

# Chelmsford Community Education

## Parent Handbook

### LION'S PRIDE CHILDCARE 2022-2023



Chelmsford Public Schools  
Chelmsford Community Education  
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# Chelmsford Community Education

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### Philosophy

Our philosophy is founded upon a belief that play is vital in each child's physical, social, emotional and academic development. Young children are active participants in learning as they share their genuine excitement and love for learning.

We value the role of parents as primary care givers and encourage open communication. The teacher/parent relationship is crucial as we work together to support the child. Lion's Pride is a place where children are valued as unique individuals. We work with each individual child to help reach their true potential.

### Registration Policy

All families currently enrolled in our program will have first preference for registration for the following year. Registration will then open to Chelmsford Public School Employees and then to the public. All currently enrolled families will be guaranteed the same amount of days for the following year for their child following the traditional progression. The traditional progression will be Toddler 1, Toddler 2, Preschool, Pre-K. Students who attend CHIPS must register for the Wrap Around Room when it is age appropriate. If a student is signed up in the Wrap Around Room as a 3-year-old, they will be guaranteed the same number of days for the following year in the Wrap Around Room. (This is the only classroom a child could potentially repeat, and only while falling in line with age requirements). Once a student meets the age requirement to start kindergarten (Age 5 by August 31st), they will not be eligible for Lion's Pride the following year. Students cannot repeat Toddler 1, Toddler 2, Preschool, or Pre-K for retention purposes.

Requests for changes of days or classroom and siblings of currently enrolled students will be given preference before registration is open to the public. This will be on a first come basis if spots are available.

### Staff

The staff in our program consists of a Lead Teacher and Teacher Aide(s) in each classroom, who are under the direction of a Supervisor. The Wrap Around Room has two Lead Teachers. In addition, we occasionally have the services of high school and college students.

### Curriculum

Our curriculum has been designed to meet the needs of the whole child. It provides opportunities for increased exploration of motor skills, language, social development and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). We introduce the children to the Fountas & Pinnell literacy program, Foundations pre-writing curriculum, and Math Expressions in coordination with Chelmsford Public Schools. We emphasize a positive, safe, secure learning environment that helps children build their independence.

The classrooms have the following play areas: block area, writing center, dramatic play, math and science center, art and sensory. Our students are given 2 daily opportunities for gross motor play, using the full-sized gym, playground, Toddler Playroom, or our Rec Room.

Our Toddler Classrooms offer a large space with an abundance of toys to allow our youngest students to play and explore. The Toddler Classrooms start introducing students to a school setting, providing a toddler appropriate circle time and projects. We provide areas for Gross Motor, Fine Motor and Art within the classroom. The teachers work with each child to help them reach his/her personal developmental milestones.

Our Preschool Classroom recognizes that 3-year-old children are in a year of transition. They are seeking independence while still dependent on adult reassurance. There is a special focus on social skills built into this classroom. We offer daily activities to encourage social development and confidence, while providing safe boundaries. Our Preschool curriculum is built around the introduction of the alphabet and basic math and science concepts. Each week is packed with exciting activities based on the letter of the week.

The Wrap Around Classroom is an integrated, mixed aged classroom for 3 and 4 year old's. Any student who attends CHIPS and needs extended care will join this classroom, as well as students from our Preschool and Toddler 2 classroom. This classroom focuses on social skills, as well as academic development centered on weekly letter-based themes. The classroom introduces the students to Fountas & Pinnell, Foundations, and Math Expressions at age

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appropriate levels, while reinforcing the alphabet and numbers for our younger learners. This classroom offers a two-year rotating schedule with morning and afternoon curriculum to meet the needs of students attending CHIPS, with a focus on goals for both 3 and 4-year old's. The Wrap Around Classroom offers the best of our Pre-K and Preschool Classrooms, meeting the academic fundamentals of our Pre-K Classroom, and the social support of Preschool Classroom.

Our Pre-K curriculum has been created around weeklong themes. The teachers are able to look at each unit in depth and provide the maximum learning opportunities. We use the Fountas & Pinnell and Foundations curriculum to introduce writing and literacy in the same way as the Chelmsford Public Schools. We also realize the tremendous value of learning through play. The Pre-K classroom offers ample play time and creative activities to reinforce social skills and foster independence. During the months of May and June, Pre-K focuses on graduating Lion's Pride and moving on to Kindergarten. This classroom is only appropriate for those students planning on moving to Kindergarten the following year.

### **Parent Communication**

Parent communication is vital in an early childhood setting. We use a variety of methods including verbal and written communication on a daily basis. The classroom teachers will greet each family and catch up on any important information at drop off and pick up. The children are in the room at this time, so conversations will need to be brief. Any personal information or concerns will be discussed away from the children. Daily communication for toddlers will include a brief summary of the daily activities, nap times, diapering info (if applicable) and any other new information. Parents and teachers can request a meeting at any time. Meetings are the appropriate time to have lengthy conversations, or discussions involving the children. Please feel free to set up an appointment for a phone conversation with your child's teacher, if that is more convenient.

### **Daily Routine**

Classroom schedules are posted on the classroom bulletin board. Each schedule is designed specifically to offer an appropriate balance of self-directed play, and teacher designed activities.

### **Lunch & Snacks**

We follow Chelmsford Public School's calendar and offer a similar hot lunch to the Chelmsford High School menu. Menus are posted online. Children must choose either school lunch or bring lunch from home daily (not both). You will need to send a lunch on the following: all early release days, the day before school starts and the day after school ends. You are always encouraged to send a healthy lunch for your child.

We are a **peanut-free program** and we check to ensure items are peanut-free. In addition, we provide drinks and snacks twice a day.

### **Transitioning To A New School**

The first day of school can be an emotional time for parents and children. We are here to support families during this process. We encourage all new families to visit before the first day of school. Children are often less anxious when they have had the opportunity to meet their teachers and friends. They will be able to explore the classroom with their parents and become familiar with their surroundings. Parents are welcome to call or email the teacher throughout the day to check on their child.

### **Personal Toys**

We discourage bringing personal toys to our program, as we cannot be responsible for them. An exception can be made if your child requires a "napping" toy.

### **In-House Opportunities**

In-house opportunities for extended learning will be available. Examples may include; visits from the mail carrier, special guests, school presentations and other entertainment.

### **Birthdays**

Due to food allergies we need to be extremely cautious with food. We feel every child deserves a special celebration for their special day. If parents wish to contribute to their child's special day there are several non-food options to make the day more festive: decorative plates, birthday hats, non-food goodie bags or a book for the classroom.

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Birthday Party Invitations: Please mail all birthday invitations, unless the entire class is invited. We do not want any children to have hurt feelings. Thank you.

### Open Door Policy/Visitors Policy

As with all Community Education programs, the Lion's Pride has an open-door policy. You are encouraged to participate with your child as time permits. Free play time is a great time to come explore the classroom with your child. If you would like to facilitate an activity, or read a story, please meet with the teacher to schedule an appropriate time.

### Parent Conferences

Child evaluations will be completed by May. At that time parents are invited to meet with the teachers for a conference. Parents may request a meeting at any time.

### Referral Policy/Screening

Concerns about a child's development can be referred to the Special Education Preschool Coordinator at 978-251-5188.

### Clothing & Supplies

#### (not all items may be needed for your child)

The following items should be labeled and provided by the parents. An adequate supply is always needed because there are no spares available. All items are stored separately for your child.

2 complete sets of clothing, including socks and underwear.

Blanket	Outer wear
Small pillow	Disposable diapers
Crib sheet	Sunscreen (optional)*
Wipes	
4x6 photo (used to label cubby, etc.)	

*\*Sunscreen applied after rest/nap time. Parents asked to apply in AM if desired.*

Proper attire is required for children in order to participate in outdoor cold weather activities. Children may not go outside without warm clothing.

We are a hands-on classroom. Please make sure you send your child in comfortable clothing that they can play in and get messy.

**We request that all children wear closed toe shoes, preferably sneakers.**

### Rest Time

Rest time needs to be a pleasurable experience for children. Children who are 18 months to 3 years old will have a mat to rest on. Parents are required to provide a crib sheet and blanket which is sent home each week for laundering. Mats are separated with dividers to offer sanitary conditions. Blankets will be stored in the child's cubby. Teachers will sit next to a child and, if appropriate, gently pat a back, which can make a child feel safe. Children will not be forced to sleep. Instead they can cuddle with a stuffed animal or blanket quietly. Nap is no longer than 2 hours and no shorter than 45 minutes. 4-year-olds will have a quiet rest/activity in lieu of a nap - no mat materials needed.

Children are required to wear socks and shoes during nap in case of an emergency.

### Diapering and Bathroom Use

Diapers will be changed as needed and/or on a regular schedule. We will assist the older children as they begin toilet training using a positive, relaxed approach. Staff will encourage the children to become independent in the bathroom but will assist as needed while they are mastering the skills (e.g., redressing, wiping, hand washing).

Children who are potty trained can use the bathroom at any time, with staff supervision. Children in the **Pre-K Classroom** must be potty trained to enroll (not applicable for Wrap-Around students). The formal diaper policy will be posted in all changing areas and will be adhered to by staff.

### Tooth Brushing Policy

At Lion's Pride we respect the parent's decision to make the choice regarding your child's oral hygiene practices. We are offering two choices to families regarding brushing teeth.

Parents may choose to bring in **disposable** toothbrushes and a labeled tube of toothpaste for their child. Toothbrushes will be disposed of daily. Parents may choose to opt out of this policy and brush their child's teeth at home.

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If your family chooses to participate, we will be encouraging the children to brush their teeth after lunch. The children will independently brush their teeth with adult supervision.

### **Injury/Incident Reports**

Minor bumps and scratches will be communicated to the parents verbally, or through email or written daily notes.

Reports will be completed by attending staff member for any and all injuries to a child when the nurse is not available. This includes those requiring basic first aid and beyond. Injury/Incident report forms are completed for all events related to behavioral incidents, accidents, property destruction and emergencies.

An Injury/Incident Form will be completed on the day of the injury/incident by the attending staff member. The form is reviewed and signed by the teacher and parent.

An original will be maintained in the Community Education Office.

### **Health Care and Medication Administration**

The nurse is scheduled to be on duty most days from 8:15 -2:45 to handle all medical needs. When the nurse is unavailable, a staff member trained in first aid and CPR will handle medical issues.

### **Illness**

We are recommending that children do not come to school if they appear to be ill. It is advisable to keep the child home if he/she has a sore throat, severe cold, rash, fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea.

Your child needs to stay home or will be sent home if he/she has any of the following:

Strep Throat: if you suspect he/she has strep throat and until the child either has had a negative throat culture or has been on antibiotics and fever free for a full 24 hours.

A fever over 100: may return to school when he/she is fever free for 24 hours without medication (e.g. Tylenol or Advil).

Vomiting and/or diarrhea: may return to school 24 hours after his/her last vomiting and/or diarrhea episode.

Red or pink itchy eyes with crusty and or green/yellow drainage: may return to school the day after treated for 24 hours or has no further eye discharge.

Head Lice: a student will be sent home from school if live lice are found; the school will provide an information sheet. A student may return after being treated and the School Nurse confirms no live lice are present.

A rash of unknown cause: may require to MD clearance at the discretion of the school nurse.

If he/she is unable to participate in daily activities (e.g., due to excessive fatigue or discomfort).

If a child is too ill to remain in school, the nurse will call parent/guardian and or emergency contact numbers for dismissal. Parents are required to notify the school if your child contracts any contagious diseases (e.g. Chicken Pox, Strep Throat, Whooping Cough, Fifth's Disease, Conjunctivitis, Scabies)

If a child has been absent due to a communicable disease or injury a physician's release may be required before returning to school.

If a child has had a medical procedure/operation, a doctor's note is required clearly stating 'no restrictions'; or any restrictions must be cleared by the nurse prior to returning to the program.

### **Medication Policy**

#### **(Health Services Requirements)**

It is the policy of Chelmsford Public Schools to administer medications during the school day only when necessary. If at any time during the school year your child requires the administration of any medications during the school day, then please refer to the following:

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### Medication Documentation Requirements

Our school district requires that the appropriate orders and/or consents must be on file in your child's health record before we begin to give any medications at school (these orders and/or consents must be submitted every year or at the start or restart of any medication treatment).

1. Signed consent by parent or guardian to give the medication- This needs to be completed for both prescription medications as well as non-prescription medications such as, but not limited to Motrin, non-prescription eye drops and cough medications. When permission is given on the Emergency Form for acetaminophen/Tylenol, ibuprofen (motrin/advil), Caladryl, Benadryl, Aquaphor, Vaseline, Sting Relief Wipes, saline eye solutions, Bacitracin, Silvadene Cream, hydrocortisone cream, and First Aid Cream, the Emergency Form will act as the signed consent by the parent or guardian.

2. Signed medication order - This needs to be obtained and returned to the school nurse for both prescription medications as well as non-prescription medications. As noted on the Emergency Form, the school physician has approved acetaminophen/Tylenol, ibuprofen (motrin/advil), Caladryl, Benadryl, Aquaphor, Vaseline, Sting Relief Wipes, saline eye solutions, Bacitracin, Silvadene Cream, hydrocortisone cream, and First Aid Cream and thus an additional doctor's order is only needed for these medications if the school nurse requests such.

In addition, short-term antibiotics are the only prescription medications that do not require a separate signed medication order. The instructions on the bottle will be sufficient if the current label is intact, and a parent or guardian signed consent is provided.

### Medication Delivery/Pick-up Requirements

All medications must be delivered to the school and picked up from the school by a responsible adult.

All medications can be picked up from the Nurse's Office anytime during the school day. All medications

will be disposed of if they are not picked up within one week following termination of the order or if they are not picked up by the last day of school.

All prescription medications must be in a pharmacy labeled container that includes the child's name, name and correct dose of the medication, physician's name, and current date.

Please ask your pharmacy to provide separate bottles for school and home. Not more than a thirty-day supply of medicine should be delivered to the school.

All non-prescription medications must be in the original manufacturer's container.

### Behavior Management

Lion's Pride believes in positive guidance. This policy will be consistent for all children. We realize that all children are at different developmental stages. All guidance will be reasonable with the child's needs and understanding and is meant to encourage children to maximize his/her growth and development.

The following procedure will be used in our classroom to help foster appropriate behavior for all children:

Step One: Clear limits and expectations will be set. (No child will be expected to follow a limit or policy that they are too young to fully understand.)

Step Two: Children will be redirected to a more appropriate behavior or task (children will be offered choices to encourage them to follow the guidelines of our classroom).

Step Three: Children will be provided with logical consequences/choices. Examples may include the following: "You can clean up your toy by yourself, or I will help you." "If you chose to run in the block area, you will need to choose a new place to play".

Step Four: Children will be asked to settle down independently or with a teacher. They will be able to return to the activity or play when they are ready. Children will be

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encouraged to verbalize their feelings and emotions in all situations.

Physical or verbal abuse and ridicule will not be tolerated. No child will be denied food, outside play or use of the bathroom for any reason. No child will ever be force-fed. There will be no punishment for soiled clothing or not using the toilet.

### **Individual Behavior Modification Plan**

When a child requires additional support other than what is outlined in our behavior management policy, the supervisor will contact the parents. With parental consent the teachers will take the following actions:

- 1.) Identify the child's specific struggles and needs and create strategies for success.
- 2.) Teachers will develop a behavior plan. The plan will outline specific expectations and consequences.
- 3.) Review the plan with the parents for approval.
- 4.) If parents approve of the plan the teachers will review it with the child so he/she understands how the teachers will help him/her be successful in the classroom. If age-appropriate, the discussion will include strategies for making better choices and gaining self-control. Teachers will stress that they are there to help support the child.

During challenging situations, the teachers will work with the child and help him/her regain composure. The child will return to the activity after the conflict has been resolved. The teacher will repeat this action as long as necessary to help the child. Parents will be informed of struggles and successes through daily communications.

Severe or continued problems may result in a temporary or permanent removal from our program.

### **Biting**

Biting requires special action in a classroom. Whenever body fluids are possibly transmitted all precautions must be taken.

If the skin is broken: Both children involved are immediately taken to the nurse. The nurse will handle contacting the parents of both children to explain that an exposure may have occurred. It is up to the parents' discretion how to handle the situation (call M.D., pick up, etc.) The teacher will meet with the child who bit the other child and have an age appropriate conversation based on the event. If this is a one-time event, we will deal with this situation by following our behavior management plan. If this behavior develops into a habit, we will work as a teaching team to find strategies to eliminate the behavior. If the problem cannot be resolved with our strategies, we will have a meeting with parents to discuss other options.

If the skin is not broken: TLC will be given to the child who is injured. If another staff member is available, they will meet with the child who caused the injury. If not, the staff member will comfort the child who is injured and then meet with the other child. The teacher will use her discretion to lead the conversation in a manner that is age appropriate for the child. We will follow our behavior management plan and create an appropriate response.

### **Written Policy For Reporting Abuse Or Neglect**

Many factors contribute to the maltreatment of children which makes the identification of child abuse and neglect a complex matter.

Child Care providers are required to report all suspected cases of abuse and neglect. They are mandated reporters. If there are any signs of abuse or neglect, teachers are able to report it to the supervisor, director, or nurse. At that time a decision will be made whether a 51A report is required. We are not required to inform the parents of this report.

In the case that a staff member is accused of abuse or neglect of a child, immediate action will be taken. The employee will be immediately removed from contact with children and may be suspended without pay until the allegations have been proven false.

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### Enrollment/Cancellation Process

Open enrollment will be held in February of every year. Parents who are already enrolled in the program will be given the opportunity to reserve their spot prior to open enrollment.

### **Process for Enrollment**

#### **Step 1: Families will register for their guaranteed spot.**

Currently enrolled families will have a guaranteed spot for the following year (meaning the same amount of days they are currently registered for in the classroom that is next in the traditional progression). A registration fee will be due at this time.

Example:

A family currently registered for 3 days a week in Toddler 1 would sign up for 3 days a week in Toddler 2. Families will have until the designated date to register for their guaranteed spot.

If a family registers for anything other than their guaranteed spot, the registration will be removed, and they may lose their spot for the next year. The traditional progression for Lion's Pride is:

Toddler 1 => Toddler 2

Toddler 2 => Preschool\*

Preschool => PreK\*

Wrap => Wrap

\*The only variation would be for children who will enroll into CHIPs program for the next school year. Their progression will be to the Wrap Around Classroom from their current Classroom.

#### **Step 2: Changing days per week and registering siblings**

After the initial registration deadline, Lion's Pride will open the WAITING LIST.

At this time, families will register for any changes for the following year, such as adding more days. This is also the time where siblings of current students will be able to enroll. **This will be on a first come first serve basis.**

### **Process for Cancellation**

If a family's childcare needs change prior to the start of the school year we require a minimum 30 days' notice prior to the first day of programming for a refund of

tuition. Cancellations with less than 30 days notification will forfeit their tuition entirely. All registration fees are non-refundable.

During the school year a parent may terminate his or her child's participation in the program by giving one month's notice to Chelmsford Community Education, 170 Dalton Road, Chelmsford, MA 01824. Where proper notice is given, parents only will be responsible for paying services rendered to their child. The monthly fee will be pro-rated to the time that the child participated in the program.

There are no cancellations for June.

### Hours of Operation & Calendar

We open at 7:00 am and close at 5:00 pm on all school days, and the day before Chelmsford Public Schools starts and the day after school ends.

*Lion's Pride will be **closed** on the district's Full Professional Development Day (November TBD)*

*We close at 12:30 pm on the day before Thanksgiving (November 23<sup>rd</sup>).*

**If you are running late and need to talk to a staff member AFTER 4:00 p.m. call 978-251-5151 X6082**

### Snow, Delayed Opening & Other Closures

We are not open on days when Chelmsford Public Schools are closed.

On delayed openings, our program will open at 9:00 a.m. instead of 7:00 a.m.

If school is dismissed early, we expect that you would pick your child up as soon as possible.

### Evacuation/Natural Disaster Policy

The Chelmsford Community Education Center has an emergency plan in place. Staff members are trained to respond if a crisis should arise at our site. Parents are welcome to review this policy if they wish.

### Rates

Fees are listed on the website. Tuition is billed in ten equal payments September through June and is due on the first business day of the upcoming month. A one-time non-refundable \$25 registration fee is due with the

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first month's payment or at registration.

It is expected that your child is enrolled for the full school year. There are no adjustments in the monthly tuition if your child is sick or does not attend for another reason. There are no adjustments for Vacations.

A late pick-up fee will be assessed at the rate of \$10 for each 15 minutes or portion thereof. **Children may be removed from the program if more than 3 late pick-ups occur during the school year.**

Please be aware that if your payments become delinquent, your child may not be allowed to attend our program, and we reserve the right to refer your account to a collection agency.

**\*\*\*Please note: All policies are subject to change based on the most current state of the COVID-19 Pandemic.**

**As of the 2022-2023 school year, CommEd will no longer be offering refunds for absences due to COVID-19 cases, including exposures, close contacts in or out of our program, positive cases and/or mandated quarantine.**

A letter from the Nurse:

Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

**Massachusetts State Laws** require children attending childcare or preschool programs to have documentation of the following items:

- **4 or more doses DtaP vaccine**
- **3 or more doses of Polio vaccine**
- **1 dose of MMR vaccine**
- **1-4 doses of HIB vaccine**
  - The number of doses required of HIB vaccine is dependent on the type of HIB vaccine that was administered. Most children do require 4, if your child has had less than 4 please speak to your child's physician about the number required.
- **3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine**
- **1 dose of Varicella vaccine or a physician-certified reliable history of the chickenpox disease**

- If submitting documentation of the disease, it must contain the month and year.
- **A current or past Lead test documentation**
- **A current/up to date physical**
  - Only a dated 2021 physical will be accepted as a current/up to date physical
  - Typically, insurance companies will only cover up to one physical per year.
  - Therefore, at this time if your child has only had a 2020 physical then please submit that. However, as soon as your child's 2021 physical is completed please promptly submit it.

### Regarding: Returning Students

- Your child's health records are mostly likely only in need of an updated physical, so please submit your child's 2021 physical as soon as it is completed.

### Regarding: New Students

- In order for your child to attend a Chelmsford Community Education childcare or preschool program, you must submit ALL of the above information prior to your child's start date in order for your child to attend such programs.

### Regarding: All Students

- The Lead Test is commonly missing from submitted physicals/immunizations. Please make sure this is included in your form.
- The Emergency Health and Medical Information Form must be signed in order for the nurse to have the proper permission and to ensure the information is correct. Please note: an updated Emergency Health and Medical Information Form will be requested on the first day of school.
- As always, please contact me (during the school year) or the Chelmsford Community Education Office (year-round) with any questions or concerns.

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