



# **Parent Handbook 2024 - 2025**



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## **About Our School**

For those of you who are just becoming familiar with our school, we would like to provide you with some background information on our school, an understanding of the principles behind the school and the learning process we use. This handbook is re-designed annually based on parents' suggestions. Please continue to share with us any thoughts you may have for improving this handbook or should you have any questions about any school policies or programs.

### **General Information**

ECDC is a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation. It is a nonsectarian organization open to all eligible children and families regardless of race, religion, cultural heritage, national origin, political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or disabilities. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement. ECDC's goals are to offer the highest quality early childhood education for children ages two years and nine months through five years and to offer parents information and support on early child development and education.

### **History**

The Early Child Development Council (ECDC) was formed in 1971 based on the belief that the first five years of a child's life are a crucial period of physical, intellectual, emotional and social growth. Early Child Development Council of Medfield, Inc., a parent cooperative nursery school, opened in 1972. In 1977 the Board opened a second nursery school in Sherborn. In 1988, the Medfield school moved to Walpole. The name of the corporation was changed to ECDC Nursery School, Inc. Both schools were operated by the same corporation through the 1992-1993 school year. As of July 1, 1993, the Walpole school became independently incorporated.

### **Philosophy**

ECDC has always believed that each child should be treated as an individual and has the opportunity to develop at his/her/their own pace with our low teacher/child ratios. The classroom environment promotes our philosophy that children learn through play with many independent choices available through the day. We have many self-directed activities as well as large and small group activities. We believe that the process of learning is more important than the product. Children are encouraged and supported by our trained staff as they play and learn. Having our graduates well prepared for kindergarten is an important goal at ECDC.

## **Goals and Objectives**

Our classes are child centered with activities designed to meet each child's developmental needs. The goal of ECDC is to foster social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth in a nurturing and secure environment. Our program has three different cornerstones:

- **Learn Through Play:** We believe that all preschool children learn best through play. Each child is treated as an individual and has the opportunity to develop at his or her own pace. Our classroom environment reflects this philosophy with many independent choices available through the day. At ECDC, the **process** of learning is more important than the **product**.
- **Parent Involvement:** The most effective education results from a partnership between parents and teachers. For this reason, ECDC was established in 1977 in Sherborn as a parent cooperative. Parents spend time in the classroom interacting with their child and the teachers. The minimum time requirement is quite modest, between 4 and 6 times per year in the classroom as your child's "guest." There are additional opportunities for parents who are interested, and additional involvement is welcomed.
- **Qualified and Committed Staff:** Qualified, committed, caring and enthusiastic teachers are the cornerstone of an effective early education program. A certified early childhood educator directs ECDC, and all of our teachers have or are working toward early childhood certification. We support continuing early childhood education for our teachers.

## **Our Programs**

ECDC Nursery School is a non-profit preschool parent cooperative that provides quality preschool education for children ages 2 years 9 months to 5. Special needs children are integrated into the program and accommodations are made, when possible, to meet their needs. ECDC offers the following programs:

### **School Year Programs**

- o **Morning Turtles class** This program is designed for children entering their first or second year of preschool but will not be attending kindergarten the following year (e.g. children with fall birthdays). The program is offered 5, 4, or 3-days a week and held Monday-Friday from 8:45am-12:45pm. The class typically consists of up to 14 children and two teachers.
- o **Morning Butterflies class:** Our 4-year-old programs provide more advanced activities, including more emphasis on writing and letter recognition, time for individual reading, and more group activities. This class is designed for children to be socially, emotionally, and academically prepared for the kindergarten environment. The program is offered 5, 4 or 3-days a week (parent's choice) and held Monday-Friday from 8:45am-12:45pm. The class typically consists of up to 14 children and two teachers.

### **Optional School Year Programs**

- o **Stay and Play Program** - ECDC offers an extended day program on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays if there is sufficient enrollment. The program begins at class dismissal at 12:45pm and ends at 2:45pm. Children bring their own lunch. A child may attend the program more than one day per week. If there is a waiting list for a particular day, preference will be given to the children who attend the morning class on that day. The program consists of lunch time, free time, crafts and other indoor activities, a rest time, and playground time. Parent participation is not required. Prompt payment for this service is expected. This payment is considered tuition and is non-refundable unless sufficient notice is given for a child's absence or if the space can be filled by another student.
- **Summer Program for 2 years 9 months - 5 Year Olds:** This outdoor/playground-based program may be held Monday through Thursday from 8:45am until 12:45pm. The program generally begins at the close of the school year in June and runs for two weeks. Music, stories, crafts, nature exploration, games, playtime and snacks are offered. The school's indoor

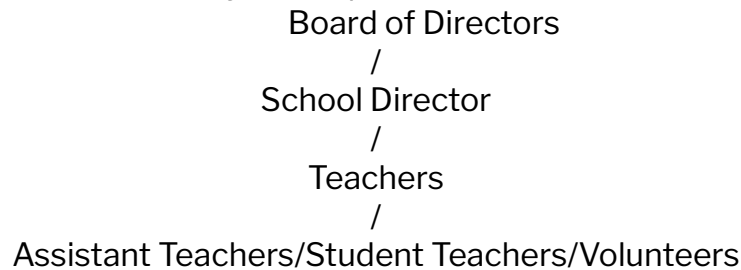
facilities are available for use in inclement weather. Enrollment is for current ECDC students. Parent participation is not required. Children must be 2.9 years old to enroll.

## **Management and Operation of the School**

ECDC Nursery School is a non-profit parent cooperative licensed to operate a preschool by the state of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). ECDC is managed by the joint efforts and cooperation of a Board of Directors (composed of parents), a team of early childhood educators led by the School Director, and a Parent Committee. The Board of Directors transacts the general business of the school, considers all questions of policy and acts on the recommendations of the School Director, school staff, and the Parent Committee. Our Board consists of five voting members, each serving a minimum two year term: Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Director of Operations, and Director of Personnel.

The Parent Committee serves as a liaison between parents, teachers, and the Board of Directors. All ECDC parents are welcomed members of the Parent Committee. The Parent Committee is directed by the Parent Committee Advisors. The Parent Committee Advisors are composed of a variety of roles (not limited to) a Chairperson, Board Secretary, Activity Leaders, and at least two Class Representatives for each class (Turtles and Butterflies). All parents are invited and encouraged to attend the monthly meetings of the Parent Committee.

Lines of authority and supervision are outlined below.



## **Teaching Staff**

Our program is run by professional staff. ECDC teachers are guided by a school director who is responsible for the quality of the program. The director is a certified early childhood educator. Our teaching staff is the cornerstone of our program. ECDC teachers all have early childhood education certification and vast experience in the field. We support and encourage continuing early childhood education for our teachers.



## **Curriculum**

Our daily routine involves a wide range of activities: creative play, arts and crafts, music, science, games, blocks, books, fine-motor activities, gross-motor activities and outdoor play. Children are taught various social skills (table manners, sharing, etc.) and are also encouraged to think and play together as well as independently. We incorporate music and movement in our classes daily. Outdoor play is included each day, weather permitting.

Themes and activities are planned by the staff and posted bi-weekly on the class bulletin boards and distributed via Brightwheel. Please read these notices promptly as they describe upcoming events and often provide specific information to help you prepare your child.

## **Parent Conferences**

Fall conferences are available for all children, if requested, to allow parents and teachers an opportunity to discuss children's adjustment to the school setting.

All classes have parent/teacher conferences in the late winter or early spring and are held in lieu of a regular school session.

Parents may request additional conferences. The Director will make arrangements for individual conferences at a time mutually convenient for parents and staff. Please remember that it is difficult for the teachers to talk to parents during drop-off or pick-up. Please reach out to teachers through email or Brightwheel to set up a time to talk about your child. Parent Teachers conferences will take place on Zoom or in-person.

## **Parent Participation**

Since its formation in 1971, parent participation in the classroom has been a requirement for all ECDC families as it enriches the program for all involved.

### **“Special Day” Parent Visits**

An integral part of the ECDC program is the requirement that all parents (or their representatives) participate first-hand in their child's classroom experience. Children enjoy sharing their nursery school experience with their parents or interested family and friends, and the day is considered the child's “Special Person Day.” The sole reason you are in the classroom is to be a part of your child's preschool experience, so your focus should be on your child, not on assisting in the classroom. The suggested frequency of participation is as follows:

- The Turtles Class: 1-2 times per year
- The Butterflies Class: 1-2 times per year

All volunteers must complete the Volunteer Orientation Handout in Brightwheel Forms prior to entering the classroom which will help familiarize you with your role in the classroom. Please read and sign it and return it to school before your first scheduled visit. The Volunteer Orientation Handout will be reviewed annually during ECDC Parent Orientation Night.

Once scheduled feel free to talk to your child's teacher or your Class Representative(s) if you have any questions regarding your participation in the classroom.

Notes on Participation in the Classroom:

- Arrive on time or a few minutes early.
- Dress so that you will be comfortable for all activities.
- Participate in the children's activities; your child should be your #1 priority.
- Follow the direction of the teachers. Ask questions if you have any doubts.
- Be aware of what's going on in other areas of the classroom.
- Treat each child with respect. Do not discuss any child in the classroom with other parents or outside the classroom.
- Accept each child's work or efforts enthusiastically.
- Please limit cell phone use. No pictures of other children.
- Leave all drinks outside the classroom.
- Enjoy!

The opportunity to regularly have a “Special Day” for both parent and child is often cited by ECDC parents as one of the best features of the program!

## **Parent Committee**

Parents are also invited to join the Parent Committee, which sponsors a number of opportunities for parent involvement, including fundraising activities, student enrichment programs, school maintenance and improvement projects. The range is limited only by the imagination and inclinations of the parents!

## **Tuition**

### **Tuition Rates 2024-2025**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Tuition</b>
3 Day \$6,698	8:45am-12:45pm	
4 Day \$8,755	8:45am-12:45pm	
5 Day \$10,730	8:45am-12:45pm	
<b>Additional Programs</b>		
Stay and Play Program \$35.00	12:45pm-2:45pm	
Occasional Day of Care \$65.00	8:45am-12:45pm	
Summer Program	8:45am-12:45pm	TBD
Annual Registration Fee	\$200.00 for returning students.	

## **Schedule**

### **Daily Routine**

*Absence and Lateness:* Please email, send a message through Brightwheel or call the school before class starts, if possible, at 508-653-9149, and leave a message on the answering machine. Please make every effort to be on time when dropping off and picking up your child. Late arrivals are disruptive to the classroom and late pickups are difficult for the teachers and students.

#### *Pick-up and Drop-off:*

AM drop-off: 8:45 am at designated classrooms.

Pick-up: 12:45 pm at classrooms

Stay and Play pick-up: 2:45 pm

Please note that children are the responsibility of parents until they are released to a teacher. The ECDC staff is scheduled to care for children only during class hours as posted. We cannot accommodate early arrivals or late departures. Arriving and picking up on time will be very important.

*Authorized Pick Up:* The Brightwheel online enrollment forms require parents to submit the names of the individuals who are authorized to pick up their children. Additional names may be added during the school year. To authorize anyone not on that list, please leave a signed note stating such at drop-off time. If there are any last-minute changes in pick-up plans or if you are going to be late due to an emergency, please send a message on Brightwheel, email or call. The staff will require photograph identification for anyone authorized for pick-up who is not known to them.

Parents are responsible for their child's transportation which includes the drop off and pick up of their child.

### **Holidays**

Holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day are celebrated; they provide themes for learning units, creative artwork and dramatic play. Religious holidays generally will not be used as unit themes, except for all of the December holidays, which may be used as a learning theme. However, these holidays may be observed through songs and stories. Gift giving is not feasible in the classroom. Parents wishing to plan holiday parties may do so outside of school.

### **Starting School**

Staff is prepared to help your child feel welcome and safe in his or her new classroom. If you feel that your child may need some additional time during separation from you, please let your child's teacher know. Teachers can provide

some suggestions to make the parting easier. For most children, a brief goodbye with a reminder that you will return soon helps with separation. If your child becomes upset, his or her teacher is comfortable helping your child. Teachers will help your child to become involved with activities until your return.

### **Opening Schedule**

Over the years we have developed an opening schedule that eases children into the regular school routine. Prior to the start of classes, teachers will try to schedule a visit to all students whose parents request a home visit, these visits will be held in person. A home visit can be an invaluable aid in easing a child from home to school. Before school begins, a classroom orientation will be held for each class. Parents can sign up for scheduled time slots through Sign Up Genius (link forthcoming). This is an opportunity for children and parents to see each other, teachers, and explore the classrooms. We also host a Lemonade Social the week prior to the start of school in the ECDC playground. During the opening week of school, we introduce the children to the school routine.

### **Snow Days**

ECDC will close when the Dover-Sherborn public schools are closed. Please check the Dover-Sherborn public school's website ([www.doversherborn.org](http://www.doversherborn.org)) or listen to the television news for school-closing information. If D-S public school classes are delayed one hour, morning classes at ECDC will be delayed one hour. Afternoon classes will meet. If the opening of Sherborn schools is delayed two hours, morning ECDC classes will be canceled, afternoon classes will be held at the discretion of the Director. In the event of a midday public school closing due to bad weather, afternoon classes will be canceled. In addition, the Director may cancel school due to bad weather, if the Dover-Sherborn public schools are open, if the Director feels there is a substantial risk to the students and teachers, school staff will alert parents via Brightwheel no later than 7 am that morning. If any class is canceled for more than one week, the Board of Directors will consider making up the class hours missed in excess of one week. The Director will send a message on Brightwheel and email when there is a school closure.

### **Special Days-Birthday Parties**

Ways in which birthdays will be celebrated will be determined on a class-by-class basis. The teachers will come up with creative ways to celebrate your child's special day. ECDC asks that no food, including cupcakes, be brought into the classroom. Talk to your child's teachers to determine how they have decided to celebrate birthdays.

While it is understood that it is not always possible to invite all students in a class to a home party, please remember that great sensitivity is necessary to avoid hurting the feelings of children who are not invited.

## **Nutrition**

### **ECDC is a Nut Free environment.**

Our number one goal is the safety of all children in our classrooms. Please check granola bars for nuts. If an item includes nuts, we will provide the child with a nut free alternative.

### **Snacks**

Each day the children should bring a nutritious morning snack. Sometimes the classes do their own cooking and have a special treat. Parents with dietary concerns or who have children with allergies should discuss them with their child's teachers. Please provide a labeled water bottle filled daily. ECDC will provide water as needed. No nuts can be sent in. Items that are "made in a factory with nuts" are acceptable. We work hard to keep all students safe and healthy.

Ideas for snacks include fresh fruits, vegetables, crackers, cheese, bars, and other similar items.. Please provide a labeled water bottle filled daily. ECDC will provide water as needed. No Nuts can be sent in. Made in a factory with nuts is acceptable. We work hard to keep all students safe and healthy.

### **Nutritious Lunches Suggestions**

Lunch containers should be labeled with the child's name. Lunch should be packed separately from snacks.

Below are some suggestions for nutritious lunchbox meals:

Leftovers, pasta, soup (heated at home and kept warm in a thermos)

Sandwiches: sliced meats, tuna, cheese.

Fresh vegetables: carrot sticks, celery sticks, cucumber slices, etc.

Fresh Fruit: apple, orange, pear, banana, peach, etc.

Dried fruit: raisins, prunes, figs, apricots, etc.

Cottage cheese, hummus or yogurt in a container

Granola or fruit bars, crackers

Milk or 100% juice (kept chilled in a thermos)

We try to make meal time an enjoyable, social experience. Our staff sit and talk with the children about their day while they are eating. Preparing nutritious foods at home in amounts that your child can eat helps make lunch a pleasant interactive experience.

## **General Program Information**

### **Individual Health Care Plans, Allergies and Other Medical Concerns**

All parents of children with allergies should let the Director and their child's teachers know about all allergies and medical concerns pertaining to their child. It is required that an Allergy Action Plan (AAP) be completed prior to the start of school. This plan can be obtained from the ECDC website, or from the director. The plan provides the school with detailed information about each child's history, symptoms, methods of treatment and physician information. If medication is required, ECDC will need a signed consent form allowing teachers to administer the medicine. If an EpiPen is required, 2 new EpiPens in the box with a valid rx label, should be provided at the start of school.

No snacks brought from home can be shared with other children in the classroom. Children with allergies will bring their own snack from home. ECDC will always review any additional food brought into the classroom with parents of children with food allergies. Throughout the year teachers and students often cook items to go along with curriculum in the classroom and the staff will have parents check the ingredients with any child with allergies.

Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP) will be created for children with a chronic medical condition, which has been diagnosed by a licensed health care practitioner and will be maintained in the child's record. The plan must describe the chronic condition, its symptoms, any medical treatment that may be necessary while the child is at school, the potential side effects of that treatment, and the potential consequences to the child's health if the treatment is not administered. Parents must create the IHCP with their child's licensed health care practitioner. ECDC staff may be trained by the child's parent or programs health care consultant with written consent by the child's licensed health care provider. If the IHCP requires administration of medication, ECDC staff will follow the Administration of Medication Policy.

### **Administration of Medication**

The Director/Assistant Director/designated Lead Teacher will administer all medication, as needed, and are responsible for the documentation of the administration of medication on the Medication Administration Record which will be kept in the child's record. The Director will review the five right practices of medication administration with the healthcare consultant annually. All ECDC staff will complete the online Department of Early Education and Care Medication Administration Training and will be evaluated annually by the schools Director. The Director will do the following when administering medication to a child:

1. Verify that the right child

2. receives the right medication
3. in the right dose
4. at the right time
5. by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given.

The Director/designated Lead Teacher giving the medication signs documentation of the five right practices of medication administration on the Medication Administration Record.

No prescription or non-prescription medication will be administered to a child without written parent/guardian authorization on the Medication Consent Form which indicates that the medication is for the specified child. ECDC will not administer the 1<sup>st</sup> dose of any medication.

Prescription medication will be administered to a child if there is a written authorization by a licensed health care practitioner, which is valid for one year. This may include the label on the medication which must indicate the child's name, the dosage, the frequency and duration the medication is to be administered.

Topical, non-prescription such as antibacterial ointments which are applied to wounds, rashes, or broken skin must be stored in the original container, labeled with the child's name, and used only for an individual child. Parents must provide written authorization by a licensed health care practitioner; authorization will be valid for one year.

No medication contrary to the directions on the original container will be administered unless so authorized by a written order of the child's physician.

All medication will be kept in its original container, with the child's name, the name of the drug and the directions for its administration and storage.

ECDC will maintain a written record of the administration of any medication, prescription or non-prescription, for each child that will include the name of the medication, the time and date of each administration, the dosage, the method of administration, the name of the staff member administering the medication and the name of the child. The completed medication record shall be made part of the child's file. ECDC staff will inform the child's parent(s) at the end of the day whenever a prescription, non-prescription or topical medication was administered.

ECDC shall store all medications out of the reach of children in the groups First Aid Backpack, under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security and safety. Prescription medications requiring refrigeration will be stored in the office refrigerator.



All unused medication shall be disposed of, or returned to the parent/guardian when no longer needed. Sunscreen and bug spray are to be applied by the parents/guardians at home.

Children that require a prescribed inhaler must have a prescription for a spacer to leave with the emergency medication. Nebulizer treatments should be done at home before school as these types of treatments can not be given at ECDC. If your child is ill and requires nebulizer treatments during the school day they should remain home until symptoms improve and treatments are no longer needed.

### **Emergency Evacuation Plan**

If ECDC needs to evacuate the building and general premises, we will follow the following procedure:

- The teachers will walk the children to Sherborn library. If evaluation is before 10 am, we will meet at the town hall or police station.
- We will consult with local authorities and evacuate accordingly.
- We will use Brightwheel to communicate with families as soon as we are in a safe location and the children are settled.

If the circumstances and time allow, there will be a message left on ECDC's answering machine and a note will be placed on the classroom and outside doors to notify parents. ECDC will also utilize Brightwheel to send all parents an alert message through the app. Each parent or contact person will be called once we are settled in at the designated location to pick up the children. The Director will document when children are picked up and by whom.

### **Field Trips**

From time to time, ECDC teachers plan field trips that complement the school's curriculum and provide learning opportunities for the children. A letter and permission form will be sent home to families describing the field trip. ECDC will ask parents to volunteer to attend the field trip and assist in transportation, if required. ECDC requires that parents leave a car seat or a booster seat at school for their child attending a field trip where vehicle transportation is required. ECDC has liability insurance and limited medical coverage. ECDC's insurers require ECDC to have on file a copy of the car insurance policy for each car that is used to drive on field trips. Each vehicle used to transport students must have the following minimum amounts of liability insurance: Injury per person \$100,000, injury per accident \$300,000 and property damage \$5,000. Each driver must provide copies of their license and registration and confirm that their car is currently inspected. A first aid kit, a cell phone, name tags with the programs address and phone number for each student, permission forms, emergency numbers for the children and emergency numbers of other drivers will be provided by the school and is required in each vehicle. Each vehicle transporting ECDC students will have an ECDC staff member present. The ECDC teachers will take attendance of each vehicle prior to departure, upon arrival, throughout the field trip and follow the same procedures prior to leaving the field

trip. ECDC will transport children with disabilities in the same vehicle as other children and will work with parents if other accommodations are necessary.

Only snacks that meet the same nut-free guidelines outlined above are permitted on field trips. ECDC encourages any parent of a child with allergies to attend all field trips with their child. ECDC teachers will be responsible for bringing necessary medication and plans for children with an Individual Health Care Plan or an Allergy Action Plan as well as the ECDC Emergency Backpack.

### **Toys**

ECDC does not encourage children to bring toys or stuffed animals to school. All children will be invited to share special items from home periodically. When a toy helps to bridge the gap between home and school, it is welcome to accomplish this goal.

## **School Policies**

### **Behavior Management**

Behavior management will occur in a way to maximize each child's growth and development. Teachers will above all make sure that each group of children is safe. Activities will be set up to allow children to make choices, and all expectations made of children will be positive and reasonable. Children will always be given the opportunity to verbalize their feelings. ECDC teachers utilize redirection and conflict resolution for behavior management.

When an inappropriate behavior occurs in the group teachers will try redirecting the child to an alternative area of the room and be there to engage the child with a new activity or experience. Teachers will provide the child with positive reinforcement for more appropriate behaviors.

Preschoolers who have good verbal skills will be encouraged to express their feelings and wants to others. Teachers will assist in modeling and supporting preschoolers in conflict resolution or problem solving. This provides the children with opportunities to discuss the problem and come up with a variety of solutions with peers and teachers.

Corporal punishment shall not be used. No child shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse. No child shall be denied food as a form of punishment. No child will be forced to eat something he/she does not want to eat. No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. No child will be confined to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision. No child shall be subject to excessive time-out. Time out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within the educator's view.

### **Social Service Referral Policy**

All staff are responsible for informing the Director of a concern about a child in the program. The teacher will observe and record behavior documenting this concern. The Director will also observe and document those observations. The Director and teacher will meet with the parents of the child and present the documentation of the concern. The Director will offer assistance to the child's parents in making the referral and shall have written parental consent before any referral is made. The Director will maintain a written record of any referrals, including the parent conference and results. The parent will be informed of their rights under Chapter 766. If the child is under three years of age, the Director will recommend that the parents contact the Middlesex Early Intervention Program. If the child is three or older, the Director will recommend that they contact the Special Education Department of the school system in the town in which they reside. The Director will document, in the child's individual file, concerns and the action taken on behalf of the child. The Director will continue to inform the parents as to the progress made in the referral process. If it is determined that the child is not in need of services or is ineligible to receive services, the Director and teacher will review the child's progress at the school every three months to determine if another referral is necessary.

Please see the School Director for a list of referral resources.

### **Termination and Suspension Policy**

All efforts will be made to maintain a child's enrollment if at all possible. ECDC will provide parents the opportunity to meet with the school Director and teachers to discuss other options other than suspension or termination. This may include contacting the local public school for a referral, requesting a consultation from the public schools or a private professional to address concerns, developing a behavior plan with parents, ECDC teachers and school Director for school and home. ECDC may also seek local professional development opportunities for classroom teachers. However, a child's enrollment will be terminated for the following reasons:

1. Failure to pay tuition or other fees owed after two written notices.
2. ECDC not able to meet the needs of the child after reasonable accommodations.
3. Parents or guardians not following the policies of ECDC after sufficient notice and opportunity to comply.
4. Inappropriate behavior that is a danger to self or others after reasonable attempts to correct the behavior have been made. ECDC has a Behavior Management Policy and a Social Services Policy, which are in this Parent Handbook. If a problem arises, written notice will be sent home and a conference will be scheduled at the convenience of all parties involved.
5. Habitual lateness after closing time with two written notices sent home stating the intent to terminate.

Parents and guardians will be notified in writing of actions that are grounds for termination. All actions and communication (written, verbal, or telephone) will be documented and placed in the child's file. Parents or guardians will be offered the opportunity for a conference with the Director. At that time suspension may be considered at the discretion of the Director. Suspension will only be considered for extenuating circumstances and after a written plan of action is signed by both parents and staff. Copies of all decisions will be placed in the child's file. When ECDC initiates a termination of enrollment from school before the end of a period, families will be refunded that portion of the paid tuition that the child did not attend. Children will be prepared for leaving in as positive a way as possible. They will always have the opportunity to say good-bye to friends and staff. Referrals to other programs and services will be provided to parents.

### **Policy and Procedure for Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

ECDC shall protect children from abuse and neglect while they are in the school's care. The Department of Children and Families defines child abuse and neglect as follows:

Child Abuse - Non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker which causes or creates a substantial risk of harm or threat of harm to a child's well being.

Child Neglect - Failure of a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, or other essential care.

### **Procedure for Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect to the Department of Children and Families and EEC**

1. ECDC will protect children from abuse and neglect while in the program's care and custody.
2. All staff are mandated reporters and must report suspected child abuse or neglect. Staff will document any suspicions or signs of abuse and neglect and include the date and their signature. Any suspicions will be shared and discussed with the Director.
3. All suspected cases are reported by the Director, with the reporting staff person's assistance, to the Department of Children and Families immediately, with written follow-up (a 51A report) within twenty-four hours. A copy of the information sent to DCF and the school's documentation is kept in the child's file.
4. If the situation is an emergency the Director will also call the Child at Risk Hotline,

if the child's safety is assured the parents/guardians will be notified of the filing. If we must file a report it is always done on the behalf of the child not against the parent/ guardians or caregivers.

5. Because all staff are mandated reporters one may choose to file a 51A report to DCF independent of the school's decision to file or not file. However, that person must tell the Director that a report has been filed.
6. The School Director will immediately notify EEC after filing a 51A report, or learning that a 51A report has been filed, alleging abuse or neglect of a child while in the care of the program or during a program related activity.
7. ECDC will cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect, including identifying parents/guardians of children currently or previously enrolled in the program; providing consent for disclosure to EEC of information from, and allowing EEC to disclose information to, any person and/or agency that EEC may specify as necessary to the prompt investigation of allegations and protection of children. Failure to cooperate may be grounds for suspension, revocation, or refusal to issue or renew a license.
8. Any staff member of ECDC suspected of any incident of child abuse or neglect shall be immediately suspended without pay and benefits until an investigation is completed. The School Director will report these suspicions or allegations to the Department of Children and Families and to EEC immediately by telephone and in writing within twenty-four hours. In accordance with EEC regulations, the center ensures that this allegedly abusive or neglectful staff member will not work directly with children until the Department of Children and Families investigation is completed and for such time as EEC requires. A finding of abuse or neglect will result in immediate dismissal of the employee.
9. The School Director will notify the Chairperson of the Board of Directors immediately when an abuse or neglect suspicion is reported to DCF and EEC.
10. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious.

## Financial Policies

Our policy on tuition collection has been formulated to ensure equal treatment for all families. ECDC is a nonprofit corporation that is organized as a parent cooperative. As a member of the cooperative, it is the obligation of each family to keep financial payments current. Tuition is always prepaid before children may attend. The policy is as follows:

1. A non-refundable registration fee will be paid to enroll each child. This fee, as is tuition, is annually set by the Board of Directors. A child is OFFICIALLY ENROLLED IN THE SCHOOL when the registration check is deposited and clears the bank. For children enrolling after April 1, the tuition payment for the first period must be paid with the registration fee and accompany the Registration Form returned to the Director.
2. Tuition for all programs must be received by the due date to avoid a \$20.00 late payment fee.
3. Tuition due dates are published in the Registration Form and are posted at school and in the school newsletter.
4. ECDC offers a 10% Sibling Discount for siblings enrolled together on the lower tuition rate
5. Nursery school tuition is paid in three installments or 10 monthly payments. Non-payment of tuition is considered NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL. Tuition notices are issued approximately one month prior to the final date the payment is due: these dates are: May 1, November 1 and February 1 for three installments or May 1, June 1, September 1-April 1 for ten monthly payments.
6. A family withdrawing a child from school before the end of a period will be refunded that portion of the tuition that the child did not attend only IF THE CLASS IS FULL AND WHEN THE CHILD IS REPLACED IN THE CLASS.
7. Weather closings and holidays that fall on school days are not subject to reimbursement.
8. Payment for Stay and Play and the summer program will be billed on Brightwheel as publicized in the program announcements. Late fees will be assessed.
9. ECDC recognizes that payment problems occasionally arise. Special payment arrangements may be made by contacting the Chairperson or the Director.
10. Financial assistance is available. Inquiries may be made of the Board of Directors Chairperson or the Director. All inquiries are strictly confidential. Interested parties must complete an application that can be obtained from the school.
11. Any charges incurred by ECDC for returned checks will be the responsibility of the family issuing the check. If a second check is returned, future payments must be made by bank check. Payments must be made online through Brightwheel all fees associated with payment will be the responsibility of the family.
- 12.

## **Role of ECDC Volunteers**

We recognize the importance of parent participation in the classroom, and encourage parents and other individuals who are “special” to the children to volunteer in the classroom on many levels, including being your child’s special person for the day and volunteering on field trips.

As a volunteer at ECDC, there are certain guidelines that we ask you to follow which are set forth in ECDC Volunteer Orientation handout. These rules are important because they are required by our licensing regulators, and they help ensure that the school is a safe and secure environment where all of the children can play and learn.

Accordingly, we ask that you become familiar with the following rules before you volunteer in the classroom.

1. Arrive on time or a few minutes early.
2. Please turn off your cell phone or set it to vibrate because cell phones are disruptive during class time. Only take calls in the event of an emergency and please excuse yourself from the class if you must answer your phone.
3. Due to allergy and other safety concerns, please do not bring any food or beverages into the classrooms.
4. Dress so that you will be comfortable for all activities.
5. Participate in the children's activities; your child should be your #1 priority.
6. Follow the direction of the teachers. Ask questions if you have any doubts.
7. Be aware of what's going on in other areas of the classroom.
8. Do not pick up any child. If a child is upset or hurt, immediately alert one of the teachers.
9. Volunteers may not be alone with the children at any time. Therefore, teachers will be responsible for bathroom duty.
10. Treat each child with respect. Do not discuss any child in the classroom with other parents or outside the classroom.
11. Accept each child's work or efforts enthusiastically.
12. Enjoy!!

If you have any questions before or after your volunteer opportunity, please set up a time to call the teachers or the school director. Please remember that it is difficult for the teachers to talk to parents during the regular class time.

We ask that all volunteers sign the acknowledgement page on the ECDC Volunteer Orientation Handout and return it to school either on or before your scheduled volunteer time.

## **Grievance Procedures**

At ECDC it is our goal to keep any complaints and grievances to a minimum by addressing each situation as openly and honestly as possible from the outset among the individuals involved. Therefore, the grievance procedures that follow explain procedure by category---a complaint about a child, and a complaint about a teacher or school administrator; each category having increasing levels of formality and documentation.

At all times, please respect the individuals involved in ECDC: the children, the families, and the staff. Therefore, please discuss any concerns you may have at a pre-arranged meeting and not during regular class time or at drop-off or pick-up. In addition, please refrain from discussing issues regarding any child outside the classroom or with other parents.

### **Complaint about a Child**

Any parent wishing to lodge a complaint about a child in the school must follow the following procedure:

1. Contact the teacher of the child's class, explain the problem and ask for some resolution.
2. If the parent is not satisfied that the complaint has been resolved, the parent should contact the School Director explaining the situation and ask for the School Director's intervention in achieving a satisfactory resolution within an agreed upon amount of time. Up to this point, no written documentation will be placed in a school file.
3. If the outcome is still unsatisfactory, the parent should present a written, signed complaint to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. The School Director is then obliged to present the details of the case to the Board. A special meeting of the Board will be called, if necessary, to resolve the issue. A quorum must be present. At this level, the complaint is considered a formal complaint and documentation will appear in the child's file.
4. If the parent is not satisfied with the Board of Directors' resolution, he or she will be given the opportunity to present their case at the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting.

### **Complaint about a Teacher or School Administrator**

Any parent wishing to lodge a complaint must follow the following procedure:

1. Present the complaint directly to the individual involved and attempt a mutually agreed upon resolution.
2. If the issue is not resolved, present the complaint verbally to the School Director and attempt a mutually agreed upon resolution.
3. If the issue is not resolved, the parent and the School Director will present the complaint verbally to the Director of Personnel and again attempt a mutually agreed upon resolution.



4. If the issue is not resolved, the Director of Personnel will ask the parent and the School Director to prepare written statements and will present those statements at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors. At this level the complaint will be considered a formal complaint and the Parent's statement, the School Director's response and the resolution as agreed upon by the Board of Directors will be placed in the individual's file.
5. If either party is not satisfied with the Board of Directors' resolution, he/she will be given the opportunity to present his/her case at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

## **Health**

### **Management of Infectious Disease**

ECDC will take special precautions to minimize the spread of infectious diseases.

If a child becomes ill while at the preschool, the child will be made comfortable under the supervision of a Director/Teacher and will be immediately isolated from other children and minimize exposure to staff. The Director/Teacher will contact the child's parents and have the child picked up as soon as possible.

The following criteria will be used to determine whether or not a child requires early dismissal/release from the school. They include, but are not limited to:

- Fever of 100 or more degrees
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Severe headache
- Rash
- Open sores
- Red and crusty, itchy red eyes
- Head Lice
- Fatigue
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell

If a child or staff member arrives with these symptoms, the child will be excluded from attendance. The child may return to school once symptoms have disappeared and/or appropriate medications have been administered (i.e. after 24 hours of antibiotics for infectious disease).

When a communicable disease has been introduced to the school a notice will be posted by the doors and all families will receive email notification.

**FEVER** - Children with fevers must be kept home up to 24 hours after it has subsided without fever reducing medication. .

**VOMITING/DIARRHEA** – Children must remain home at least 24 hours following vomiting and/or diarrhea has subsided.

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASES** – Parents/guardians are asked to report to the school immediately when their child has been exposed to a communicable disease. Parents/guardians are then notified. ECDC will report and follow the isolation and quarantine requirements established by the MA Department of Health.

- **HEAD LICE:** A child will be readmitted to the school only after the scalp has been treated and all nits removed.
- **CHICKEN POX:** A child will be readmitted to the school only after the rash has been scabbed and no new lesions are forming (5-7 days from onset). Susceptible children exposed at home should be kept home from the 14<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup> day after exposure.
- **SCARLET FEVER AND STREP THROAT:** A child must be kept home until the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours. Children exposed at home do not need to be isolated.
- **CONJUNCTIVITIS:** A child must be kept at home until the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours. Conjunctivitis is very contagious and all family members should be careful not to expose themselves to any articles that come in contact with the infection.
- **IMPETIGO:** Highly contagious skin infection that should be treated with antibiotics for 24 hours before the child returns to school.
- **FLU:** Children must remain home at least 24 hours following vomiting and/or diarrhea has subsided. Children with fevers must be kept home for 24 hours after it has subsided without fever reducing medication.
- **HAND,FOOT,MOUTH:** A child will be readmitted to the school only after the rash has been scabbed and no new lesions are forming (5-7 days from onset). Fever free for 24 hours and No sores in mouth or throat.
- **COVID:** Children must remain home at least 3 days and are non-symptomatic upon return with the following symptoms in any combination: loss of smell & taste, fever, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, muscle aches, increasing cough and congestions and any new symptoms recognized by CDC or American Pediatrics. . The child's symptoms must subside and the child's energy level is back to normal level to return. Children with fevers must be kept home for 24 hours after it has subsided without fever reducing medication. If the student has an active cough a mask for 5 days is recommended.
- **All other infectious diseases are reported to the Director immediately to ensure the health of all children and staff.**

**First dose of a new medication**-must be administered at home and the child must be observed for an adverse reaction for 24 hours at home.

ECDC will consult with our health care consultant, follow CDC protocols, and adapt guidelines as advised. Parents will be notified of any changes by email and Brightwheel.

### **Annual Physical Examinations and Required Vaccinations**

Massachusetts State Law requires a physical examination and the completion of a school health form for each child attending preschool. Most physicians use their own form; however, health forms are available from the School Director upon request. The completed form must be returned to the school and is kept on file. No child will be admitted without a completed form. ECDC adheres to the immunization requirements of the Mass. Department of Public Health. A child must be properly vaccinated to attend classes. If a child is exempt from taking vaccinations due to medical or religious reasons, a letter must be provided by the child's health care provider.

### **Face Masks**

ECDC allows parents to choose if they would like their child to wear a face mask in the classroom. Face masks must cover the nose and mouth, fit snugly against the sides of the face, and be secured behind the ears or head. Children must be supervised at all times while wearing a face mask.

Exceptions to the use of face masks: children of any age who cannot safely and appropriately wear, remove, and handle masks, children while eating, drinking, sleeping, or napping, individuals who have difficulty breathing with the face covering, children with severe cognitive or respiratory impairments that may have a hard time tolerating a face mask.

ECDC will have a supply of disposable face masks for adults and children available.

## **Registration**

### **Waiting Lists/Registration**

Following are excerpts from the Registration Section of the ECDC Policy and Procedure Manual. A copy of this manual is kept at school for your review.

### **Waiting Lists**

- ECDC is NONDISCRIMINATORY in its Waiting List policy. Waiting Lists are used to establish an order to register for class openings.
- All families must call the school to place the names of children not currently enrolled on a Waiting List for the next school year. Waiting Lists open at 8:00am on the first day of school; this date and time will be advertised locally in early September.

- Names are accepted in the order received and entered on the appropriate list by category and class level (3s or 4s):
  1. Waiting List A-siblings of current students.
  2. Waiting List B-siblings of alumni (a previous 4s graduate.)
  3. Waiting List C-outside public.
- Waiting Lists A and B will be open through October 31. All names received after October 31 will be placed on Waiting List C.
- No child can be on a Waiting List for more than one class level.
- Names are not carried over from year to year.

### **Registration**

Children are registered in classes in this order:

1. Continuing students staying in the same age class.
2. Continuing students progressing into the next age class. Children who will not be eligible for kindergarten in their town the following year and children with a birthday of June 1<sup>st</sup> and later will have priority in registering for the 4s.
3. Waiting List A-siblings of current students.
4. Waiting List B-siblings of alumni (a previous 4s graduate.)
5. Waiting List C-outside public.

A registration form and fee must be delivered to the Director by the date in the registration letter to take advantage of priority status as described above.

ECDC Summer Program is made available to current ECDC students.

### **Parent's Rights**

#### **Parent Communication**

ECDC encourages open communication between the program and families. ECDC uses various means to communicate information to families which may include: email, newsletters, postings on the bulletin boards and daily contact with teachers. ECDC will be using Brightwheel, an App that will be required to be downloaded by all families. Messages about the daily activities in the classroom will be sent through Brightwheel as well as important information or updates the school needs to send out. Please inform the office if there is a preferred means of communication for your family. For families whose primary language is not English, ECDC will utilize current technology or websites to translate as much written information as possible.

#### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

Fall conferences are available for all children if requested to allow parents to touch base with the teachers. All classes have parent/teacher conferences in the Spring and are in lieu of a regular school session. Parents may request additional conferences at any time. Please call the school to set up an appropriate time. It is difficult to talk to parents during regular class time or at drop-off and pick-up.

**Parent Input**

The Board of Directors, the Parent Committee, and the School Director and teaching staff invite parents to share their thoughts and concerns about the school and its programs. We welcome comments and suggestions! On the back of this handbook, you will find contact information for the Board, the Parent Committee, the School Director and the Assistant Director.

**Parent Visits**

Parents are welcome in the classroom. You have a right to make unannounced visits to your child's room while your child is present.

**Reports to Parents**

Growth and development of the children are measured in an ongoing way through staff observations, meetings, and discussions with parents. At least once a year, you will either meet with your child's teacher to discuss your child's progress. Twice a year you will receive a written progress report of your child's activities and participation in school. This report becomes part of your child's file. If your child has disabilities, you will receive a written progress report every three months. Parents will be contacted whenever staff has concerns about a child's progress or behavior. Close cooperation and contact with parents have been very effective in serving the needs of the children.

**Your Child's Records and Confidentiality**

Information contained in your child's record is privileged and confidential. ECDC will not distribute or release information from your child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without the written consent of the child's parent or guardian. ECDC will notify the family if a child's record is subpoenaed. Upon request, you will have access to your child's record at reasonable times. In no event will such access be delayed more than two business days after the initial request without your consent. Upon such request for access, the child's entire record shall be made available regardless of the physical location of its parts. ECDC will provide copies of any part of the child's record to the parents or upon written permission from the parents to designated persons. A written log is maintained of persons receiving information from the child's record. This log includes name, signature and position of the person releasing the information; the date; the portions of the record that were released; the purpose for such release, and the signature of the receiver. This log is only available to the parents and staff. ECDC will not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of your child's file.

**Transfer of Your Child's Records**

Upon written request of the parents, ECDC will transfer the child's records to the parents or any other person the parents identify when the child leaves the program. ECDC will ask you to sign a form verifying that you have received your child's records. Otherwise ECDC will keep your child's records for at least five years.

### **Amending Your Child's Record**

You have the right to add information, comments on data, or any other relevant materials to your child's record; you also have the right to request deletion or amendments of any information contained in your child's record. Such request shall be made in accordance with the procedures described below:

1. If you are of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in your child's record, you have the right to have a conference with the Director to make your objections known;
2. The ECDC shall, within one (1) week after the conference, give you a decision in writing stating the reason or reasons for the decisions. If this decision is in your favor, ECDC shall immediately take steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

## **Responsibilities of the Program**

### **Providing Information to EEC**

ECDC must make available to the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) any information required to be kept and maintained under licensing regulations and any other information reasonably related to the requirements of these regulations. This includes children's records. Authorized employees of EEC are not to remove any identifying case materials from the school's premises and are required to maintain confidentiality of individual records.

### **Reporting Abuse or Neglect**

All school staff are mandated reporters meaning that they are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect to the School Director, the Department of Children and Families, and/or the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). The Policy for Reporting Suspected Abuse and Neglect is provided in this Handbook.

### **Notification of Injury to Your Child**

ECDC must notify you immediately of any injury that requires emergency care. ECDC must also notify you, in writing, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to your child. Written ECDC Health Care Policies are available from the Director upon request.

### **Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)**

ECDC Nursery School is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) A copy of the licensing regulations for preschool is available upon request in

the ECDC office. Parents may contact EEC for information regarding ECDC's regulatory compliance history.

**EEC Contact Information**

EEC Central Regional Office  
324-R Clark Street, Worcester, MA 01606 (508) 798-5180

**ECDC Nursery School 2024-2025 School Calendar**

August	27	Lemonade Social 9:15am-10:00 am	
	29	Classroom Orientation for Students & Parents	
September	2	NO SCHOOL - Labor Day	
	3	First Day of School	
	4	Orientation for Parents-7:00pm	
	20	Sleepytime Event UUAC Alliance Hall, 6:00pm	
October			
	1	School Pictures	
	3	No School: Rosh Hashanah	
	6	Family Pictures (rain date TBD)	
	14	NO SCHOOL - Indigenous Peoples' Day	
	31	Trick or Treating and Senior Center Luncheon	
	31	Last Day of additions to Alumni & Sibling Wait List	
November			
	1	Tuition Due	
	11	NO SCHOOL - Veterans Day	
	27	Thanksgiving Vacation Starts 11:45am	28-30
Thanksgiving Vacation			
December			
	1	Thanksgiving Vacation	
	2	NO SCHOOL - Teacher Professional Day	
	23-31	NO SCHOOL - Winter Vacation	
January			
	1	NO SCHOOL - New Year's Day	
	2	School Re-opens Thursday	
	20	NO SCHOOL - Martin Luther King Jr. Day	
	TBD	Sleepytime Event, UUAC Alliance Hall, 6:00pm	
February			
	1	Tuition Due	
	17-23	NO SCHOOL – February Vacation	

March

18 Parent Teacher Conferences: NO Classes  
 21 Parent Teacher Conferences 1:00pm-2:30pm Regular Classes

April

18 NO SCHOOL - Good Friday  
 21-25 NO SCHOOL - Spring Vacation  
 TBD Sleepytime Event, UUAC Alliance Hall, 6:00pm

May

1 Tuition Due  
 5-9 Teacher Appreciation Week  
 26 NO SCHOOL – Memorial Day  
 30 Turtle Art Show 8:45am-9:15am

June

6 Butterflies End of the Year Celebration 9:00am  
 6 Last Day of School -11:45amDismissal

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Stay & Play 12:45-2:45	Stay & Play 12:45-2:45	Stay & Play 12:45-2:45	Stay & Play 12:45-2:45	

**ECDC NURSERY SCHOOL, INC.  
2024-2025**

**General Information**

508-653-9149

ecdcnurseryschool@gmail.com  
 P O Box 1157  
 11 Washington Street  
 Sherborn MA 01770  
 ecdcpreschool.org  
 Tax ID Number: 042-512-415

**Director**

Heather Inferrera Brightwheel ecdcnurseryschool@gmail.com

**Board of Directors**

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 Christine Powell, Secretary 609-313-1757 christinerp@gmail.com  
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**Parent Committee Advisors**

Liz MacNeil, Co-Chair

203-824-2419    elizabeth.macneil.eam@gmail.com

Jaclyn Fogelman, Co-Chair

773-372-4648    jaclyn.fogelman@gmail.com

**Bookkeeper**

Jane Branch

jane@balanceandledger.com

**ECDC Parent Acknowledgement**

**ECDC Nursery School, Inc. Parent Handbook  
2024-25**

**By signing below, we acknowledge that we have read the ECDC Nursery School, Inc. Parent Handbook 2024-2025 and we will follow its provisions as they relate to our child(ren). Electronic records with signatures can be used instead of this form.**

**Parent Signature:**

**Date**

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**Print Name**

-----

**Parent Signature**

**Date**

-----

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**Print Name**

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**Please return this signed form to ECDC**