**VAUGHAN LEARNING CENTER**

 **Family Handbook**

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**2016-2017**

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 **Program Philosophy**

 We believe that play is essential in learning for young children. Play is the basis for learning in our program. Children will be immersed in exploratory activities that will help development in all areas, including physical, cognitive, social and emotional. It is our belief that a good program offers both directed and non-directed experiences, encouraging your child to plan and think about their actions. Each room provides a child-centered environment with a wide range of materials and developmentally appropriate activities, which will allow your child to create, manipulate, explore and discover according to their particular and unique interest.

 We are committed to providing safe, affordable, high-quality childcare for your children. We are also committed to having a partnership with our families. We feel that partnerships between families and the center are essential to the growth and development of the individual child. We are committed to lower child-to-teacher ratios which enable teachers to:

* Spend more time with each child, developing closer teacher-child bonds of affection, trust and respect.
* Assess carefully each child’s social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth and progress to individualize the program accordingly.

 **GENERAL POLICIES**

**Non-Discrimination Policies**

Vaughan Learning Center will maintain and conduct all practices relating to enrollment, discipline, and all other terms and benefits of child care services provided in a manner which does not discriminate against any child, parent or family on the basis of race, color, national origin, immigration status, religion, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, disability, religion, or veteran status.

**Hours of Operations and Ages Served**

VLC is open to all children from 12 months of age through 12 years of age.  Part time and full time schedules are accepted.  Hours of operation are 6:30 – 5:15 Monday through Friday. We ask that if you work until 5, your child is picked up by 5:15 unless prior arrangements have been made.

**Staffing**

VLC employs people based on education and experience criteria, regardless of race, sex, religion, marital status, sexual preference, and ethnic or national origin. The center's staff consists of: the Learning Center Director, Teachers, and Teacher Aides and Center Cook. In order to insure safety of all children, fingerprinting and a criminal history background check is conducted on all staff members.

**Privacy Policies**

Information pertaining to a child and his/her family is kept confidential by the staff at all times. Occasionally, records may be reviewed by regulatory agencies for information that may be pertinent to a child's well-being or requested by a legal subpoena. All children's records are kept in the locked file cabinet on site.

**Open-Door Policy**

VLC maintains an open door policy for all currently enrolled families. Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the center any time during program hours.

**Required Forms**

The following forms must be completed before your child can enter the program:

1. **Emergency (Child Information) Card**
2. **Registration and Emergency Information**
3. **Payment and Childs Schedule Agreement-** To be filled out and then signed with the director.
4. **Health Appraisal Form** —Health form and Immunization record, must be signed by the doctor
5. **Permission Slip**—a form granting permission for field trips, giving first aid, and photo release etc.
6. **CACFP Eligibility Form**
7. **Signed Acknowledgment of Parent Handbook**

**What to Bring**

**A fitted crib sheet, blanket, and small pillow (if your child rests):** These items are required for children who are here during rest time. We launder them every 2 weeks.

**Bathing suit and towel:** If your child attends during the summer bring a bathing suit and towel labeled with your child's name. Leave it in the cubby.

**Toys from home:** Weapons of any kind are not allowed. Toys from home are discouraged and children are asked to keep them in their cubby. Transition items such as cuddly friends or favorite blanket are always welcome.

**Disposable diapers:** If your child is in diapers you will supply us with disposable diapers (or cloth if applicable). Bring a full bag labeled with your child's name and we will notify you when we are out.

**Label everything:** Remember your child is one of many and although we make every effort to know each child's belongings, many children have the same red, blue, or green sweatshirt.

**Dress your child for mess:** We use smocks but children can be enthusiastic and will still get very messy and dirty. If you are concerned about an outfit getting ruined, do not let them wear it here. Your child should dress in clothing that is appropriate for the weather. During the winter it is particularly important that children bring boots, hats, mittens, and warm coats so that they can play outdoors. We spend a great deal of time outside. Being able to run, jump, climb, etc is important to your child's development. Please send your child in shoes appropriate for these activities.

**Change of clothes:** As mentioned above children can get messy and accidents do happen. A complete change of clothes is required.

**Arrival and Saying Goodbye**

1. Ideally children should arrive by 8:00 am, this gives children ample opportunity to have snack and make choices throughout the classroom prior to get together and group time. If your child attends an afternoon block please have your child their by 10:30 am, this gives them plenty of time to eat lunch and play before going to rest.
2. Sign your child in and out on the attendance sheet. This sheet is used as a checklist for emergencies (fire drills, etc.) and is an important center record. Children are not allowed to write on the attendance sheet.
3. Help your child put belongings into his/her cubby.
4. Make a plan with your child the day before about how you will say good-bye when you get to VLC. Usually a quick good-bye is best. Tell your child exactly what you will do when you get here and when you will return. Always say good-bye.
5. Let a teacher know when you are ready to leave.
6. Make the good-bye quick and simple.

 **PROGRAM INFORMATION**

**Daily Schedule**

6:30-8:30am ----- Arrival and Free Choice

8:30-9:00am ---- Breakfast

9:00-10:00am ---- Teacher Directed Lessons

10:00-11:00am ---- Outdoor play

11:00-11:30am ----Circle Time

11:30am-12:00pm ----Lunch

12:00-2:00pm ---- Rest/Quiet Time

2:00- 3:00pm ---- Teacher Directed Lessons

3:00-4:30pm ---- Outdoor Play

4:30-5:15pm ---- Departure Time

This is an approximate of our schedule; the times may vary depending on the classroom. The order of what happens is the same.

**Meals**

Breakfast is served mornings at 8 am for school aged children and 8:30 am for everyone else. Breakfast consists of bagels, fresh baked breads, fruit, ect. Lunch is served at 11:30 and consists of pasta, sandwiches, casseroles, ect. PM snack is served at 2:30 for the toddlers, 3 pm for Preschool. Snack consists of cheese and crackers, fruit and crackers, fresh baked cookies. Water and Milk are always available at meals. On occasion we will have 100% fruit juice with snack.

**Group Assignments**

VLC assigns children to groups based on the age of the child in September of the current year. The youngest group of children range from 12 months to 24 months, the next group 24 months to 36 month, and 3 years to 5 years old with the oldest leaving for kindergarten the following year.  Children are with their assigned teacher from September until the following September when if old enough will move to the next group. Your child is required to be independently potty trained in order to be in the pre-K program.

**Field Trips**

Occasionally teachers plan walking field trips such as a walk around the block, to one of the local parks. Whenever a non walking field trip is scheduled you will receive written notification at least 24 hours in advance. We appreciate any help you can give us when we plan these outings. If you do not want your child to take any field trips please let us know so we can make arrangements for your child to join a different group during that field trip. VLC does not provide any transportation services. Transportation for field trips is provided by a taxi service. You are welcome to drive your child to any outing we have.

**CLOSURES**

VLC is closed on the following days: New Year’s Day, Presidents Day, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving Day, Fourth of July, Columbus Day, Veteran’s Day, Christmas and Civil Rights Day. We are also closed Friday before Labor Day for cleaning and planning. When a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday VLC reserves the right to close to observe the holiday either the preceding Friday or the following Monday. The program will provide thirty days notice of a Friday or Monday closure due to a weekend holiday. If the Conway Public Schools (SAU 9) are closed due to road conditions all VLC programs will be closed. If the Conway Public Schools are closed for any other reason VLC may be open WMUR Channel 9 will announce official closings. We will also post closing and delays on our Facebook Page. These closings will be announced by 6 am.

 **FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVMENT**

 **Communication from the Director**

Parent/Guardian communication is essential to the program's success. The Director typically communicates with families via Facebook posts or in-person. If you feel you need information printed, please let us know and we are happy to arrange this. The information typically provided is information about the program, special events, and meetings. Any policy changes are also given to you at the beginning of each month. Email is used if that is your preference. We have a closed face book page, please find us there and ask to join.

**Communication from your child’s teacher**

Your child’s teacher will communicate directly with you. We may use journals or daily notes. Information you need from your child’s teacher will be in your child’s mailbox, these should be checked daily. If you have any questions about your child please feel free to call and speak with your child’s teacher or schedule a meeting.

**Family Mailboxes**

Each family will have a mailbox that should be checked daily for information. Typically, information such as photos, accident reports, or book orders will be located in your box.

**Email**

Providing us with a relevant e-mail that you check daily is preferred. We use e-mail to send communication from the director and teachers, tuition invoices, regular updates and reminders, emergency information concerning closures, lockdowns, etc. Please feel free to give us several e-mails if necessary.

**Voicemail**

Messages can be left at any time. The messages are checked several times throughout the day.

 **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES**

**Illnesses**

Please do not send a sick child to the program. Not only is it better for the child's emotional and physical well-being to remain at home but a contagious child can affect the health of everyone in the program. If a child becomes ill while in the program, he/she will be isolated from the other children. A parent or designated adult will be contacted to pick up the child immediately.

The following should be helpful in deciding when it is appropriate for your child to attend the program before, during and after an illness. These policies were written with the health of everyone in mind.

1. **Change in behavior:** If this is the only symptom, send your child to the program, but be prepared to be notified if your child has developed other symptoms and needs to be picked up.
2. **Fever:** If your child's fever is higher than 101 degrees then he/she should not attend the program until 24 hours after the temperature has remained normal without medication and the child feels well.
3. **Upper respiratory disturbances**: A child with a simple cold may attend the program only if he/she is fully able to participate in the daily regimen of the program. If he/she is lethargic, please keep him/her at home.
4. **Gastro-intestinal disturbances:** If your child vomits or has diarrhea he/she should stay at home and may return after 24 hours of no vomiting or diarrhea.
5. **Pain:** A child who is in pain cannot be comfortable or adequately cared for in a child care setting; therefore, the child should stay at home until the pain has been investigated and the child feels well enough to return and fully participate in the normal routine.
6. **Rash:** If your child has any rash it must be identified by a physician. Your child can return upon documentation from a physician.

If your child has a minor illness or has one of the above symptoms and you are unsure about sending your child to the program, please call the office.

**Notification of illnesses**

If your child has a contagious illness and will not be at the program, please call to report so we can post the information to families as required by the State of New Hampshire.

**Illnesses that exclude children**

1. **Chicken pox:** The child may return after all skin lesions have dried; usually one week after the lesions has started.
2. **Mumps:** The child may return after the swelling is completely gone.
3. **Strep throat:** The child may return 24 hours after the first dose of medication is given.
4. **Hepatitis:** The child may return after a statement of good health has been given by the attending physician.
5. **Impetigo:** The child may return after the first 24 hours of treatment.
6. **Ringworm:** The child may return after the first 24 hours of treatment.
7. **Measles or German measles:** Child may return when the rash disappears.
8. **Lice or scabies:** Child may return after treatment. All nits from lice must be removed prior to returning.

If your child will be absent because of any of the above illnesses, please call the main office. The staff will post a sign to alert parents about any contagious diseases. To insure confidentiality no names will be posted.

**Physicals**

Each child must have a physical examination by a doctor or health clinic within 30 days of their start date and every year thereafter for preschool and under. School age children Kindergarten – age 12 need one every 2 years. If the health form is not on file exclusion will occur until the form is received by this office.

**Medications**

Medication including prescription drugs or individual special medical procedures will be given or applied only with prior written permission from a guardian and with written doctor's instructions. Prescription medication must be in the original container and have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, child's name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication and shall be given in accordance with those instructions. We will not honor any instruction from a guardian which contradict the instructions of the physician. We will maintain a record as to the time and amount of any given medication. Staff has been trained in and has their certification in Medication Administration. Medication will be stored out of reach from children in a locked container or refrigerator if necessary. PLEASE NOTE: Due to any allergy or reaction from a medication, **STAFF WILL NOT ADMINISTER THE FIRST DOSE OF ANY MEDICATION.** Also we are unable to give Motrin or Tylenol for fever, cough medicine or other medication that only masks a symptom of illness in which the child should stay home from the program.

**Allergies**

Please inform the director of any allergies and/or food restrictions. All staff members are informed of the children's allergies, and allergy lists are posted in each room. If your child has a food allergy we will substitute alternative foods for snack or you may choose to bring your own snacks.

**Medical Emergencies**

In the event of an emergency we will contact the parent/guardian as well as first responders/emergency professionals and will begin critical incident protocols if necessary. If parents/guardian cannot be reached and a child needs emergency medical attention he/she will be taken to the hospital as determined by EMS.

**Pick Up**

1. When picking up your child, please make sure you tell a teacher and sign him/her out. Check your child's cubby for wet clothes and other belongings.
2. Please allow 10 – 15 minutes for your child to get ready to leave. We close at 5:15 so give yourself enough time to chat with teachers, look for belongings, say good-bye to friends, etc.
3. If someone other than yourself will be picking up your child tell a teacher and write the information on the note pad near the attendance sheet. Be sure to date and sign it. Tell the person picking up to bring a picture I.D. **WE WILL NOT RELEASE A CHILD TO ANYONE (INCLUDING SIBLINGS OR GRANDPARENTS) UNLESS WE HAVE NOTICE (WRITTEN OR PHONED IN) AND THEY HAVE A PICTURE I.D.**
4. If you will pick up your child at a different time than you normally do, let us know and write it on the information sheet next to the attendance sheet.
5. Check your mailbox daily.
6. Read notices posted on the attendance board daily.
7. We require an adult to come into the center to pick up your child. Do not allow your child to leave the building without you at any time.
8. Do not allow your child to climb on the front gate to open it.
9. If you are unable to pick up your child by closing, alternate arrangements for pick up must be made. If the child is not picked up by closing, all persons listed on the emergency card will be called. If a child has not been picked up after one hour past closing and all other options have been exhausted, Child Protective Services will be contacted.

**Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect**

As a licensed child care provider we are obligated to comply with the abuse and neglect reporting laws of New Hampshire. At VLC we take this responsibility very seriously. Should abuse or neglect be suspected these steps are the usual course of action:

1. Staff member will discuss the suspected case with the director.
2. The director will observe the child; talk with the child to determine if abuse or neglect is a possible cause.
3. The director may discuss the concerns with the child's parent/guardian.
4. The staff and director will determine if there is a need to notify Child Protective Services.
5. A social worker or representative of the agency will visit the child at home or at the child care facility.

**Updating Child’s Info Forms**

**PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR UPDATING THE EMERGENCY CARD INFORMATION WHENEVER THERE IS A CHANGE IN PHONE NUMBERS, ADDRESSES, ETC.** This is one of the most important documents we have about your child. Be sure to review the information periodically. You are required to update information annually by reviewing all forms, making all necessary changes, initialing, and dating each form.

**Child Release Policies**

As a condition of providing child care services, families must supply the names of an individual to whom VLC may release the child in the event of an emergency.

VLC will only release a child to those names on the child information record. If the child needs to be released to someone not listed on the child information record, a parent must provide a written note signed and dated with name of person picking up or call VLC authorizing the person to whom the child can be released.

Before VLC will release a child, if the individual is unknown to VLC or anyone of the VLC staff, we will require photo identification in the form of a valid driver's license. Non-photo identification will not be accepted.

Families must be aware that VLC and staff are not properly trained to make assessments relating to intoxication or other impairments and therefore assume no responsibility to assess the competency or condition of any individual appearing to pick up the child.

VLC and VLC's staff respect the family's privacy. However, where other questionable child release situations occur, VLC has a duty to maintain its role as the child's advocate.

With respect to child custody disputes, until custody has been established by a court order and documentation has been provided to VLC, neither parent may limit the other parent from picking up the child.

**Bug Spray and Sun Block**

We apply SPF 35 to children once daily in the afternoon during warm weather month’s and ask that you apply sunscreen in the morning prior to dropping off your child. We will apply bug spray when mosquitoes are present on the playground. We supply these products. You are welcome to supply your own sun screen or bug spray.

**Fire Drills**

A minimum of 9 fire drills are conducted per year to ensure staff and children know the emergency evacuation procedures. Children are escorted out of the building and across the parking lot to the church. Attendance is taken once everyone is there. Notification of fire drills will be posted on the attendance board. The building is equipped with smoke detectors, a fire alarm and fire extinguishers.

 **Discipline**

**How Do We Handle Conflict Between Children?**

We use the peer problem solving method of conflict resolution. This is a technique developed to assist children in resolving their own problems. Acting as a facilitator, the teacher supports children as they become responsible for discussing and solving differences that normally arise during social interaction.

**Serious Disciplinary Problem**

A serious disciplinary problem exists when at the sole discretion of the director, a child consistently inflicts physical or emotional harm on other children, physically abuses staff, or otherwise refuses, or proves unable to conform to the rules and guidelines of the program. If a child has a chronic behavior problem, the staff will work for a time with both the child and the parents on finding a solution to the problem. However, the right is reserved to dis-enroll any child who is unable to conform to the rules and guidelines of the program.

**Time Outs**

We do not use a time out as a method of discipline. We will redirect or offer children an area to sit and play alone.

 **Financial Policies**

**Tuition**

Tuition payments are due weekly. These amounts are based on the payment and schedule agreement that you filled out. In the event payment has not been made for 2 weeks your child will not be able to attend until payment has been made in full. This could also result in a loss of your child’s spot.

**Payments**

To ensure proper credit, please include the child's name on the check if it differs from yours. Alternate payment arrangements must be made with the Director.

Checks can be dropped in the locked box available on the Directors door. If paying with cash please have a staff member verify the amount and sign before putting money in the locked box.

All outstanding balances in any program must be paid in order to reenroll for the fall term.

**Withdrawal**

A one week notice of intent to withdraw from VLC is required. You are responsible for the week’s tuition from date of notice.

**Late Payment**

A $25.00 fee will be charged for any payments not received by the designated due date.

**Returned Check**

A $25.00 fee will be charged for each returned check.

**Late Pick-Up Fee**

Families whose children are still at the site after the program closes will be assessed a $25.00 per child late pick up fee for the first 15 minutes and $1.00 per minute after.  These fees apply even if the center was informed that the child would be picked up late. Continued late pickups could result in un-enrollment from the program.

**Drop-In**

Drop-in service is available only when space permits. Due to licensed enrollment limits, space may not be available. To determine if drop-in is available to you, call the main office or speak to the Director 24 hours in advance.

**By signing below I understand the policies and procedures of Vaughan Learning Center and have received a copy of these policies and procedures.**

**Parents Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Parents Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**