

**VILLAGE COMMON CHILDREN'S CENTER**  
**“Committed to the Education and Care of Young Children”**

3 Brookline Street, P.O. Box 514, Townsend, MA 01469  
978-597-0834

# PARENT HANDBOOK

**UPDATED FOR THE 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR**  
**BY THE VCCC ADMINISTRATION AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*The Village Common Children's Center is a mission of the Townsend Congregational Church*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The Staff, Board of Directors and myself are very happy and excited to welcome you, your child and your family to our program and into our Circle of Friends! We look forward to a pleasant and positive association with you, and we value the opportunity of being able to offer your children their first early learning experiences, as well as give you the peace of mind that your children are safe, happy, and well cared for.

We wish to be partners with all of you as we move together on this wonderful journey through early childhood with your children, and we at VCCC are here with one important mission—that the children have positive, happy, safe and fun-filled early learning experiences during their short time with us. Please remember that the VCCC Board of Directors, the entire teaching staff, and myself are here for you to address any questions, comments or concerns you may have, so please do not ever hesitate to contact us. We would also welcome and encourage parents to visit the program at any time your child is present.

We have prepared this Handbook so that you will know what you can expect from us, and what we will expect of you. If after reading it you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us—we want the lines of communication to always be open!

Sincerely,  
Carol Ciccolini, VCCC Director

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The Village Common Children's Center is a non-profit center that is committed to providing quality early care and education for young children, as well as providing a supportive environment for their families.

At VCCC we put the needs, happiness and the safety of all the children in our program FIRST, and to ensure that this goal is met, we pride ourselves on high standards of practice. We also believe that young children learn best through play. With that in mind, we have designed our programs to allow children to socialize and interact with other young children while offering them the opportunity to play and learn, both individually and in groups, in a variety of creative, age-appropriate activities. The children will be encouraged and nurtured, and when ready, challenged to the next level of their development. Our programs offer children ongoing opportunity for peer interaction which allows them to develop and enhance important social skills. They are allowed to create, explore, experiment, use their imaginations, and most of all have FUN! By combining emergent curriculum and developmentally appropriate practice through the vehicle of play, we are able to subtly present many learning opportunities and challenges that allow children to naturally develop a love for learning that will undoubtedly lay a solid foundation for future academic success.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE VILLAGE COMMON CHILDREN'S CENTER**

It is important for parents (and staff) to understand where decisions come from regarding the Center, and to whom they can go to with questions or concerns. For anything directly concerning your child in the classroom, it is suggested that you first approach the classroom teachers. After speaking with the classroom teachers, if you feel that you may need further clarification or assistance with a problem, please then go directly to the Center's Director. You would also go to the Director with any center-wide questions, comments or concerns. If you felt that you needed to still go beyond the Director, you are then welcome to seek out members of the

Center's Board of Directors, who in turn answer to the Townsend Congregational Church Governing Council and Church Pastor.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**

Townsend Congregational Church (TCC) Governing Council and TCC Pastor

**VCCC Board of Directors:** Carole Gustafson, President;

Barbara Goodwin, Treasurer/Finance Director

Kelly McNabb, Educational Consultant/Board Secretary

**VCCC Director:** Carol Ciccolini

**VCCC Teaching Staff:**

Infant Teachers—Chyann Nenonen, Tarryn Williams, Noel Laquidara

Toddler Teachers—Michelle Rautiola, Alisha Blanchard, Lindsay Moore

Preschool/PreK—Joshua Coffey, Greta Wilkinson, Stephanie Sarsfield, Jayne Franklin, Abby Williams

### **VCCC STAFF**

Carol Ciccolini is the VCCC Director and is responsible for the overall administration of the Center. She is also responsible for overseeing all curriculum in the Infant/Toddler and Preschool/PreK programs. Ms. Ciccolini holds a Bachelor's degree in Early Education and Care from the University of Massachusetts Amherst where she majored in both Administration and Early Childhood Curriculum. She has 40 years of teaching and administrative experience. Ms. Ciccolini also holds degrees in Psychology, English and Business Management.

Our formal teaching staff are very passionate in their love of children and commitment to teaching. Their educational backgrounds and their many years of hands-on experience working with young children create the kind of environment where a young child can flourish, grow and experience success. They are degreed in, or working on degrees in Early Childhood Education, and they are all state certified through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, who issue our state license to operate. All staff are also CPR and First Aid certified, and they all participate in ongoing yearly professional development. All necessary background record checks, reference checks, and health examinations per our state licensing regulations have been completed on each employee before their hire. Please note that while our state licensing regulations technically require us to only have two teachers in each classroom, it is our practice to have three teachers working in each classroom whenever we can, which helps to further ensure the safety and well-being of the children in our care.

### **FORMAL HOURS OF OPERATION**

VCCC is open year-round from 7:00AM to 5:00PM Monday through Friday. The Center is closed for the week between Christmas and New Year's, the week of 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and the third week in August, which is the Center's "Work Week" which allows us to paint, refresh, update and prep the classrooms in preparation for the new school year. We are also closed for all the holidays and Professional Development Day noted on the current school calendar that is included with your registration packet, as well as snow days closures and delays called by the North Middlesex School District.

### **INTAKE PROCEDURE**

- 1) The Parent contacts the school with interest in our program either through telephone call, email or in person.
- 2) The Director will speak with the parent either on the telephone, through email or in person giving basic information including hours, fees and space availability. If the parent is interested, the Director will confirm an appointment for a time for the parent to visit the school for a tour. If the parent is a "walk-in", the Director will give them an immediate appointment if time allows.

3) At the appointment, the Director will give a tour of the school, review policies and procedures, and answer any questions the parent may have. If the parent has come without their child, another appointment is offered to allow the child to visit the school.

4) If the parent wishes to enroll their child, they will receive a Registration Packet which will give general “overview” information about VCCC programs including tuition policies and price sheets. After Director and parent verbally agree upon an appropriate placement, the parent will then be required to submit the registration forms and required medical information as well as the non-applicable, non-refundable registration fee and one-week tuition deposit before the child can begin attending the program. (The deposit is then credited as tuition payment for the last week of the formal school year in June.) Registration financially obligates parents to the “school year” which runs the last week in August through the end of the third week in June. It should be noted that if a family chooses to withdraw registration before the end of the school year, the one-week deposit will then be forfeited.

### **REGISTRATION AND TUITION POLICIES**

While consideration for enrollment in The Village Common Children’s Center may be given to those families currently enrolled, children of staff members and members of the VCCC Board of Directors, siblings of students currently enrolled, and children of the Townsend Congregational Church members, it is still done on a first come, first served basis. Registration for both the school year programs and the summer programs are required yearly. Registration for the new school year for families currently enrolled in VCCC and for the children of staff members will typically begin sometime mid to end of January with a registration schedule given to parents. Usually by mid to end February registration is then open to our waiting list and then the beginning of March to the general public. If no space is currently available, the family will be placed on a waiting list and called as soon as space allows. The current tuition fee schedule is included with your registration packet.

Tuition fees are formulated to cover a 9-hour day. Should you require the entire 10-hour day, please note that the 1-hour extra time fee noted on the Tuition Fee Schedule will be added to your weekly tuition fee.

Please note that families registering more than one child for 5-days per week, there is a \$50 per week discount. For any parent who is in active duty in any branch of the military, there is a \$50 per week discount.

While the Center follows a September through June formal school year schedule, we are open year-round and offer a summer program that begins the week after the week of July 4th. Our daily hours of operation are 7:00AM—5:00PM, Monday through Friday.

At the time of our formal registration (which again, is typically sometime in January/early February) a non-refundable Registration Fee, a one-week tuition deposit and the first week’s tuition payment is required to secure your space in the program. The non-refundable registration fee is \$75 per child, \$100 per family if more than one child in the same family is registered. **The one-week deposit (which equals the amount for the weekly tuition for the program you are registering for) will then be credited as your tuition payment for the last week of the formal school year in June. *\*Please note that deposits are only valid as payment for the last week of the formal school year. If parents choose to withdraw their child’s registration for any reason, or if VCCC is forced to close for any reason, this deposit is then non-applicable and non-refundable.*** Deposits cannot be rolled over from year to year.

Mid-February registration is then open to those families on our waiting list, and by the first week of March, registration is then made available to the general public. Please note that if you have not paid your one-week tuition deposit by this point, you will risk losing your space in the program as we will not be able to reserve space without the payment of the one-week deposit.

If you are registering after the start of the school year for immediate enrollment, the Registration Fee,

One-Week Tuition Deposit, and the first week's tuition payment will be required. Thereafter tuition is due on Friday for the following week of service.

Please note that all holidays noted on the school calendar, as well as any necessary snow day closures or delayed openings, 2 emergency closures, 1 professional development day in March, the half-day closures on the last day of the formal school year, the half-day closure on the last day of the Summer Program, as well as the holiday vacation week between Christmas and New Years and the summer vacation week-the week of July 4th have already been taken into account and removed from the financial equation when tuition fees are formulated.

**This means that your tuition payment remains the same each week regardless of those center closures or delays.** There is also no reimbursement or “credit” of tuition if a child is out sick, or if parents choose to take their child out of program for vacations, and parents cannot substitute days for absences.

The Center is closed the third week in August which is the Center’s “Work Week”. **Please note that there are no tuition charges for this week.**

To assist our bookkeeper in crediting your checks to the correct tuition accounts, *please write your child's name in the check memo area.* Please note that there is a \$35 charge for any check returned to the Center for insufficient funds. **Tuition payments are due on Friday for the following week of service.** (There is a white tuition box located on the wall in the Preschool hallway above the cubbies near the preschool classroom door.) **Please note that you are financially responsible for the entire September through June school year schedule that that you have registered for.**

Prior arrangements must also be made with the Director if parents need to make any changes to the schedule that they initially registered for, either as a one-time addition or as a permanent addition. Please note that if you are permanently adding to your child’s schedule, this will result in an additional fee towards your tuition deposit. The Center can never exceed licensing capacities at any time and will only allow these additions of time if space and staffing are available. Parents will obviously be charged for the extra time as noted on the current fee schedule that is included in your registration packet.

It is very important to understand that staff schedules are formulated according the hours noted on your child’s registration form. Just because the Center opens at 7:00AM does not mean you can drop off at 7:00AM if your registered time is 8:00AM. Just because the Center is open until 5:00PM does not mean you can pick up at any time up until 5:00PM if your registered time is 4:00PM. Again, please understand that staff are scheduled according to the times noted on your registration form. Late pick-ups result in late fees that are clearly noted in the Tuition Policy sheet at the end of this document. Late pick-ups also result in overtime costs to our payroll budget, and because no teacher is allowed to be alone in the building, it then results in overtime costs for two staff members. We expect, and most appreciate, that **parents adhere to their registered schedules.**

### **REGISTRATION FOR THE SUMMER PROGRAM**

Registration for the Summer Program will typically begin for currently registered families on April 1<sup>st</sup>. There is a \$65 non-refundable/non-applicable registration fee per child, \$85 per family if registering more than one child. Registration opens to the general public on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Because we understand that family’s schedules may need to change during the summer months due to older children being out of public school, family vacations or reduced parental work hours during the summer, we do allow VCCC families to choose whatever weeks they want for the Summer Program (unlike the school year program where you are registered for each week of the entire school year). **However**, please note that for all programs there is a **required minimum registration of at least five weeks** throughout the entire summer in order to retain your registration for the Fall. These five weeks must equal the number of days per week that you have utilized during the regular school year. (However, if you plan on having your child attend the entire summer but wish to reduce a 5 or 4-day school year registration, you may drop down to a minimum of 3 days per week, but again, this will only apply if you are registering for the entire summer.) Please understand that we must have this requirement in place in order to

keep the school up and running throughout the summer as we still have the same overhead and payroll costs to meet.

As registration for the Summer Program obviously begins well before the program starts, parents are able to change their choices with no penalty up until June 1<sup>st</sup>. Because we are basing our summer budget on those registrations, **after June 1<sup>st</sup>, parents will then be held financially responsible for whatever time they have registered for regardless if they make a decision to eliminate any time as we have to have staff schedules in place.**

## **CENTER CLOSURES:**

### **SNOW DAYS, EMERGENCY CLOSINGS, HOLIDAYS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL DAYS AND VACATIONS**

With regards to snow days or emergency closings, please note that we follow the cancellation and delay decisions of the North Middlesex School District. We clearly understand that parents may still need to get to work, but parents also need to understand that most of our staff do not live in Townsend, they come from Fitchburg, Leominster, Littleton, Lunenburg, Ashburnham, and Temple NH. So please understand that if weather conditions are bad, our staff will have a hard time making it in and we obviously cannot open without the appropriate number of staff members here. So we must ask parents to please keep in mind the possibility of a closure or delay due to weather conditions and please try to have an emergency back-up care plan in the event that this happens. If inclement weather forces us to have a delayed opening or close altogether, parents can follow the school closures or delays on local television, again we would fall under the North Middlesex School District. I will also send out a school-wide email. Parents should also always be prepared for the possibility of weather forcing us to close any time before our formal 5:00PM closing time. While it will always be our goal to stay open, we again need to take into consideration the health and safety of all our families and staff. So, if weather conditions necessitate an early closing, we would then call parents to come and pick up children early. If we cannot reach a parent, we would then call someone on the child's pick-up list.

With regards to holidays, please note that VCCC is closed for the following: Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Eve, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Patriot's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth Day, we will close at 12:30 on the last of the formal school and the last day of the Summer Program. Two emergency days are also built into our school schedule and calendar in event of an unforeseen emergency. There is also one Staff Professional Development Day on the second or third Monday in March.

With regards to vacations, parents are obviously allowed to take their child/children out of school for family vacations whenever they wish to, but do so understanding that they are required to still pay their tuition commitments for that time period. Please note that VCCC is closed for vacation the week between Christmas and New Year's, and the week of July 4th. **There is no change in tuition costs for those weeks.** The Center is also closed the third week of August for our "Work Week" during which time the staff are cleaning, painting and prepping classrooms for the start of the next school year. Parents are not charged for this week.

**\*\*\*Please note that there is further tuition & payment information as well as bookkeeping procedures from the VCCC bookkeeper at the end of this handbook document.\*\*\***

## **SERVICES PROVIDED**

The Village Common Children's Center offers year-round childcare and early learning opportunities for Infants 2 months—15 months of age; a Toddler Exploration program for children 15 months—2.9 years of age; a Preschool/PreK program for children ages 2.9 year—5 years of age; and a Before/After School-Age program for children 5—7 years of age. The Center is open from 7:00 AM—5:00 PM. We are closed the week between

Christmas and New Years and the week of July 4th, as well as the third week in August. These closures are

noted on the school calendar. Additionally, we are also closed for all the holidays noted on the school calendar as well as any necessary snow/emergency days and one Professional Development Day. On the last day of our formal school year, the Center also closes at 12:30PM to allow the staff to prepare for our Summer Program which will begin the following week. We also close at 12:30 on the last day of the Summer Program.

Our Infant program offers our youngest “students” a warm, home-like atmosphere filled with soft music and lots of cuddling! Even at this very young age, infants have many learning opportunities. Language and literacy skills start with teachers reading stories and singing songs each day. The infants will begin to learn communication skills through the use of sign language, and they will be able to explore an intentionally set up environment that allows them to use all of their five senses. This program also allows parents the “peace of mind” to go about their work day knowing that their infant child is receiving quality care from compassionate, experienced educators.

Our Toddler Exploration program allows these young students the opportunity to begin a stronger exploration of social interactions, which will become very important components of their overall development. Activities in this class will include tabletop manipulatives and block play, story times, music/movement/gross motor activities, art, and dramatic play. While there is not necessarily the subtle academic focus found in the Preschool/Pre-K class, the Toddler class activities still allow for positive growth and development in language, cognitive and social skills, as well as the enhancement of fine and gross motor skills.

Our Preschool/PreK program includes daily literacy and language activities, (we utilize the Handwriting Without Tears program which is also used in the public school) math and science explorations, music and movement activities, a formal circle time, tabletop manipulatives and block play, art and cooking projects, dramatic play opportunities, and multicultural activities which will address holidays around the world! All of these activities allow for positive growth and development in language, cognitive and social/emotional skills, as well as the enhancement of fine and gross motor skills. The subtle and underlying academic components found in all of these activities also help to ensure later success in the child's future kindergarten and beyond experiences.

Communication is the key to a positive relationship between home and school and the successful experience the children will have with us. The VCCC Director and Teachers will strive to keep parents informed and updated on general Center information as well as on their children’s daily activities, and their ongoing growth and development through daily notes, monthly newsletters, bulletin board postings, written progress reports and evaluations, through daily verbal interactions with you, in formal and informal parent/teacher conferences, and through center-wide parent meetings that the Director can have intermittently throughout the school year. We would ask that you also keep us informed of any pertinent events or happenings at home that may affect your child so that we may assist them if any additional support is needed while they are here with us at the Center. Please note that state licensing requires formal progress reports for infants three times per year, twice per year for toddlers, preschool and PreK classes.

Our curriculum throughout all the programs in the Center continually strives to meet the social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs of each individual child through all stages of their development. It allows for observation; stimulates curiosity and imagination; provides materials and equipment for investigation and discovery; and encourages freedom of creativity. The curriculum, as well as the physical environment, allows for the growth of a positive attitude towards learning, a respect for others and their possessions, a positive self-image, and the development of self-help skills and constructive group play skills. We are very proud that the children “graduating” from our program will be more than prepared for the next step in their academic journey as they move on to kindergarten in a public or private elementary school.

A *sample* of our Daily Schedule for the Toddler and the Preschool/Pre-K programs are as follows, but please keep in mind that we are extremely flexible in adhering to any schedule. We take note of the children's interest and activity levels and will adjust the schedule accordingly to meet their needs. (Please note that the daily schedule in the infant classroom is determined by the needs of the infants on any given day based on their individual feeding and napping routines. Diapering is technically done every two hours with any additional needs accommodated.)

### **TODDLER DAILY SCHEDULE**

7:00-9:00AM	Free Choice Time/Table Activities/Curriculum Art Activity
9:00-9:30AM	Bathroom—Diapering/Toileting/Handwashing
9:30-10:00AM	Morning Snack
10:00-10:30AM	Bathroom—Diapering/Toileting/Handwashing
10:30-11:00AM	Outside Time or Indoor Gross Motor
11:00AM-11:30PM	Circle Time
11:30-12:00PM	Bathroom—Handwashing
12:00-1:00PM	Lunch/Bathroom—Diapering/Toileting/Handwashing
1:00-3:00PM	Rest Time
3:00-3:30PM	Bathroom—Diapering/Toileting/Handwashing
3:30-4:00PM	Afternoon Snack
4:00-4:30PM	Free Choice Activities
4:30-5:30PM	Outside Time or Indoor Gross Motor Activities depending on Weather Free Choice Time/Final Dismissals

### **PRESCHOOL/PRE-K DAILY SCHEDULE**

7:00-9:15AM	Arrival/Free Choice Center Time
9:15-9:30AM	Bathroom—Toileting/Handwashing
9:30-10:00AM	Morning Snack Time/Handwashing
10:00-10:30AM	Circle Time
10:30-11:00AM	Teacher Directed Curriculum Activities and Center Time
11:00-11:45AM	Outside Time or Indoor Gross Motor Activities depending on Weather
11:45AM-12:00PM	Bathroom—Handwashing
12:00-12:30PM	Lunch followed by Handwashing
12:30-1:00PM	Bathroom—Toothbrushing/Toileting/Handwashing/Books on Mats
1:00-2:45PM	Rest Time
2:45-3:00PM	Bathroom—Toileting/Handwashing
3:00-3:30PM	Afternoon Snack Time
3:30-4:00PM	Afternoon Circle Time
4:00-4:45PM	Outside Time or Indoor Gross Motor Activities depending on Weather
4:45-5:00PM	Bathroom—Toileting/Handwashing Stories/Tabletop Choices/Final Dismissals

### **DAILY ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Upon your daily arrival, we require that you immediately bring your child to the bathroom to wash their hands before they enter the classrooms and begin play. This is to not only reinforce good hygiene habits, but to also help keep our students with food allergies as safe as possible. This requirement is applicable to ALL children regardless of their age and classroom.

You must then accompany your child to their classroom where you must then **SIGN THEM IN** on the Parent/Guardian Sign-In/Sign-Out Sheet. Sign-In/Sign-Out clipboards are located on the walls outside of each classroom door. This sign-in/sign-out procedure is a state regulation that is in place to ensure that we know how

many children we have on site at all times, and it is especially important during the event of an unforeseen emergency which forces us to evacuate the building. After signing in, your child can then be left under the supervision of the classroom teachers. Please note that you may never drop your child off in the driveway or allow them to walk into the Center alone or have a sibling under the age of 16 do so.

Children will only be allowed to leave the Center with a parent, guardian or designated person from the authorized pick-up list that the parent/guardian has given to us prior to the start of the school year. A child will only be allowed to leave with another individual if written permission is given to staff by the parent/guardian. If an emergency arises that necessitates the need for someone other than parent/guardian or designated authorized person to pick up without a prior written permission, the parent/guardian will need to call the Director, explain the situation and will be given a code word that they will then give to whomever will be picking the child up, and that person will have to relay that code word to the staff before the child is released. All unidentifiable people will be required to show staff a picture I.D. at the time of pick-up. No one under the age of 16 will ever be allowed to pick up a child. Parent, guardians or other designated pick-up person will be required to sign the child out on the Sign-In/Sign-Out clipboard which is hung on the wall outside the classroom doors or is outside with the teachers on the playground. Once the child is signed out, VCCC is no longer responsible for your child.

Please note that VCCC technically closes at 5:00PM. If a child is picked at any time after 5:00PM, a \$25 late fee will be assessed to your next monthly statement for every 15 minutes (*or any portion thereof*) that you are late.

### **ABSENCES**

Please notify the Center if your child will be absent, letting us know the reason for the absence as well as the duration. In case of a communicable disease, we need to notify other parents to watch for symptoms in their children. Also, children can become disturbed by the absence of their friends unless they are reassured with the reason for the child's absence and the approximate time of his or her return. If you know the night before that your child is sick and won't be coming to school the next day, you can leave a message on the school answering machine the night before or first thing in the morning. Please note that should you not call us, it is our policy to call parents if a child has not arrived within one hour of their scheduled time. As this then takes a staff member away from other classroom duties and interactions with children, we would most appreciate your consideration in calling us should your child be out. Thank you for your understanding and courtesy.

### **CLASSROOM RULES AND DISCIPLINE POLICY**

At the beginning of the school year we begin talking about our Classroom Rules: we use *inside voices*; we use *kind words* and have *happy hands*—hurting someone emotionally or physically is not allowed; *sitting* is best for listening at Circle Time, we use *walking feet* inside, outside we may run all we want; we *take care* of toys and materials by using them appropriately and by putting them where they belong when we are done playing with them; and that special things from home should only be brought on special days requested by teachers. We then reinforce these “rules” on a regular basis with teachers modeling these positive behaviors, by giving the children reminders as needed, and of course by giving them positive praise when they are following through on things on their own.

Classroom rules teach positive social behavior, discipline and control. They provide guidelines for how we should act and react, and what kind of behavior is expected and acceptable. We help children find the appropriate words that they need to negotiate, compromise and express their feelings to each other in a positive, constructive manner. When discipline is necessary, we use measures that show love and kindness, but also firmness and consistency. Teachers will always take into account each child’s developmental level so that they may provide the appropriate diversion and redirection with positive reinforcement. If negative behaviors continue, a verbal reminder will be given that such behavior is inappropriate or unacceptable in the classroom. We attempt to help the children gain the confidence and knowledge that will help to develop their self-control.

We do not allow children to hurt themselves or others or destroy property. As a last resort, the disruptive or abusive child will be taken to a quiet area of the classroom within sight of a staff member. At no time however will a child ever be left alone in a “time out” situation, a teacher will always be present. Again, all discipline and guidance shall be consistent with and based on the understanding of the individual needs and development of the child. The staff shall direct discipline to the goals of maximizing the growth and development of the children and for protection of the group and individuals within it. As a child’s parents are considered an integral part of the adult support system for children who may have behavioral concerns, when a child requires a higher level of support that stretches over an extended period of time, the child’s parents will be consulted and a comprehensive behavioral plan of action will be established for both home and school to reinforce positive and pro-social behaviors in both settings.

At no time will any of the following ever be allowed at The Village Common Children’s Center:

1. Spanking or other corporal punishment of the children.
2. Subjecting the children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect or abusive treatment.
3. Depriving children of meals or snack.
4. Force feeding children.
5. Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet; or forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing a child to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.

### **CLOTHING**

Please do not send your child in clothing that cannot get dirty. Remember our motto, MESSY IS FUN! The art activities, sensory tables, cooking and outside play portions of our programs can often be very messy, and while we do utilize the use of smocks, clothing still has the potential to get dirty. Also, please remember to have the children dress appropriately for daily outdoor play. While there may be a rare time that we do not go out due to involvement in other activities, we do try to make sure that the children are taken outside every single day unless it is raining, sleeting, below 32 degrees, or high, hot and humid temperatures. Appropriate outerwear, including footwear, is important. Please, no open toed shoes or flip flops. Sneakers are really best for active play. When the weather calls for boots, either winter boots or rain boots, please send in shoes that your child can change into to wear in the classrooms. Also, please be sure to leave extra clothing in your child’s cubbie (taking into account weather and your child’s growth pattern.) Infants, toddlers and any preschoolers who may be going through the potty training process would benefit from more than one set of extra clothes. Please note that should your child need to change and there are no extra clothes in their cubbie, the Center does have some extra clothing available. We would ask that you then wash and return the clothes within the next day or two.

### **SNACK/LUNCH**

Parents are required to send a healthy morning snack (and one for the afternoon if your child stays all day) as well as a lunch with their child each day.

Infant parents would need to send in whatever bottles of formula and baby food their child is eating and drinking. (No glass bottles please for safety reasons.) With regards to bottles, please note that **we are not allowed to heat up bottles of formula in either the microwave or a bottle warmer**. Parents of toddlers, preschool, and prek children are required to send in a non-glass drink container or thermos for water every day for their child. They can be sent filled with cold water, and the staff will refill as needed throughout the course of the day.

Children’s lunches should come in **fully prepared**, as time does not allow teachers to cut, peel or slice foods. **PLEASE BE SURE THAT CHOKABLE FOOD ITEMS LIKE HOT DOGS, GRAPES, CHICKEN NUGGETS, CHERRY OR GRAPE TOMATOES, ETC. ARE BEING APPROPRIATELY CUT UP BY PARENTS AT**

**HOME PRIOR TO SENDING THEM TO SCHOOL.** And please NO POPCORN for the Toddler classroom. Please remember to label the outside of your child's lunchbox with their name, as well as label the actual lunchbox items inside (pre-packaged food) and any food containers (top & bottom), and water bottles or thermoses with their names. And please, NO GLASS containers. We cannot serve food that is not labeled with your child's name. Please note that we do not allow the children to eat candy at school. If it is sent in as part of their lunch, we will send it back home.

Because the Toddler classroom does have a microwave within its confines, children enrolled in the Infant or Toddler classrooms are able to have lunch items heated up in the microwave. However, please note that we are only allowed to take the chill out of the food to avoid any possible burns since microwaves tend to heat food unevenly. While we do have refrigerator space for infant formula, any Toddler lunches that may need to be kept cold, should plan on utilizing a freezer block in the lunch box for those items.

Please note that heat-up lunches are **NOT ALLOWED** in the Preschool/PreK classroom because the Preschool/PreK classroom cannot physically accommodate a microwave within its confines. We ask that if you want your preschool/prek child to have a hot lunch, to please utilize a food thermos which will keep it hot for them until lunch time. As the Preschool/PreK classroom cannot also accommodate a refrigerator within its confines, if you are sending any possible food or drink items that need to be kept cold, please utilize a freezer block in the lunch box for those items.

As it is our policy to promote and encourage healthy eating habits with the children, we would ask that snacks and lunches be of a nutritionally sound nature to further support our conversations with the children. The following are lunch suggestions:

- Sandwiches (i.e. Sunbutter and Jelly, Chicken or Tuna Salad, Lean Lunch Meat and Cheese)  
(\*Please label Sunbutter sandwiches so that teachers know it is not peanut butter)
- Macaroni & Cheese, Soup, Pasta, Pizza
- Bagel with Cream Cheese, Fresh or Canned Fruit
- Veggie Sticks and Dip, slices or small cubes of Cheese, Yogurt

Snack ideas would include: Dry Cereals (such as Cheerios, Kix), Bagels, English Muffins, Yogurt, Applesauce, Graham Crackers, Saltine Crackers, Oyster Crackers, Ritz Crackers, Wheat Thins, American Cheese Slices, Cream Cheese, Sun Butter, Apple Butter, Apples, Pears, Peaches, Oranges, Clementines, Bananas, Strawberries, Carrots, Cucumbers, Snow Peas, Green Beans, Ranch Dressing for Dipping, Pretzels, Goldfish.

\*\*\*Due to the severe food allergies of some of our students, please remember that **VCCC is a PEANUT AND NUT-FREE ENVIRONMENT**. Please do not send any food items containing any kind of nuts or nut products or products that are labeled "may contain" or "have been manufactured in a facility that processes nuts" etc. Should a child have any other kind of severe food allergy (such as egg) we may make the decision to add that restriction to that specific classroom. We most appreciate your help in keeping all of the children in our care safe and healthy.

Please note that we do not allow the children in all our classrooms to share any food from home with other children.

### **BIRTHDAY OR SPECIAL OCCASION TREATS**

Please remember that we are a **PEANUT AND NUT-FREE ENVIRONMENT**, and that we do have some students with other food allergies other than nut products. As we want all the children in our care to stay safe and healthy, we do ask that you please make sure that you speak with classroom teachers *before* bringing in any kind of food treats for the entire class. Please note that any "treats" must be store bought and brought in to us in the original store packaging showing the food label so that staff can see the ingredients. This is to ensure that

staff know without a doubt that the food is safe for ALL the children. Without package ingredients or food labels, we will not be able to serve the food to the children. We thank you for your attention to this very serious matter, and appreciate your help in helping us keep all of the children in our care safe and healthy.

### **BIRTHDAY BOOK PROGRAM**

As we are always trying to add to our school library, which obviously benefits all the children in the Center, we have implemented a “Birthday Book Program” which will allow you to donate a book to the school library in honor of your child’s birthday! The book could be your child’s favorite book, a parent’s favorite children’s book that they love reading to their child, or any other paperback or hard covered children’s book. A nameplate will be placed in the book signifying the donation as well as noting your child’s name and birthday! If you need any possible title suggestions, please ask your child’s teacher or the Director. We thank you for your generosity.

### **HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Based on the diversity in the world we all live in, we believe that it is very important to expose the children to multicultural customs, traditions and experiences. Doing so then allows us to enrich our curriculum with age-appropriate social studies and geography components. A simple and fun way for us to expose the children to this diversity is to spend time throughout the year focusing on the different holidays that are celebrated around the world. It also offers us the opportunity for the families enrolled at VCCC to share their own holiday traditions with us. Parents should expect to receive a letter from their classroom teachers asking how their families celebrate different holidays. The letter will also invite parents to come in and share with their child’s class any specific family holiday traditions such as reading a story, singing songs, sharing a cooking activity with the children or doing a holiday inspired art project with them!

### **REST TIME**

In accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Early Care and Education regulations, a rest time is required for children who are in our care for longer than four hours. ALL children need to have a sheet (52” L x 22” W) to cover the rest cots that we provide. (Crib size sheets seem to fit all of our rest cots, both toddler and preschool.) (Center-owned sheets for infant cribs will be given to the infant for use during the time a crib for them is utilized as our cribs require specific sized sheets to ensure that they are snug. Parents will be required to take this sheet home at the end of their child’s weekly schedule, wash it and return it on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of their return the following week. When the infant has graduated to a sleep mat (at 12 months old), the parent will then be required to provide a crib sheet for covering that mat during their nap times.) The children can also have a SMALL pillow and blanket and a SMALL “lovey” or stuffed animal if they choose to. All of these materials need to fit inside a rest time bag that is no bigger than 15”x16”. The reason for this is that everything needs to fit inside the rest time cubbies and the fabrics cannot be sticking out because it might then touch the materials/fabrics in the next cubbie, which then presents the possibility of an outbreak of lice. (Also, for this same reason, please make sure that the extra clothes you are putting in the baskets in the cubbie shelves are completely inside the basket.) All rest sheets and blankets must be taken home on the last day of the week your child attends to be laundered and then returned on the next day your child attends.

Please note that children are not technically required to actually sleep during these designated *rest* times, which typically run between 1:00 and 3:00PM with the minimum time being 1-1/2 hours and maximum time being 2 hours. Because we understand that many children will not actually sleep, we tend to separate those that do sleep to one side of the room, and those that do not to another side of the room. We ask the children who do not sleep to simply “rest their bodies” for the first thirty minutes, after which time they are given books to read or other “quiet time” activities to do on their rest cots.

### **TOYS FROM HOME**

We request that parents refrain from allowing children to bring toys from home, although we do realize that this is often easier said than done. Bringing toys from home creates the problem of not wanting to share their

something special with the other children, and of items possibly being broken or lost. There are obviously more than enough toys, games and materials here at school for the children to play with making it totally unnecessary to bring toys from home. We would appreciate your help in this matter. The exception to this rule would be special days that are being made part of the curriculum and requested by teachers. Parents will be advised ahead of time on these special exceptions. We want it known that should a child bring a toy from home, we will have to then ask them to leave it in their cubbie. Please note that toy guns or other toys of destruction will never be allowed at the Center, and will be sent home with the parent immediately.

### **TRANSITIONING FROM THE INFANT CLASSROOM TO THE TODDLER CLASSROOM**

It is our policy at VCCC that children are **not moved to a new classroom after the start of a school year**, unless a child is becoming age and readiness eligible within the first month of school. Infants who are becoming age-eligible for a formal Toddler class (age 15 months) will not transition over into the Toddler classroom until the end of the formal school year in June. As infants transition to toddler age, the infant teaching team will incorporate age-appropriate materials, equipment and curriculum to accommodate these new toddlers. While all the children in the Infant classroom are familiar with all the teachers in the Toddler classroom given the close proximity of the two rooms, starting in the beginning of June, any children in the Infant classroom who have become toddler age during the course of the school year, will have scheduled “visits” in the Toddler classroom when ratios allow. The parents of these new toddlers will be notified in writing that this process of Toddler classroom visits will be happening and they will be given an authorization to sign signifying their approval.

The formal procedure is as follows:

- 1) The Director speaks with staff regarding the fact that an infant has now technically aged into the toddler age bracket. Staff will be reminded to then include toddler age-appropriate activities for those children.
- 2) At the end of May the Director has a verbal conversation parents regarding visits to the Toddler classroom.
- 3) The Director then gives the parent a letter in writing outlining the verbal conversation which includes an authorization section for the parent to sign indicating their approval for visits and eventual permanent placement in the Preschool program.
- 4) A copy of this authorization is given to the parent and a copy is placed in the child’s file located in the Director’s office.
- 5) Scheduled Toddler classroom visits will then take place starting the first week in June. These visits will be timed according to the toddler classroom’s ability to still maintain required teacher/child ratios.
- 6) A final written evaluation by the Infant staff will be given to parents prior to the permanent move to the Toddler classroom. This evaluation will outline the progress since the last formal evaluation was done, and will confirm the child’s readiness for the permanent move to the Toddler classroom.

### **TRANSITIONING FROM THE TODDLER CLASSROOM TO THE PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM**

It is our policy at VCCC that children are **not moved to a new classroom after the start of a school year**, unless a child is becoming age and readiness eligible within the first month of school. Like the Preschool/PreK class, the Toddler class is designed to accommodate both a younger toddler group and an older toddler group. Again, similar to the way that we do in the Preschool/PreK classroom, each group will have a designated teacher assigned to them. The teachers of these two groups then plan curriculum that is developmentally appropriate for the differences in the children’s ages in both groups. This process then allows us to

accommodate those children who will be turning 2.9 during the course of the formal school year. While we understand that many centers tend to move children from their Toddler programs up to a Preschool program as soon as a child turns Preschool age, those programs tend to be more focused on childcare versus a learning environment. They also tend to be larger centers overall with the availability of separate classroom space for a young preschool class (which would be those 2.9 to 3 year old children), a 3 turning 4 year old preschool class, and then a PreK class. Here at VCCC we do not have the luxury of such space to have those individual classrooms, and more importantly, our main focus here is the developmentally appropriate *learning*

environment that we are providing and concentrating on. We realize that we are also providing childcare, but we consider that aspect of our programming an extra added benefit for our working parents.

So towards the end of the Spring, when a child in the Toddler program is age eligible for a move into the preschool program, a determination by the Toddler staff will be made to confirm that the child is also ready developmentally. The Director will have discussions with the Toddler staff to confirm this readiness, after which she will have a conversation with the parents regarding the move. If parents are in agreement, the child will then begin scheduled visits to the Preschool classroom during the month prior to the permanent move to aid in the transition. This will be either the month of June for the child moving up at the start of the Summer Program, or the months of July/August for the child moving up for the start of the new school year. Before the permanent move, parents will receive a final written evaluation from the Toddler staff outlining the child's progress and confirming readiness for a permanent move to Preschool.

The formal procedure is as follows:

- 1) The Director speaks with staff to confirm that a move to preschool for an age-appropriate child (2.9 years of age) is also developmentally appropriate.
- 2) The Director has a verbal conversation about the move with the child's parents.
- 3) The Director then gives the parent a letter in writing outlining the verbal conversation which includes an authorization section for the parent to sign indicating their approval for visits and eventual permanent placement in the Preschool program.
- 4) A copy of this authorization is given to the parent and a copy is placed in the child's file located in the Director's office.
- 5) Scheduled Preschool visits will then take place the month prior to permanent placement. These visits will be timed according to the preschool classroom's ability to still maintain required teacher/child ratios.
- 6) A final written evaluation by the Toddler staff will be given to parents prior to the permanent move to Preschool. This evaluation will outline the progress since the last formal evaluation was done, and will confirm the child's readiness for the permanent move to Preschool.

### **TOILET TRAINING POLICY**

Toilet training is a developmental task which occurs naturally as children grow physically, emotionally and cognitively. Each child has their own timetable for readiness. Exactly when this will occur depends entirely on each child. Success depends on a child's ability to understand and control the body, development of self-help skills, and a desire to become independent. While the implementation of a toilet training process is something that would begin in the child's home under the direction of parents, it is our policy is to support that process while the child is here with us at VCCC. Communication between home and school is important so that consistency in the process can be maintained.

Throughout the course of our daily schedule, there are always specific times that all the children in the class are asked to use the bathroom, such as before and after snack and lunch times, before going out on the playground, and before rest times. For those children that we know are going through the "potty training" process we would then ask them more frequently to try using the toilet. Please know that all children are supervised when using the bathrooms. The children are required to wash his/her hands with soap and water immediately after toileting, and are guided by the staff to dry their hands with a paper towel which they then use to shut off the water.

Any clothing that may be soiled by feces or urine are double bagged, labeled with the child's name and sent home with the child for laundering. Each child should have complete changes of clothing in their cubbies at all times to allow for the possibility that a change may become necessary. We suggest that children who are going through the potty training process have multiple changes of clothes available in their cubbie at all times. However, should a child having an accident not have a change of clothes in their cubbie, the center does have an extra clothes bin from which we can find something for the child to wear. We would then ask that the parent wash and return the clothing to us on the child's next day of school.

**At no time will any child ever be punished, verbally abused, or humiliated for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet when in our care.** Staff clearly understand that toilet training is a process, one that can take time, and one that always presents the possibility of accidents. Staff will always support the process with positive encouragement and assistance.

### **AEROSOL SPRAY POLICY**

Due to the respiratory issues of some of our students, aerosol sprays, such as certain sunscreen or bug sprays, cannot be allowed at VCCC. We ask parents to instead send these items in either a cream form or a pump spray. And we again thank you for helping us keep all of the children in our care healthy and safe.

### **SECURITY POLICY**

There are keypad locks on both the I/T hallway door and the Preschool/PreK classroom doorway that require a specific code that is assigned to each parent, and all VCCC staff and administration. There are also keypad locks on both back hallway doors that only VCCC staff and administration have code access to. These keypad locks prevent anyone other than VCCC staff, administration and parents to access areas where the children are during their time with us. Any possible outside visitors throughout the day (delivery men, sales people, etc.) will be greeted in the initial entryway, asked for identification, and will NOT be given access to any of the children's classrooms.

After bringing your child to the bathroom to wash their hands, you will bring them to their classroom and SIGN-IN them in each day on the clipboard that hangs on the wall outside each classroom door. When you pick your child up, please remember to SIGN-OUT each day. Accurate attendance records are not only a state regulation, they are vital in the event of an emergency that requires us to evacuate the building.

There are telephones located in each of the classrooms for immediate access in the event of an emergency. Staff bring a phone outside on the playground, or when they bring the children on walks in the event they need to reach the director or another staff member inside for any assistance.

### **SAFETY AND EVACUATION DRILLS**

Per fire code and state regulations, safety and evacuation drills will be carried out throughout the year on a documented monthly basis following a regular plan for exiting the children from the building. Copies of this plan are posted inside each classroom by the door. While we realize that these drills can cause some of the children to become upset, particularly in the beginning of the school year when they are not used to them, we are sure you can understand the reasons we must have them. These evacuation drills and the need for safety will be reinforced throughout the year in discussions and stories during many of our "Circle Times" to aid the children in the smooth transition and understanding of these drills.

### **ACCESS TO VCCC'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT POLICY**

A copy of VCCC's Emergency Management Policy is available at all times. The Infant/Toddler and Preschool/PreK classrooms have copies in their classroom binders, and there is a copy located in the Director's office. There is also a copy in each classroom's emergency backpack. Any parent wishing to see or receive a copy of this policy should see the Director who will be happy to share!

### **TRANSPORTATION POLICY FOR FIELD TRIPS**

In the event that we would consider taking a field that required transportation other than walking, We would give as much notice possible regarding a field trip to allow our working parents the opportunity to rearrange work schedules or find an alternate adult to transport and accompany their child on a field trip. Please note that if for whatever reason a parent decides that they do not want their child to participate in a scheduled field trip, they will need to find alternative childcare arrangements for their child for the time the class will be out of the Center for the field trip.

Should formal transportation ever be needed for any Center field trips, it would be through a contracted bus service that is licensed in accordance with the laws of Massachusetts, and the vehicle used for that transportation would be registered as such and inspected in accordance with state law. This contracted vehicle would be equipped with seat belts for each child. Children would always be accompanied by staff and parent chaperones, and teacher/child ratios would continue to be maintained. A first aid kit as well as each child's emergency information would also accompany the staff on any field trip, and the staff would have been trained in pediatric CPR and First Aid.

### **WALKING FIELD TRIPS**

Parents must sign the Excursion Permission Form, which outlines the areas that teachers may take children for walks. This includes the Townsend Congregational Church property, the Town Common, the Townsend Library, the local rail trail, the Farmer's Exchange and the local town playground. During our "Community Helpers" theme, a "walking field trip" may be taken to visit the Post Office and the Fire & Police Stations. Teachers will maintain proper ratios at all times during these walking field trips, and will bring a first aid kit, attendance sheets, signed permission forms, and emergency information with them.

### **PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

Parents, the most important source of influence and guidance in the development of their children, are felt to be partners with the staff in this beginning learning process. We recognize that parental involvement is very important to a young child's social and emotional growth, and we therefore encourage parents to participate in our activities and to share in and enjoy the varied aspects of their child's early learning experiences. Many opportunities will exist for parent and family involvement including classroom volunteers, guest readers, parent workshops, donating materials for certain projects, parent nights, field trip involvement, family parties, and special events. Please do not feel pressured by the offers to volunteer. We realize how busy all of our lives are, and no one is obligated to volunteer, but we wanted you all to know that you were most welcome should you decide to do so. If a parent has a special interest, talent, hobby or job that they would like to share with the class, please feel free to talk with us about it. All parental/family interest, input and suggestions are always welcome!

To help us keep tuition costs as low as possible, we will occasionally ask parents to donate certain supplies to their child's classroom. Examples of these donations could be items for cooking projects, specific craft items or recyclables for art activities, donating wet wipes, boxes of Kleenex especially during colds season, etc. There are enough parents in each class so that if everyone occasionally donates, the burden is then not placed on the same parents all the time. We are enormously grateful to parents for their help in this way. This also gives parents an opportunity to participate in their child's educational experience especially for those who may not be able to physically volunteer in their child's class.

### **PROGRESS/EVALUATION REPORTS AND PARENT CONFERENCES**

Per our State regulations, written progress and evaluation reports will be done on Infants three times per year, Toddlers and Preschool/PreK children twice per year, and School-Age children once per year. These reports will allow teachers to adapt the curriculum and program schedules to the individual needs and interests of the children in our care as needed. A copy of the report is given to the parent, and a copy is put in each child's file at the school.

Teachers and the Director are available for parent conferences at any time during the school year should a parent feel the need for one. However, teachers will have formal conference times available twice a year so that parents can meet with them to discuss their child's progress and keep the lines of ongoing communication between home and school open. Please note that any serious concerns staff may have about your child will be brought to your attention as they occur. However, please understand that time is generally needed to properly evaluate any concern to determine whether or not it is in fact a valid concern or simply a developmental stage the child is going through.

## **CHILDREN'S RECORDS**

VCCC will not release any information in a child's file without the prior written consent of the child's parent/guardian. We will notify the parent/guardian immediately should a child's file be subpoenaed by a court of law. A child's parent/guardian shall have, upon request, access to his/her child's file at reasonable times, and access will not be delayed more than two business days following the initial request. When a child's file is requested, such request will be documented in written form in the file, and will indicate the date of request and who was requesting it. A child's parent/guardian has the right to add information, comments or other pertinent data to their child's file. When the child leaves the care of VCCC, upon written request of the parent/guardian, the Director shall transfer copies of the child's file to the parent or the parent's designee.

## **OUTSIDE REFERRAL PROCESS**

An integral part of our philosophy here at VCCC is our commitment to considering each child as an individual, and to respond to each child's needs as they arise, in the most appropriate way. If a teacher has a concern about a child, they will inform the Director. The Director and the teachers will agree on what needs to be observed, recorded, and for what period of time. Parents will then be notified and a conference will be held to inform them of the concern/s. The classroom teachers will keep a written record of their observations, including dates and times. After the observation period, the Director and classroom teachers will review the information and any information that may already be in the child's file (say from observations or written yearly evaluations from the year before.) If a decision is reached to refer, the parents will be contacted to meet again with the Director and classroom teachers to share and discuss all information. Parents will then be given all referral information, including appropriate telephone numbers and possible name of contact person. If the parent chooses to move forward with the referral, the director will ask the parent to sign a consent form authorizing that the referral can be made. Minutes of the parent/teacher/director meeting, including all observations, will be placed in the child's file.

The procedures for referral would be as follows:

1. The Parent/Guardian would contact the family pediatrician for an appropriate referral.
2. If the family pediatrician is not a possible resource, the following would be offered:

Ages 0-3

Early Intervention Program  
Linda Edwards, Herbert Lipton Mental Health Center  
100 Erdman Way, Leominster, MA 01453  
Telephone: 978-537-0956

Ages 4+

Brad Brooks, Director of Special Education  
66 Brookline Street, Townsend, MA 01469  
Telephone: (978) 597-8713, Extension 1501

Speech/Language

Health Alliance, Burbank Hospital  
Speech, Language, and Audiology  
Telephone: 978-343-5005

Pediatric Physician

Pediatrics West P.C.  
Russell Coleman, MD, Jayne Laurin, R.N., M.S., C.P.N.P.  
100 Boston Road, Suite A, Groton, MA 01450  
Telephone: 978-448-8282

Pediatric Dentist

Linda M. Blaschke, DMD  
75 Main St, Pepperell, MA 01463

Telephone: 978-433-3700

Optometrist

David L. Friedman  
228 Littleton Road, Westford, MA 01886  
Telephone: 978-692-2521

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY**

Child abuse is defined as a “non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child for which there is no reasonable explanation” by the *National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA)*. All professionals who work with children (i.e. child care administrators, teachers, assistants, substitutes) are mandated reporters who are required to report suspected abuse or neglect to the Department of Children’s and Families (DCF). If the decision is made that an abuse or neglect charge will be filed, then the Director will make the necessary phone call to the Department of Children and Families Child-at-Risk Hot Line at 1-800-792-5200. A written report will be filed with DCF within 48 hours and the parents will be notified that a report has been filed. The Department of Early Education and Care will also be notified.

### **INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE OR CRIMINAL ACTIVITY**

As a licensed child care program, we shall protect children from abuse and neglect while they are in the Center’s care and custody. Therefore, we will enforce EEC’s policy of, *no form of corporal punishment or restraint* will be permitted at the Village Common Children’s Center. Substantiated instances by a staff member of slapping, spanking, shaking, pinching, or other physical modes of punishment will be cause for immediate dismissal of such staff member. The use of sarcasm, mocking, embarrassment, scapegoating, or other forms of verbal abuse, if substantiated, will be cause for immediate dismissal of a staff member.

*When a staff member is suspected of abuse, the following procedures will be followed by the Director:*

1. Upon being notified of the alleged incident of abuse, the Director will remove the staff member from direct contact with the children until a full investigation can be conducted.
2. The Director will proceed to file a 51A report with the Department of Children and Families and will notify the Department of Early Education and Care. (During this time, the staff member will be presumed innocent and will continue to receive full salary and benefits.)

\*The Director will inform the VCCC Board of Directors of all allegations and updates.

*When a staff member is suspected of a criminal action, the following procedures will be followed by the Director:*

1. The Director will meet with the staff member to discuss the situation. If parents are involved, then the Director, staff member, and parents will meet.
2. The staff member will be presumed innocent during this time. Pay will continue but direct contact with the children may be limited.

\*The Director will inform the VCCC Board of Directors of all allegations and updates.

### **SUSPENSION/TERMINATION OF A CHILD**

A child may be terminated from VCCC under the following circumstances:

- 1) The health and safety of the child while at center cannot be assured.
- 2) The health and safety of the other children in the class is being compromised by that child.
- 3) The child's developmental needs cannot be met at the center.
- 4) Required paperwork is not returned in a timely manner when requested.
- 5) Lack of parental cooperation or disrespect of staff.
- 6) Tuition responsibilities as outlined in this Handbook are not being met.
- 7) Parent expectations of staff and program are unrealistic and do not concur with the Center's philosophy and policies.
- 8) Any violation of policies and procedures outlined in the Parent Handbook.

Parents/guardians will be notified in writing about the circumstances including the reasons for termination. A copy of this letter will be kept in the child's record. The Director will inform parents/guardians of the availability of information and referral for other programs and services through local child care referral agencies. If it becomes necessary to terminate a child from the center, whether initiated by the school or the parents/guardians, teachers will prepare the child for termination from the Center in a manner that is consistent with the child's ability to understand. The teachers will talk with the child and the other children about the departure giving them simple reasons that they can understand for the departure. The children may decide to give the departing child drawings or a book with drawings or photos. The class may participate in a "good-bye party". Occasionally a child's departure is sudden and the child and the Center are not given an opportunity to say good-bye. In such a case, the teacher will write a simple note of good-bye addressed to the departed child from the class.

### **PLAN FOR MANAGEMENT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE**

The Center will minimize the spread of infectious disease by maintaining constant high standards of cleanliness. Parents are asked to bring their child to the bathroom to wash their hands before entering the classroom each day. Staff are diligent in their own handwashing process, as well as with monitoring the children in theirs throughout the day. Diaper changing and toileting procedures are followed and these procedures are written and posted in each bathroom on-site. Furniture and toys are regularly washed and sanitized, and tables for eating are washed and disinfected both before and after snack and lunch times. Tissues are kept in each classroom within easy reach for children and staff. Used tissues are thrown into the trash after use and hands are washed. Please note that if 3 or more children are diagnosed with the same contagious illness, that all parents will then be notified of the illness via email from the director.

### **MEDICATION POLICY**

\*All VCCC staff go through an annual medication training before the start of a new school year.

\*Any medication given orally requires a written physician's note giving us permission to administer any medication. This includes Tylenol, Motrin or Benadryl. Please note that there is a formal medication form that will need to be filled out and signed by your child's physician before we can administer any medications.

\*Any prescription medication that is brought in must be labeled by a pharmacy that includes the child's name and specific dosage information. **Please note that we cannot and will not administer any medication that is labeled with another child's name on it (i.e. a sibling) nor can we administer medication that has expired.**

\*Before it can be administered by staff, any new medication must be given to the child for a full 24 hours at home to determine if the child has any adverse reaction to the medication.

\*All medications must be handed directly to a teacher who will then put it into the classroom's medicine cabinet. **Please DO NOT leave medications in your child's backpack or cubbie.**

\*Teachers will not use restraint or unusual force if a child is upset or uncooperative when trying to give them their medication, and should a child be uncooperative, the parent will be notified immediately.

\*It would be helpful if Parents would ask their pediatricians if it is possible to have a prescription that allow the medication to be dispensed during times that they are not at the Center.

\*Sunscreen, bug spray and diapering creams can only be applied once a parent has signed a Topical Substance Permission form. Parents must provide these items and have them clearly labeled with their child's name.

### **FOOD ALLERGY POLICY**

Due to the severe food allergies of some of our students, VCCC is a **PEANUT AND NUT-FREE ENVIRONMENT**. Please do not send any food items containing any kind of nuts or nut products, or products that are labeled "may contain" or "have been manufactured in a facility that processes nuts" etc. for snacks, lunches or special occasion treats. We thank you for helping us keep all of the children in our care healthy and

safe. Staff will be diligent about reading and scrutinizing all food labels of cooking project ingredients and of any special snacks that might be served to ensure that there are no peanut or tree-nut contents, or that those products are not in any way manufactured in a facility that processes nut products. They will also make sure that there are no other food allergens in any of these food items that present an issue for any other children in our care who have other food allergies. Staff will also monitor children's snack and lunch contents to further ensure that no food allergens are present. Should they find something with peanuts or nut products, or a product that has been manufactured in a facility that processes nuts, we will be forced to send it back home. We would then offer that child a snack option from our kitchen.

All staff are washing their hands before and after snack and lunch times. All children are also being asked to wash their hands before and after eating snacks and lunch, with staff monitoring this process. All tables for eating snacks and lunch are washed with soapy water, and then sanitized with the appropriate bleach and water solution, and let air dry both before and after daily snacks and lunch time.

### **ORAL HEALTH POLICY**

The Department of Early Education and Care has issued a regulation for child care programs that includes a requirement that educators assist children with brushing their teeth if the children are in care for more than four hours. Participation in this activity is up to the discretion/decision of parents. We ask that parents check off their choice on the Oral Health form that is in their enrollment packet, and sign where noted. Parents need to indicate their choice either way. Should a parent choose to have their child participate in the tooth brushing process, our plan of action is as follows:

- Parents/Guardians will send in a tooth brush and a tube of toothpaste, both clearly LABELED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME & THE DATE. ]
- Following lunch time, teachers will then assist children in the bathroom with their tooth brushing process. In the Toddler classroom, wearing disposable gloves, the teacher will put a small smear of toothpaste (that the parent has sent in, clearly labeled with the child's name) onto the toothbrush. In the Preschool classroom, wearing disposable gloves, the teacher will put a pea size amount of toothpaste (that the parent has sent in, clearly labeled with the child's name) onto the brush and hand it to the child. The teachers in both classrooms will observe the children brushing, guiding as necessary. They will then direct the children to rinse their mouth with water using a disposable cup, spitting the water into the sink. The child will then be asked to wash their hands and return to the classroom.
- Toothbrushes are then allowed to air dry and are then stored in a slotted tooth brush drawer system.
- The teachers will then wash and sanitize the bathroom sinks.
- Each week, on the child's last day of attendance, staff will put the children's tooth brushes in their lunch boxes to be sent home for cleaning. We ask that parents disinfect them and return them to the Center at the beginning of the next week, making sure to again label it with the child's name and date. (The tooth brush can be disinfected by soaking them in water that has been boiled.)
- According to health practices, children should receive new tooth brushes following times of illness, or after 3 months of use.
- Please note that since the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, the Department of Early Education and Care has suspended the required toothbrushing policy, so until further notice, our toothbrushing practice after lunchtimes has been put on hold so there is no need to send in a toothbrush and toothpaste. We will inform you if and when this toothbrushing requirement has been reinstated by EEC.

**STAFF AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS MUST WORK TOGETHER TO MAINTAIN GOOD HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR ALL THE CHILDREN IN OUR PROGRAM. WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE IN MEETING THIS GOAL.**

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

- Please note that the director of VCCC and its governing Board of Directors have the right to make any changes, additions or deletions to Center policies and procedures deemed necessary at any time during the school year (including those possibly related to tuition.) Parents would be notified in writing of any changes.
- It is important to keep the Center informed of any changes in family status, telephone numbers, emergency numbers, addresses, changes in daily schedules, etc. Please let the Director know as soon as a change is made.
- If parents need to physically mail anything to VCCC through the US Postal Service, please note that our mailing address is **P.O. Box 514, Townsend, MA 01469**
- Parents/Guardians have the right to contact the Department of Early Education and Care for information regarding VCCC's regulatory compliance history.
- The Village Common Children's Center is a smoke-free environment. There is no smoking allowed at any time either inside the building or on the Center's property.

**Thank you for choosing the Village Common Children's Center !!!**  
We **WELCOME** you and your family to our "Circle of Friends" !!!

*This Handbook has been updated January, 2026 CAC*  
*This Handbook has been reviewed and approved by the VCCC Board of Directors, January, 2026*

# The Village Common Children's Center Payment Policy

(Revised and Approved by the VCCC Board of Directors January, 2025)

As a private child care center, Village Common Children's Center is funded entirely from the tuition fees paid by the parents and guardians of the children who attend our program. Therefore, it is imperative that families make their payment of tuition on time which allows us to provide the quality program your children deserve.

- Tuition is set yearly by the VCCC Administration and the VCCC Board of Directors (prior to signing contracts, which is your Registration Form)
- See attached Fee Schedule (which is subject to change without notice)
- Please make checks payable to: Village Common Children's Center or VCCC

*Please note that VCCC does not have the ability to accept Credit or Debit Cards at this time.*

**\*Registration fee** is due at the time that your child's enrollment application is submitted. This is a *non-refundable fee* to cover the processing of the application.

**1-Week Tuition Deposit** is required at time of registration to secure your child's placement. This deposit is then credited as your payment for the last week of the formal school year. Should parent choose to withdraw their registration for any reason, or VCCC is forced to close for any reason, this deposit is then non-applicable and non-refundable.

**Weekly Payments** are due by the Friday of each week, in advance of the services being rendered. Families are always welcome to pay bi-weekly or monthly, as long as it is PRIOR to the services being rendered.

**Termination:** If a family decides to leave VCCC for any reason, their deposit is then forfeited.

**Payment during Absence:** If a child does not attend due to illness, vacation, or other absence (on a regularly scheduled day), parents are still responsible for paying tuition. The program does not allow families to swap or trade days, therefore, if your child attends a different day than they are scheduled, this will be seen as extra time and will be charged to the tuition account as such.

**Center Closings:** If the Center is closed due to holiday, our two yearly vacation closures, inclement weather, or any other closings beyond the Center's control, tuition is still charged according to scheduled enrollment rate. Tuition is only waived when the Center is closed for our Work Week (third week in August).

**\*Delinquent payments:** You will have until the Monday following the Friday due date to submit tuition payments. At the end of day on Monday, any account that has not been paid will receive a \$25 late fee added to the delinquent tuition. ***If you are not current in your payment by the end of the week of non-payment then we will not be able to offer care to your child until payment is made in full.*** If your child is removed for non-payment there is no assurance that his/her space at VCCC will be available after that date.\*

**\*Returned Check Fee:** Fee of \$35 will be charged to your account.\*

**\*Late Pick-Up:** Every effort needs to be made to pick-up your child at the agreed time. If a situation arises, please inform VCCC as soon as possible. A late fee of \$25 will be assessed for every 15 minutes a parent is late to cover additional payroll costs.\*

***\*Current Fee Schedule is included in your Registration packet  
(This policy is subject to change without notice)***

*This Payment Policy has been updated January, 2026 CAC  
This Payment Policy has been reviewed and approved by the VCCC Board of Directors, January, 2026*



## The Village Common Children's Center

### **FEE Schedule**

(Effective January, 2025)

School Year Registration Fee: **\$75.00** (non-refundable/non-applicable)  
2 or more Students **\$100.00 per family** (non-refundable/non-applicable)

Summer Registration Fee: **\$65.00** (non-refundable/non-applicable)  
2 or more Students **\$85 per family** (non-refundable/non-applicable)

**Sibling Discount:** For families registering more than one child for 5-days per week, there is a \$50 per week discount applied to the "family" account.

**Active Military Duty Discount:** For any parent who is currently **active duty** in any branch of the military, there is a \$50 per week discount.

**\*Please note that only one discount is per family is allowed.**

Late Payment Fee: **\$25.00**

Returned Check Fee **\$35.00**

Late Pick-Up Fee: **\$25** Every 15 minutes (*or any portion thereof*)

(Revised and Approved by the VCCC Board of Directors February, 2026)



## **THE VILLAGE COMMON CHILDREN'S CENTER**

### **Bookkeeping Check Processing and Payments Procedures**

- Invoices are charged on Fridays for the following Monday through Friday week of service. Payments are due by the Friday PRIOR to the week of service provided. Advance payments are gladly accepted, as are bi-weekly and multiple week payments, and as long as they are paying for services PRIOR to services being provided, you are welcomed to pay for as far in advance as you would like.
- Payments are received from the white mailbox located in the Preschool hallway at the end of day on Fridays, and are processed/deposited by Monday.
- **Payments are applied to the oldest outstanding charge(s) on the account.** If the amount of the payment is more than the outstanding balance of an invoice, a credit balance will occur, and remains on the account until it is applied to the next invoice charged to the account. Any unallocated payments remain on the account as a credit.
- **Every attempt will be made to apply the payments as noted on a check memo section, if applicable. But, if you indicate on your check a payment is for a specific date range, and there are open invoices PRIOR to that date range, the check will be applied to the oldest invoice.** The only time this does not apply is for registration and deposit payments.
- When there is a change in program facilitated by a parent, the amount of the original deposit is also changed. If an increase in time is made, an additional deposit amount is required. If a decrease in time is made, the difference in the original deposit amount and the new deposit amount results in a credit to your account, and will be applied to any outstanding or upcoming invoices.
- The balance of an account must be paid IN FULL PRIOR to any child attending an upcoming session at the center, such as the Summer Program or a new school year.

### **PAST DUE AMOUNTS AND LATE FEES**

Please remember that payments are due on the Friday prior to the service of week—this is your original due date.

#### **When your account becomes past due, the following rules will apply:**

- Two days late (Tuesdays).....A reminder notice is emailed.
- The entire account balance MUST BE received by the following Friday for the *past due AND current Friday tuition charge*.
- If your payment has not been received in full by that Friday, on Monday you will receive a notice that your child will not be allowed to return to VCCC until arrangements have been made to bring the account up to date. A weekly late fee in the amount of \$25 *will be applied* if payment is not received by Friday following the original due date.

**HOLIDAYS/SCHOOL VACATIONS/SNOW DAYS/EMERGENCY CLOSURES/  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS**

As stated in the Parents Handbook, VCCC holidays, school vacations, snow days, emergency closures, professional development day and the half-day closures are BUILT INTO THE TUITION RATES PRIOR TO TUITION SCHEDULES BEING SET. Because of this, tuition amounts are the SAME each week regardless of any Center closures to eliminate the financial logistics of needing to credit each account whenever there might be a closure.

**(Approved by the VCCC Board of Directors January, 2026)**