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# **SCHOOL AGE PARENT HANDBOOK**

**updated January 2009**

*Providing Quality, Licensed Child Care with an Educational Focus since 1967 ~ [www.GreatBayKids.org](http://www.GreatBayKids.org)*

## **CURRENT SCHOOL AGE PROGRAMS OFFERED THROUGHOUT THE AGENCY**

All programs are licensed by the New Hampshire Bureau of Child Care Standards and Licensing.

### **In Exeter:**

\*An Action Club Junior Program for children in 1st and 2nd grade at Main St. Elementary School for children ages 5-13 years

\*An Action Club Senior Program for children in 3rd, 4th and 5th grade at the Lincoln St. Elementary School for children ages 6-13 years

### **In Newfields:**

\*An Action Club Program for children in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade at the Newfields Elementary School

## **STATEMENT OF NON DISCRIMINATION**

Our programs do not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, national origin, citizenship, religion, sex, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation or veteran status.

## **AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT**

Great Bay Kids' Company is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing quality early childhood education and school-age enrichment programs for children.

## **PROGRAM ORIENTATION**

"The Child Comes First" is the basic philosophy of the agency. We believe that the program must attempt to adjust to the child's needs, rather than the child to the program. Planning and implementation revolve around the needs and cues from each child. By respecting and encouraging individual abilities, we hope to develop a strong feeling of self-esteem in each child.

Since children's needs are diverse, we provide for all aspects of the child's development: physical, intellectual, emotional and social. Our programs are designed to integrate all aspects of the child's development. Our primary goal at Great Bay Kids' Company is to help each child to become a well-rounded individual. Each program offers an environment filled with warmth and caring. At the same time, we strive to provide a safe environment for each child to learn, grow and be happy. You will be given an information sheet about your child's specific program and daily schedule when you enroll.

## **OUR HISTORY**

The Newmarket Community Action Council for Day Care Centers, Inc., was incorporated in September of 1967 as a non-profit organization to administer quality child care programs for children. The Newmarket Child Care Center was opened on October 2, 1967. The Center's funding came through local fundraising and a grant from the Spaulding-Potter Charitable Trust. In 1973, the agency applied for a 3 to 1 matching Federal Grant through the Division of Welfare. The Newmarket center is now located at 3 Simons Lane in Newmarket.

Due to the growing need for child care in the Exeter area, a center was opened in January of 1975 in that community. The Exeter location outgrew its original facility and is now housed at 13 School Street in Exeter. This property also incorporates the SAU # 16 developmental preschool operated by the school district.

We established before and after school programs in Exeter in 1990. Programs at both the Main Street and Lincoln Street schools offer care for elementary school children before and after regular school hours as well

as during school vacations. In the Fall of 2008 we opened an after school program at the Newfields Elementary School for children in Kindergarten through fifth grade.

Fiscal support from the town, state, and county governments, the United Way of the Greater Seacoast, New Hampshire Division of Health and Human Services as well as fundraising and donations help the agency provide programs to serve over 340 families annually.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Agency is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who have the responsibility of hiring the Executive Director and Financial Administrator and guiding the administrative staff with general agency policy. Community members, staff and parents are encouraged to attend the open sessions of the board meetings and participate in committee meetings. If you would like more information about our Board of Directors please contact our Executive Director.

### **FUNDRAISING**

The agency holds fund raising events throughout the year in which parent/guardian participation is essential. The monies raised from these events goes into our agency's general budget and helps to keep child care costs reasonable. Please talk with your center's Program Director to find out information concerning upcoming fundraising events.

### **ENROLLMENT**

Clients are eligible for enrollment on a first come/first serve basis. Priority is given to children at risk referred by the Division of Children, Youth and Families and to siblings of enrolled children in order to keep families together. Drop-in and vacation care is provided on a space available basis.

During the enrollment process, all necessary forms will be completed, policies and procedures reviewed and a tuition agreement will be signed. Enrollment will begin on a Monday with payment prior to enrollment. If you choose to start your child in the middle of a week, you will still be responsible for the full week's tuition payment.

All children are required to have an up to date immunization records on file **prior** to entering school age care. All significant medical facts (allergies etc.) *must* be made clear during the enrollment process. In accordance with New Hampshire Child Day Care Agency Licensing Rules, every child must have an up to date physical on file within 60 days of enrollment. Thereafter, physical records must be updated annually for children 5 years of age and under and every other year for children 6 years of age and older. Programs shall not be required to obtain physical examination records for children whose parents object thereto in writing, on the grounds that such physical examination is contrary to their religious beliefs. See your Program Director for the Physical Exempt form.

### **FEES / PAYMENTS**

Upon enrollment you will be required to complete a Tuition Agreement. A registration fee, activity fee and one week's tuition are required at the time of enrollment. Activity fees are charged for the School Year Program (September through mid-June) and again for the Summer Program (mid-June through August). The activity fee assists in covering special activities for the programs as well as general expenses and seasonal related expenses and is assessed per child.

## **PAYMENT POLICIES**

- Tuition is to be paid by Friday for the following week.
- Tuition is charged regardless of child's attendance. This includes illness, snow days, holidays, and professional development days. Tuition will not be charged for the days the agency is closed between Christmas and New Year.
- Tuition Agreement revisions must be communicated to the Program Director in writing at least two weeks in advance and granted if space is available.
- You will be allowed to change your child's schedule at the beginning of a new program without being charged a re-registration fee. After 30 days, you may be subject to a re-registration fee for each tuition change. Please talk with your Program Director concerning availability.
- The agency participates in the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Development Fund Scholarship Program, which subsidizes tuition fees for eligible families. Our Executive Assistant can give you more information.
- A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for a check returned for any reason.
- Tuition payments made after Monday may not be reflected on your bill for that week.
- Balances must be current in order to enroll your child in a new program within our agency.
- Tuition and fees are subject to change at the discretion of the Board of Directors with thirty (30) days written notice.

For current tuition rates, please refer to our current tuition rate sheet.

## **OVERDUE PAYMENT PROCEDURE**

If payment is not received by Monday of the following week, an overdue notice will be sent. Payment for the current week, as well as the overdue payment is expected by Friday. If payment is overdue, a late charge of \$15.00 per week may be assessed unless payment arrangements have been approved by the Administrative Office.

If payments become overdue, payment arrangements must be made with the Administrative office. If payment arrangements are not fulfilled, your child(ren) will be withdrawn from the agency. Unpaid client balances will be turned over to the New Hampshire Credit Bureau for collection.

## **WITHDRAWAL**

Parents/ Guardians who intend to withdraw their child(ren) are required to give the Administration two full weeks advance written notice or two weeks tuition. Last day of enrollment must end on a Friday; therefore, notice given in the middle of a week will be in addition to the required two-week notice.

### **LATE PICK-UP FEE**

All children must be picked up by 6:00 PM. This rule is strictly enforced. A fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes you are late will be added to your bill for the week. This late fee charge is assessed on a per child basis.

### **EARLY RELEASE DAYS**

On Early Release Days there is no extra charge for children who are normally scheduled to attend on that day. If you are in need of care on an early release day and your child is not scheduled to attend on that day, you will be charged the hourly drop-in rate. Please talk with your child's Site Director to confirm availability on those days.

### **SCHOOL VACATION WEEKS**

The agency provides care during the February and April school vacation weeks. You must sign up in advance for care for these weeks. You may sign up for two, three or five days and you will be charged the current daily rate **regardless of attendance.**

If you do not sign up for care during school vacation weeks, no fee will be charged.

### **SUMMER PROGRAM**

Each spring families are offered the opportunity to sign up for the School Age Summer Camp Program. You may sign your child up for two, three or five days per week and you sign up only for the days/weeks you need. **Any changes to this schedule may be made up to thirty days before the start of the summer program. After that date, you will be charged for any days you have signed up for regardless of child attendance.**

**Enrollment in our Summer Program does not guarantee enrollment in our Fall Program.**

### **EXTENDED AND DROP-IN CARE**

For Contracted Parents/Guardians: Extended care is granted for parents who are currently enrolled 2 –3 days a week, but occasionally need care for additional times. Fees are charged at the hourly rate for extended care use and the hours are rounded up. Extended care is granted if space is available in your child's program. A 24-hour notice is requested. Contact the Site Director for availability and authorization.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Agency hours are Monday - Friday from 6:30am-8:30am and 3:00pm-6:00pm. We are also open 6:30am-6:00pm during school vacations and no school days. Parents are responsible for payment of any days your child is registered, with the exception of the days between Christmas and the New Year when our agency is closed. Please notify the Action Club when your child will be absent so we can plan accordingly.

### **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT DAYS AND HOLIDAYS**

Two days a year are designated during the Summer and Fall Programs for agency personnel to prepare, set-up rooms, and receive agency-wide training. We will be closed for these two Program Development Days as well as the eight holidays listed below. The parents will pay for all development days and holidays if they are registered for those days. Our agency's dedicated staff work year round with your children and are entitled to compensation for holidays and development days.

CLOSED HOLIDAYS: \*New Year's Day \*Martin Luther King, Jr. Day \*Memorial Day \*Independence Day \*Labor Day \*Thanksgiving Day \*Day after Thanksgiving \*Christmas Day

### **SCHOOL/TEACHER IN SERVICE DAYS**

During a regular school week, fees for these days are included in your weekly tuition amount unless your child is not scheduled for care on those days. If your child is not scheduled to attend, you may sign up for drop-in care if space is available. Please talk with your program's Site Director for availability. You will be charged the daily drop-in rate for care.

### **SNOW AND EMERGENCY DAYS**

In the unlikely event that our agency is closed or has a delayed opening due to a bad snow storm, lack of electricity, etc. the Executive Director will notify local radio stations WERZ (107.1 FM) and local television station WMUR (Channel 9) to announce closings. The closing will also be posted on the WMUR web site at [www.wmur.com](http://www.wmur.com). If we must close early, we will call you or your emergency contact person to pick up your child. You will be responsible for payment on these days, unless we are closed for more than two consecutive days.

If the public schools are closed due to bad weather and our agency has decided to remain open, our School Age Program will provide emergency care at the Lincoln Street Elementary School in Exeter from 6:30am-6:00pm. Please call the Lincoln Street Program at 778-1812 for availability.

### **ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

When children are dropped off they must be brought into the program by the parent/guardian and their presence must be made known to the staff. Parents/guardians must sign in the time that your child arrives and sign out the time that the child leaves daily with your signature under your child's name for verification. Notify the teachers when you are leaving and make sure that your child does not go outside unattended.

Parents/Guardians must designate on appropriate agency forms any individual authorized to pick up their child from Great Bay Kids' Company, Inc. Persons authorized to pick up any child must be at least 18 years of age and provide a picture identification to agency personnel upon request. If a parent calls the center to make alternate pick up arrangements, the parent will receive a return phone call from agency personnel to verify the phone call and information. If any person arrives to pick up a child that is not listed on appropriate agency forms as an authorized pick up person, or we do not have written or verbal parental approval for the pick up, agency personnel will immediately call 911 for assistance. Under no circumstances will a child be allowed to leave the premises with anyone that has not been given prior parental approval.

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, agency personnel will notify the police to report their concerns about the welfare of the child and will assist the police as requested.

### **REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

New Hampshire State Law, RSA 169-C, the Child Protection Act, states that any person who has reason to suspect that a child under the age of eighteen (18) has been abused and/or neglected must make a report to the Division of Children, Youth and Families.

## **CUSTODY, VISITATION, SUPPORT, CARE AND RELATED ISSUES**

Great Bay Kids' Company recognizes that the parents or legal guardians of enrolled children may be subject to court orders, stipulations or other agreements which govern custody, visitation, support, care and related issues. Great Bay Kids' Company at all times desires to promote the parent-child relationship, to nurture child development, to minimize potential conflicts and problems, and to promote an environment best suited for the provision of high quality child care, enrichment and education. To promote these interests the Board of Directors for Great Bay Kids' Company has adopted the following policies.

Unless Great Bay Kids' Company is provided with a certified copy of an order from a court of competent jurisdiction which expressly states otherwise, either natural or adoptive parent or legal guardian may visit the enrolled child or children on an unrestricted basis during the normal hours of operation during the day. It shall be the parent or legal guardian's responsibility to provide Great Bay Kids' Company with the certified copy of the order. In the event that the certified copy of the order expressly states that either a natural or adoptive parent or legal guardian shall not have any contact with the child or children, and in the event that such person attempts to have contact with the child or children, Great Bay Kids' Company shall first notify the local police department, and only then attempt to notify the custodial parent or legal guardian.

Unless otherwise notified, Great Bay Kids' Company shall assume that all natural or adoptive parents or legal guardians of the enrolled child or children shall have equal access to the records kept by Great Bay Kids' Company regarding the enrolled child or children, subject to state law governing disclosure of such records.

In the event a parent seeks to have an administrator or staff member of Great Bay Kids' Company testify at deposition or in court, during normal business hours, a subpoena shall be required in accordance with New Hampshire law. Neither administrators nor staff of Great Bay Kids' Company shall be permitted, during working hours, to take time from their regular duties to provide testimony, affidavits or otherwise act as witnesses on behalf of a natural or adoptive parent or legal guardian involving matters such as the custody, care, support, visitation or control of the enrolled child or children without service of a subpoena.

Parents/guardians may request copies of their child's portion of the sign in/out sheets for the past six months for child custody related issues. Requests must be made in writing to the Administrative Office. A cost of \$5.00 per copy will be charged and is to be paid prior to processing of documents.

## **HEALTH AND ILLNESS**

Our agency is not set up for the care of sick children; therefore we are unable to accept ill children. If your child is ill, please keep him/her home until (s)he is well enough to attend. Your child may return when (s)he is well enough to participate in the day's events, including outside play. In the case of a contagious condition for which antibiotics have been prescribed, the child may not return to the program until after the required treatment has been administered in accordance with New Hampshire State Regulations. Please see your Program or Site Director with questions.

If your child becomes ill while at the site, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child immediately. For this reason, we ask that you keep your emergency card updated.

You will be called if:

- your child has an oral temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher or an under arm temperature of
- 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher

- your child has uncontrolled coughing or wheezing
- your child is vomiting while at the program
- your child has diarrhea while at the program
- your child has any other symptom that prevents him/her from participating in the program
- your child has an illness that may infect other children
- your child has head lice and/or nits

### **MEDICATION POLICY**

Absolutely no medication will be administered without a written authorization from the parent or guardian and the order of a licensed practitioner. (A pharmaceutical label is acceptable). Medication forms are available from your Site Director and all medication must be in its original container and labeled with the child's name, medication name, dosage and the physician prescribing. There will be no medication administered past the expiration date.

According to the New Hampshire Child Care Program Licensing Rules, we are not obligated to administer medication at any time. We request that medication be given to your child at the centers only when necessary.

### **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 form, with the child's name, time, location, type of injury, treatment given, etc. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to have the parent or pick up person review, sign and date each accident report. Parents receive a copy of the report. The master copy will be reviewed by the Program Director and then placed in the child's health folder.

If a child receives a head injury of any type, the parents or emergency contact person are notified by phone immediately. If a situation arises where immediate outside emergency care is needed, an ambulance will be called. We will then attempt to contact the parent or emergency contact concerning the injury and give information as to where you can meet your child.

In the event that one child is injured by another child, no names will be used when describing the injury and the incident. This is a requirement of privacy laws, as well as agency policies of confidentiality.

### **DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY**

We at Great Bay Kids' Company believe that discipline is not punishment but rather teaching, guiding and redirecting. The word discipline comes from an old English word meaning "instruction" and this is the way we approach discipline. We help children learn to get along with adults and other children, teach them to behave in an acceptable way and help children learn self-control. The purpose of disciplining children is to raise responsible, confident children who grow up to care about others and themselves.

Great Bay Kids' Company keeps an open line of communication between parents and staff regarding their child's experiences within the program. If a behavior issue is interfering negatively with the functioning of the program and the safety of the staff or any of the children, we will notify the parent or guardian. We will work cooperatively with the family to develop and implement strategies to assist with the child's challenging behaviors. If all suggested strategies have been unsuccessful, the parent/guardian will be asked to withdraw the child from the program in order to preserve a safe environment.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Our agency realizes the importance of good communication. The lines between parents and teachers should be open and effective. To better facilitate communication between staff and parents we provide a variety of ways in which to transfer information to one another, such as; mail pouches, newsletters, memos, phone calls, and letters. Please be sure to utilize these communication methods **daily** so that you are informed and up to date. Good communication facilitates the team effort between staff and parents that is necessary for the care of your child(ren).

If a question or concern arises about your child, their care or the program, please make a point to speak to your child's Site Director. If the Site Director has not provided an adequate answer, please seek the assistance of the Program Director. If you still have not received what you feel to be the proper attention to your question or concern, contact the Executive Director.

## **HEALTH AND NUTRITION**

As part of the USDA Food Program, Great Bay Kids' Company provides nutritious meals daily. A breakfast and afternoon snack are served in all of our school age programs. During full day programs we also provide lunch. All of these meals meet USDA requirements and guidelines. The meals are served in the classrooms in a pleasant atmosphere in which the teacher sits with the children to encourage appropriate manners and conversation.

If your child has a food allergy or has special dietary needs, we must have a "Special Meals Prescription Form" on file in our office that has been signed by your child's physician. If your child has special dietary requirements due to religious or other philosophical beliefs, we will need a letter from the parent/guardian stating your requirements. When possible, we will make substitutions to the menu to meet the needs of your child. The Program Director and Cook will meet with the parent/guardian of a child with special dietary needs as requested in order to work out a plan concerning food substitutions and who will be responsible for providing food items. Please do not bring in any food for any reason unless prior arrangements have been made with your center's Program Director.

As part of our agency Wellness Policy and in consideration of those children with food allergies, we ask that you refrain from bringing in food items for your child's birthday. Your child's birthday celebration will be incorporated into the curriculum for that week. With input from your child, your child's teachers will plan a special project in celebration of your child's birthday. Examples may include decorating birthday hats, baking a healthy treat, painting balloons at the easel or scarf dancing to your child's favorite music.

Great Bay Kids' Company has a commitment to provide families and employees with a safe, healthy, and clean child care environment. Because of this commitment, tobacco use of any kind is not permitted on the grounds or within the buildings.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (292) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

All field trips will be announced in advance either by memo or a notice from your child's teacher. We travel in insured parent/guardian cars as well as school busses and follow the New Hampshire seat belt law. If your schedule allows, we welcome your participation on such trips. On all of the trips, we maintain strict child to staff ratios. If we cannot provide this ratio, the trip will have to be canceled. Occasionally an extra fee may be charged for these trips. Field trip forms must be signed prior to the field trip in order for your child to attend.

If we have planned a field trip that you do not want your child to attend, please talk with your center's Program Director at least 24 hours in advance of the trip. Your Program Director will make every effort to make arrangements for your child to participate in another group within the agency during the scheduled field trip time. If your child arrives at our program after the scheduled field trip departure time, you may transport your child to the field trip destination. If you choose not to do so, no care will be provided for your child until after the group arrives back from the trip.

## **REST TIME**

Our agency follows the New Hampshire Child Care Program Rules concerning rest time. During February, April and Summer Vacations and other full day programs, all children in attendance will be required to rest for thirty minutes. Children will be allowed to read or work on any quiet activity during this thirty minute rest period. This rest period allows the children time to relax and enjoy some quiet time before afternoon activities.

