so that we can provide proper support and intervention.

Positive Reinforcement

Social skills and the safety of all of the children and staff are a very important part of SCS and PEAK. We encourage and foster healthy, respectful interactions among our children and staff. Staff will always focus on the positive behaviors of children and encourage those behaviors through positive reinforcement. This may include extra attention, special privileges, responsibilities, certificates, or awards given on a daily or weekly basis.

Persistent Behavior Incidents

Sometimes children do choose to engage in disruptive, unsafe, unacceptable behavior. This behavior includes physical and verbal abuse of self or others, destruction of property and/or leaving the supervision of teachers. Teachers will identify unacceptable behavior, encourage positive alternatives, and give children the chance to solve the problem on their own. The teachers may take the additional following steps in these situations:

1. Document the frequency of behaviors using the Behavior Incident Reporting tool for at least 2 weeks to look for patterns and function of the behavior.
2. Use this data to inform their practice and make necessary changes to the environment or daily routine. These may include less transition time, visual pictures, timers or a quiet area for a child.
3. Keep the family informed. Make sure the family is aware of these behaviors so we can be working as a team.
4. Documentation will be kept on the child's situation and progress will be kept in the child's file as a reference.

The following are additional steps that may be taken when such behavior continues to occur:

The parent/guardian will be contacted and asked to meet with the Director of their child's program. At this meeting, the team will discuss various options to help alleviate the behaviors, as well as the impact of the behaviors on the classroom. The team will then develop a written plan of action. These options may include:

- a. Requesting that a parent pick a child up and take the child out of the School for the remainder of the day.
- b. Recommendations/referrals for community support (i.e. special educational services, counseling/mental health services).
- c. Immediate suspension of the child for 1-2 days until a safety plan can be developed.
- d. In the event that all of the above fail in adequately serving the child while maintaining a safe environment, for all, the course of action may include termination from the program.
- e. In the event of termination from the program, we will do our best to help the family find other options for care and support in our community.

Termination of Care Policy

The School also reserves the right to terminate child care in the following situations:

1. We cannot keep your child safe.
2. We cannot guarantee the safety of other children.
3. We cannot guarantee the safety of our teaching staff.
4. Outstanding balances of unpaid tuition or charges.

Parental Partnership

Seacoast Community School seeks to work hand in hand with families to ensure an atmosphere of respect, acceptance, support, and partnership. The cooperative spirit that exists between parents and the school is critical to the success of every child, and professional behavior in that effort by parents, teachers, and administrators is key. Parents or family members who behave outside the bounds of acceptable behavior, on or off the school property or sites, during school hours or not,

may be asked to modify that behavior, be limited in how they may interact with the community or leave the school community altogether.

Emergency/Closings Information

The School makes every effort to stay open during inclement weather and snow storms for the entire day. If weather conditions are severe, we may delay opening, close early, or close for the day; in one of these events it will be announced on WMUR Channel 9 (or www.wmur.com).

Tuition is contracted for the year, and will not be credited for delays or closures.

It is our sincere hope to be able to offer consistent care throughout the winter months. We try to avoid closing the School for the day by utilizing delayed openings or early closings so that families can get as much out of their work day as possible.

Delayed Openings

When the Portsmouth Public Schools are closed, it may become necessary to delay opening of SCS and PEAK. Please check WMUR for updates. When the Portsmouth Public Schools are closed, the half day Community School program at Little Harbour will not be open.

Early Closings

Parents will be notified via Bright wheel if the school decides to close early. Please make sure to set the app to receive alerts; if you are not available by phone, we need **AT LEAST two other emergency contacts** that can be reached by phone and are authorized to pick up your child.

Evacuation Procedures

In the event of a need to evacuate the Community Campus building for safety reasons, our evacuation site is currently Saint Patrick Academy on Banfield Rd. We may also use Unitil and/or National Wrecker at the intersection of West Road and Campus Drive, if the evacuation prohibits us from the route to Saint Patrick Academy.

In the event of an emergency at Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant, SCS Community Campus site, Little Harbour PEAK, Community School Preschool, New Franklin PEAK, Dondero PEAK, and The Meadows Preschool will be transported by bus to the Rochester Middle School in Rochester, NH. Greenland PEAK will be transported by bus to the Dover Middle School. For further information, please contact State Office of Emergency Management, Special Facilities Field Representative at 1-900-852-3792. *Note – children may be released to parents/legal guardians or authorized individuals if they arrive prior to vehicle boarding.

Fire Drills

Fire drills are practiced according to NH Child Care licensing regulations, and conducted at various times of the day during all seasons and types of weather. Children learn that leaving the building quickly and safely is the priority. Children may not be signed-in or signed-out of care during a fire drill.

Arrivals and Departures

Drop off/Sign-in and Sign-Out Procedures

Parents/guardians are required to bring their child into the school and sign their child in each day. Parents should notify the morning staff of their child's arrival and share any pertinent information that might affect their child's day. The same procedure must be followed each night when picking up your child. Once a child is signed out, the parent/guardian is responsible for the safety and

supervision of their child. **Signing in/out is a critical part of our safety plan and must be done to help ensure the safety of your child. Please use your assigned PIN code to do so, and please do not share your PIN code with others. If an alternate pick-up person will be signing your child out, a teacher or administrator will be happy to assist them. A fee may be assessed for failing to sign your child in or out on an ongoing basis.**

Door code

At the Community Campus our classroom doors are locked at all times. Each family is given their own door code at enrollment. This code is for your family only. If you have an alternate person picking up your child, please have them go to the front office to be let into the classroom. In addition, please do not allow your child to access the code or keypad.

Absence Notification Policy

The School relies on consistent enrollments throughout the year. Therefore, the agency reserves the right to fill a child's slot – whether private or subsidized – in the program, if three or more consecutive unreported absences should occur. **The School must be notified whenever a child is out for any reason.** Families will be expected to pay their regular rate of tuition even though a child has been out for any reason.

Pick Up Authorization

As part of our safety plan, parents are required twice per year (or any time as needed) to review their contact information and authorized pick up list on file. **Individuals who are not on the authorization list will NOT be allowed to pick up children from the School.** Authorized pick-ups must be able to present a photo ID when picking up a child. Parents may add new pick-ups to the list by logging into their parent portal and adding them to their contacts. We cannot release children to anyone under the age of 16. If a parent/guardian or designated pick-up person is suspected of being under the influence of alcohol/drugs, the child's teacher and or Program Director will call the individual aside to discuss the suspected condition and potential danger to the child. Agency personnel will offer to call a spouse, friend, or taxi for the individual. If this is ineffective, the agency will notify the local police to report their concerns.

Late Pick-Up

Please note the following times at which the programs close for the day:

- The Community Campus location and The Meadows Preschool close at 5:00 p.m.
- The Community School Preschool Program closes at 12:30.
- PEAK school year programs close at 5:30
- Summer PEAK closes at 5:00.

Parents/guardians need to pick up their child(ren) so that all staff, children, and adults can vacate the building by those times.

As a state licensed agency, our license covers our program during our normal operating hours only. Therefore, families may not enter an ECE classroom or drop off before 7:30 a.m. and it is **very important that all children have been released to an authorized pick-up person by closing time.** In the event that your child(ren) is/are still here at closing time, staff are instructed to follow these guidelines:

1. We will attempt to contact parents/guardians immediately.
2. If we can not reach a parent or guardian we will start calling ALL emergency contacts and authorized pick-ups on your child's list.
3. We will call the local police department 30 minutes after closing if we are unable to contact anyone from your authorized list that can pick up your child in a timely manner.

→ **Please remember to keep your Emergency Contacts, Authorized Pick Ups, and phone numbers where you can be reached updated.**

The late fee is designed to be a deterrent rather than an extra charge parents can use regularly. Regular late pick ups pose a burden on our staff and school overall. It is not only important, but a requirement that parents/guardians arrive on time to pick up their children so staff can be exiting the building by the program's closing time. Please also keep in mind that if you have questions or would like to speak to the teachers about your child, to arrive early enough to have those conversations so that teachers are still able to be exiting the building by the closing time. It is certainly understandable that parents pick up late once in a great while for reasons that are beyond anyone's control, however **you should know that late pick-ups will result in additional fees and put your childcare slot in jeopardy.**

Frequent or patterned late pick-ups will result in the following fees. First occurrence: \$1.00 per minute through 10 minutes; every additional min will be \$5.00 per minute. Additional occurrences: \$5.00 per minute through 10 minutes; every additional minute will be \$10.00 per minute thereafter. Repeated or frequent occurrences will result in additional conversations with administration.

Illness and Medication Policies

Procedures Regarding Injured Child

Minor injuries such as scrapes or small cuts are treated by First Aid certified staff. All injuries are then entered on an accident report, with the name of the teacher who responded to the child, time of accident, location of accident, type and location of injury, etc. It is the responsibility of the afternoon teacher to have the authorized pick up person review, sign and date the accident report. In the event that one child injures another, when explaining the injury we make sure that **no names** are used. Parents/guardians are notified of all head injuries by phone as soon as possible. The Program Director(s) and/or other staff members will take responsibility to notify the medical facility first, giving the child's name, School's name and type of injury. Parents will be notified as soon as possible and can meet us at the medical facility. Previous consent for emergency treatment is located in the child's file and will be brought to the medical facility. If a parent/guardian or other emergency people on the child's emergency list are not available, we take the child and his/her file to the medical facility. A third person will continue to make contact with the parent/guardian or other emergency person on the child's emergency list.

Illness Policy

In order to adhere to state health regulations, we are required to have a current physical on file at the time of enrollment, and for children eight weeks to five years, this must be updated annually. For children ages 6 and older, an updated physical is required every two years. We cannot provide child-care without a current physical that is updated annually. We are committed to providing as healthy and germ-free an environment as possible for children and adults. All staff practice communicable disease control procedures. This includes using rubber gloves and a solution for

disinfecting when necessary. Our staff is first aid and CPR certified. Unfortunately, our programs are not equipped to care for sick children. We ask parents to keep the child home or come to pick them up when you are called, in the event your child is sick. If your child should become ill while in our care, they are made comfortable until you arrive. Please keep your emergency list updated for this reason. Certain symptoms in children may suggest the presence of a communicable disease.

Communicable Diseases

Children who have symptoms that point to a communicable disease need to be excluded from the program until a physician has certified the symptoms are no longer communicable or the symptoms have subsided. Please let us know if your child has been exposed so we can inform parents of any communicable diseases which their child may have been exposed to. Here are some examples of symptoms/diseases that would require a child to be excluded from the program:

Temperature: orally of 101, or higher, especially if accompanied by other symptoms such as vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, headache and stiff neck, or undiagnosed rash. **Child must be fever-free without medication for at least 24 hours before returning to care.** **Diarrhea:** more than one episode in the previous 24 hours. **Vomiting:** more than one episode in the previous 24 hours. **Undiagnosed or contagious/infected sores:** sores with crusty, yellow, or green drainage which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages.

Chicken Pox, Mumps, Etc.: Children with chickenpox, mumps, etc. must stay at home for one week after first eruption has passed and all pox have scabbed over. **Head Lice:** is extremely contagious. Children with visible live lice may need to be excluded from the program, and may return as soon as proper treatment has been completed even if nits (not live lice) are still present. **Impetigo and Conjunctivitis:** These are very contagious conditions and must be treated with antibiotics for 24 hours before the child may attend the School. **Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever/Fever accompanied by a rash:** A child with strep throat must be kept home until he/she has been on antibiotics for 24 hours. **Ear Infections:** Ear infections (otitis media) are extremely common. We ask that children take the prescribed antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to the School. **Respiratory Infections:** These are very common and usually caused by viruses. Child must remain at home until fever free for 24 hours without medication. **Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease:** (Coxsackievirus) is caused by a viral infection. It is characterized by small ulcers in the mouth, blisters on hands and feet and sometimes near genitalia and on the buttocks. The child is contagious until the fever is gone (3-4 days) and should stay at home until fever free for 24 hours without medication.

Children may also be excluded from the program if they are experiencing symptoms that impair or prohibit the child's participation in regular child care activities, or if they require more care than child care personnel are able to provide without compromising the health and safety of the ill or injured child or the other children in their care. More information on communicable diseases and New Hampshire's health regulations regarding excluding children with communicable diseases in a child care setting is available from your program director.

Hand Washing

In an effort to minimize the transmission of communicable disease, we ask that every adult thoroughly wash his hands upon entering any classroom. The Hand Washing Policy and Practice is posted in each classroom.

Medications

The following are regulations from the “New Hampshire Child Care Agency Licensing Guidelines” regarding dispensing medication to children in child care, which applies to all programs and all age groups. In addition to these guidelines, please note The School policy regarding non-prescription medications in Paragraph (2). Medication shall be stored and administered in accordance with the following:

1. Child day care agencies shall not administer prescription medication to a child unless the medication is accompanied by written authorization from the parent and written order of a licensed health practitioner.
2. Child day care agencies may administer non-prescription medication to a child only when the medication is accompanied by written authorization from parents. (NOTE: SEACOAST COMMUNITY SCHOOL ALSO REQUIRES WRITTEN ORDERS FROM A LICENSED HEALTH PRACTITIONER FOR ALL NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION. NO EXCEPTIONS.)
3. Non-prescription medication shall be administered in accordance with the instructions printed by the manufacturer, or in accordance with the written order of a licensed practitioner.
4. Medication shall not be administered unless it is in the original container and labeled with the name of the medication, dosage, the name of the child and if prescription, the name of the physician.
5. Medication shall not be administered beyond the expiration date.
6. The agency director or designee shall supervise the administration, records and control of all medications.
7. Medication shall be stored in accordance with instructions for storage and in a location not accessible to children.
8. Each dose of medication administered shall be recorded by the staff person responsible for administering the medication.
9. Medication shall be administered from an infant feeding bottle only when instructed to do so by a licensed healthcare provider.

These medication policies are intended to be applied for a maximum of 1 to 2 doses each day. When possible, Seacoast Community School encourages parents to give all medications at home before or after child care. Parents are welcome to come at midday to administer a needed dose. We use the system of the “Five Rights” when administering medication.

Tuition & Fees

Registration Fee

Parents/guardians are required to pay a \$80 non-refundable registration fee at the time of picking up the enrollment paperwork. If a family withdraws their child from the program and returns to the program at any time within the next six months, they are required to pay a \$40 re-enrollment fee per child. Families who have been withdrawn for 6 months or more will be required to pay the full \$80 enrollment fee.

1st Week Tuition

A non-refundable 1st week tuition payment is due by the registration return deadline. The first week tuition payment is non-refundable should you choose to withdraw from the program prior to the enrollment or the re-enrollment start date.

Tuition Policies

1. Tuition will remain the same when the Center is closed, such as closings due to holidays, inclement weather, Professional Days, and any other days the Center is closed due to circumstances which, in the opinion of the Executive Director(s), necessitate closing during the school year. Tuition is based on the Center's 50 week calendar year, and parents/guardians are required to pay for these weeks, regardless of the public school vacation schedule, or personal vacation schedules. At this time PEAK families are not billed during the February and April break weeks unless they enroll for full day care. Tuition will also remain the same when the Center closes earlier than the regularly scheduled time. Please refer to our agency Calendar of Closings for further information. The Center will make best efforts to notify the parents in advance of any closings that are not already listed in the calendar.
2. Schedule changes must be requested in advance in writing to the Admissions Coordinator. Such changes will be considered, but may not be possible to fulfill. A permanent schedule change shall be effective only if in writing and approved by the Admissions Coordinator.
3. We ask for a two full billable week's written notice of their child's reduction of days, or withdrawal from the Center. If the parent fails to provide said notice, the parents agree to pay two weeks tuition to the Center.
4. Payment for services is due Monday of the week service is rendered. A late fee of \$10 will be assessed if weekly charges are not paid in full. Biweekly or monthly payments are accepted, but must be made at the beginning of the period. It is our practice to treat all families with the same policies and procedures to ensure that we are being fair and consistent. On any accounts that have not received payment in two weeks, there must be a written payment plan in place before the child is accepted into care on the following Monday.

The payment plan must cover the amount due weekly plus some of the past due amount owed. If the payment plan fails and the past due amount grows beyond a two week balance, the parent will receive notice by Friday at noon that the child care services are considered suspended, and the child will not be allowed into care on Monday. The family may reverse the suspension by paying the balance in full no later than the last day of the week of the suspension, including payment for the week of the suspension. If payment is not made in full by Friday at noon on the week of suspension, the space will no longer be held and the child care services are considered terminated. If care is terminated, the effective date will be made the Friday that notice of suspension was given.

We understand that circumstances may arise that temporarily inhibit a family's ability to adhere to this tuition collection procedure; therefore, families must communicate with the Finance Director immediately if such situations arise so that a possible solution can be discussed, and that by doing so, child care services may not be placed in jeopardy. Families are responsible for immediate repayment to SCS via cash or certified check any payments that are returned by the bank for any reason including any fees associated with such return.

Payment Responsibility

The parent who enters the tuition contract with Seacoast Community School is responsible for the full payment of tuition. Please contact the Finance Director immediately if you have any issues on your account.

Tuition for PEAK:

PEAK (our before and after school program) have additional rate structures for no school days, early release days and vacation weeks. Please see the separate PEAK rates sheet for more information.

Tuition Assistance

The Center works with several state and local child care assistance programs. Programs such as: DHHS NH Child Care Scholarship, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), City of Portsmouth Grant, SELF scholarships and multiple child discounts are provided by the center. Parents are typically eligible to participate in only one program at a time. Please contact the Family Services Director for specific information and requirements for each assistance program. Please remember that your child's schedule is contracted and billed regardless of your child's absence from the program due to illness or any other reasons. Tuition assisted families may be responsible for extra fees on absent days.

OFFICE HOURS The main office of SCS is at the Community Campus, 100 Campus Drive, Suite 20, Portsmouth NH 03801. Our phone number is (603) 422-8223. Our office hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.