



FAMILY HANDBOOK

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Welcome

Welcome to Puffer Childcare Center & Preschool. We invite you to spend some time with our Family Handbook. Use it to get to know Puffer Child Care Center & Preschool better and to think of questions for our staff, families, and board members.

This handbook is intended to serve as a guide to the roles and responsibilities of the Puffer Child Care Center Director and staff, the families and the children enrolled at the Center. **It is by no means all-inclusive, and it will be regularly updated.** Please feel free to ask for additional/updated copies at any time. Please know that the door is open for each of you to ask questions, make recommendations and offer suggestions for the benefit of the program or specific to your child/children.

When you enroll your child, please sign and return the acknowledgment form at the end of this handbook.

Sincerely,

The Puffer Staff

Mission Statement

The mission of Puffer Child Care Center is to support the children and families of Puffer by providing a safe, positive, and developmentally appropriate environment that fosters the growth and development of the whole child.

Philosophy

- Social-Emotional Development of the child is foundational to all growth and development.
- Children learn best when they are able to develop warm, trusting, nurturing, respectful, positive relationships with adults in their lives.
- A successful learning environment invites children of all origins to play together, learn from each other, and develop their skills at their own pace.
- Each child possesses unique strengths and abilities, and are individuals.
- We strive to guide and empower each child to express his or her needs and emotions in a healthy and responsible manner.
- **Play** is the developmentally appropriate vehicle of all learning in early childhood and prepare our classroom environment with activities and materials to support learning through play.
- We observe, document, and assess the growth and development of each child as they play, work, and interact with teachers and peers, so that we can better support each individual child and continually improve our center.

Introduction

Puffer Childcare Center and Preschool is a private, non-profit child care center that is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors made up primarily of parents and guardians of the children receiving early education services at the Center. An Director, who manages and assists the teaching staff, runs the center on a delay basis and oversees all business and financial operations.

Our present location is 228 Industrial Park Road, Morrisville Vermont.

Puffer Childcare Center and Preschool license is renewed annually based on state regulations administered by the Licensing Unit of the Child Care Division of the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services of the Vermont State Agency Human Services. State regulations set forth minimum requirements. Puffer Childcare Center and Preschool reserves the right to impose stronger guidelines, if appropriate.

Copies of those regulations are available at Puffer Childcare Center and Preschool or from the licensing unit. Parents may contact the licensing unit at:

Child Development Division
Department of Children and Families
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, Vermont 05676
1-802-241-3110
1-800-649-2642
http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/child_care_licensing

Puffer Childcare Center and Preschool shall not exclude a child from admission for reason of race, creed, color, national origin, disability, gender or the child's parents' marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation or religion. In the case of an acutely disabled child, the staff may determine that the child has an aide while attending Puffer Childcare.

Programs and Curriculum

Puffer Childcare Center and Preschool serves children ages 6 weeks through preschool. Puffer Childcare Center and Preschool is licensed to care for up to 29 children daily. Families may choose a full-time or a part-time schedule based on space availability. Puffer Childcare Center and Preschool is not staffed or licensed to accept children on a non-recurring or "drop-in" basis.

Sunshine Room

The Infant Program serves children between the ages of 6 weeks and 1.5 years. Teacher to child ratio may not exceed 1:4 and group size may not exceed eight children. Children who are eating solids or purees are fed breakfast and lunch along with an afternoon snack. Children are allowed to nap whenever necessary.

Children over the age of one are starting to transition using a rest mat and the schedule of Rainbow Room.

Schedules include time for free play, snacks and meals, group and activity time, and outdoor play. Feel free to speak to your child's classroom teacher about the schedule in that room.

Rainbow Room (1.5 years to 3 years)

The Older Toddler Program serves children between the ages of 1.5 years to 3 years. The group can accommodate up to eight children with two-full time teachers. Children are offered

breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Children begin nap at approximately 12:00 and wake up at their leisure.

Schedules include time for free play, snacks and meals, group and activity time, and outdoor play. Feel free to speak to your child's classroom teacher about the schedule in that room.

Butterfly Room (3 years to 5 years)

Puffer Child Care Center & Preschool participates in Universal Preschool, a program that allows us to work hand in hand with local school districts and parents to provide a cohesive and consistent preschool program. Any child 3 years of age as of September 1st may participate in Universal Preschool as long as their particular school district is approved through the Universal Prekindergarten Program. If you have any questions please contact the director.

In the Preschool Classroom staff to child ratio may not exceed 1:10 and group size may not exceed 20 children, our current preschool is licensed to allow 14 children. Children are offered breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Children begin nap at approximately 12:00 and wake up no later than 3:00pm Children are not required to sleep, but are asked to lay down quietly on their rest mats with books to allow those who want to sleep to sleep.

Schedules include time for free play, snacks and meals, group and activity time, and outdoor play. Feel free to speak to your child's classroom teacher about the schedule in that room

Puffer Child Care Center & Preschool Staff

- 18 years of age
- Each staff member shall have a written work, education, training, and experience history on file that documents the staff member's ability to perform the duties in his or her job description.
- All staff shall be actively engaged in professional development activities as specified in their Individual Professional Development Plan which is updated annually.
- Within three months of hire, all paid staff shall obtain training in basic first aid for child, injury prevention and emergency readiness and be Infant/Child CPR certified.
- Each staff person must pass the State of Vermont's background check, including fingerprinting.
- Each staff person must meet, and preferably exceed Vermont's licensing requirements for hours of professional development.

Board of Directors

A Board of Directors governs PCCC and may be comprised of parents and community members. The board meets monthly and all meetings are open to any parent or teacher who would like to attend. Meeting times, as well as the agenda for the meeting and minutes of previous meetings are filed at PCCC.

The Board welcomes questions and concerns, praise and criticism regarding PCCC operation from families. Parents should attend a regular meeting to discuss any questions they may have.

List of Current Board Members:

Brian Meszkat, Chairman of the Board of Directors

Cheryl Atwood, Director

Kerrie Johnson, Secretary

Samantha Cook, Board Member at Large

Katie Yoskowitz, Board Member at Large

Hours and Schedule

Puffer Child Care Center & Preschool is opened Monday through Friday 7:00am to 5:00pm except on Wednesday's when we close at 3:30pm. Opening staff will be preparing the center for the day and are not available for child care until 7:00 am. All children must be dropped off before 9:00am.

The building will close and all children **must be picked and have exited the building and the grounds by 5:00 P.M Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, and by 3:30PM on Wednesdays.**

Holidays

Puffer Child Care Center and Preschool closes for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day (Jan 1st)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Town Meeting Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Labor Day
- Indigenous People's Day
- Veteran's Day
- Day Before Thanksgiving
- Thanksgiving
- Friday After Thanksgiving
- Winter Break

Payment is required for the holidays the center is closed if it falls on a day your child would be in attendance. Please advised the center of any planned vacation time as soon as possible. Payment is required for the vacation days you take if it falls on a day your child is schedule to attend Puffer.

In-service Days

The staff schedule five in-service days and announces them at the beginning of the year. Four of the five in-service days are used for teachers to attend professional development, and one is for teachers to reorganize classrooms and deep clean. Any additional in-service days will be determined by the Director with Board approval. Where possible, parents will be given at least 30 days notice of additional closing.

Closings and Delays

Every attempt will be made to provide care even during inclement weather, however, Puffer Child Care Center and Preschool reserves the right to close the Center if circumstances dictate. Due to the distances traveled by our families and our staff, Puffer Child Care Center will typically follow the lead of the **Lamoille North Supervisory Union** in decisions regarding closure due to inclement weather.

If the Center has to close, an announcement will be made on WCAX. We will also send out a message via the app Brightwheel to notify families of any closures or delays, but it is the family's responsibility to check the above places for announcement. If the center has to close, we will call parents immediately. If we are not able to reach immediate family, then emergency contacts will be called to pick up your child. Payment is required when the Center has to unexpectedly close on a day that your child was scheduled to attend.

Parent Visits and Involvement

Family Volunteers

The Center and families benefit from family volunteers. Each year there are many opportunities to help the Center. A few examples are: participation in the Board of Directors, volunteering in the classroom, organize annual fundraiser, help with a classroom project, field trips chaperones, preparation for special projects.

Visitors

Visitors to the Center are always welcome. We ask that you check in with the director so we will all know you are here, and sign in/out on the sign-in sheet.

Cell Phone Usage

In order to give your child full attention during drop-off, pick-up, or Center gatherings we ask that families refrain from using cell phones while in the building except in the event of an emergency. Please end phone calls before entering the building.

Nursing

Should you be nursing your child while he/she is at PCCC&P, we will support you and your schedule. Please see your child's teacher to set up a plan that works for you and your child.

Special Events

May: Parent/Teacher Conferences

August: Butterfly Release Party (Preschool Graduation)

November: Parent/Teacher Conferences

November: Harvest dinner: potluck in celebration of our families and community

** The center plans additional events throughout the year. These events change due to the community's needs, finding times that works best for families, and special topics being discussed in the classrooms.

Enrollment-Fees-Withdrawal-Termination

Enrollment

All children must be enrolled **2, 3, or 5** days per week. Half days are not offered. Upon availability, drop-in days are also offered for children registered at the Center. Please check with the director when drop-in days are needed. If space is available, parents complete an Enrollment Packet with the following included:

- Enrollment Agreement
- Child Information Form
- Emergency/Medical Form
- Immunization Certificate
- Act 166 Paperwork (Preschool Only)
- Other forms necessitated by the Vermont Licensing Unit

Parents are asked to keep all information in their child's file up to date such as medical information and immunization records, emergency contact numbers, changes of address, etc.

When enrolling your child/children you will be required to sign an agreement that specifies the schedule of early education and care that will be reserved for your child/children. Should you wish to change the schedule, a new contract must be drawn up, approved and signed by the parent/guardian and the Director. Puffer Child Care Center and Preschool requires at least a **two week notice** if a change is to take place. A change may not be approved if it does not meet the needs of the Center. Contracts will be updated yearly prior to the beginning of the school year.

Fees - Tuition, Late Tuition and Late Fees

Tuition

1. Weekly – due the first day of your child’s week.
2. Monthly payment due on the first of each month.

Payment is expected in full at the beginning of each week or month. If a parent falls behind by two weeks tuition payment the Center reserves the right to suspend services. At this time, we would not be able to guarantee that a slot would remain open for your family. If you have any questions or concerns about payment speak directly to the Director.

All rates will be reviewed as part of the annual budget process, with an annual increase occurring September 1st or when deemed necessary by the board.

A \$30 returned check fee will be applied for returned checks plus any additional costs associated with the returned check. If two checks are returned within a year’s time, cash will then be required.

Late Tuition Payments

Please speak to the Director if you need to make a late payment. If a parent falls behind by two weeks tuition payment the Center reserves the right to suspend services. If you have any questions or are having trouble making payments speak directly to the Director.

Late Fees

When a late pick-up occurs (after 5:00pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday or after 3:30pm on Wednesday), there is an late fee that will be charged. The late fee begins at 5:01 / 3:31 at the minimum of \$10.00. After the first 10 minutes there is a dollar per minute late charge added to the first \$10.00. This rule is strictly enforced. The fee is due at the time of late pick up. **The child(ren) may not attend Puffer until the fee is paid in full.** You will be asked to sign a late pick up form by closing teachers, stating that you recognize this payment.

Withdrawal

Written notice of permanent withdrawal must be given two weeks in advance of the last day of attendance. If notice is not received, full enrollment fees will continue to be charged, even if your child is no longer in the program. A permanent space cannot be guaranteed if you wish to temporarily withdraw your child. Your child will be placed on a waiting list to re-enter the program. This includes summer withdrawals. It is the

responsibility of the parent/guardian to make regular contact with the director regarding the availability of space.

Termination

If there is a situation involving the needs of a child that cannot be addressed or supported by Puffer Child Care Center and Preschool, the Director will contact the parent/guardian as soon as possible. This will typically be if a child's behavior is extreme and not the typical pushing and shoving. Some examples include, but are not limited to: choking, scratching, bolting, pushing other children down, spitting, throwing items, kicking and repeated hitting/biting/excessively foul language. If a child's behavior threatens or inflicts emotional and/or physical harm to themselves, other children, or staff, the family may be asked to keep the child home for a 'safety break'. This allows de-escalation of the situation and encourages a fresh re-start. If this safety break is insufficient, the family may be asked to keep the child home until a meeting with the family, teacher and Director can occur. The Center will also reach out to Children's Integrated Services to obtain support for the class and teachers.

In rare cases a child's behavior may be such that the Director determines that the risk of emotional/physical harm to the child, other children, or staff is too great. In this case the 'safety break' will be passed by and the family will be immediately asked to keep the child home until a meeting occurs. The child's re-entry to PCCC&P will depend upon the positive outcome of the meeting.

The Center reserves the right to alter or terminate a child's enrollment if it is clear that this decision is in the best interest of the child and/or the needs of other children in the Center. PCCC&P may not be the appropriate setting for all eligible children. If it becomes necessary to terminate a child's enrollment, every effort will be made to assist the family through this transition. If the child is enrolled in Act 166 public pre-k, notice will be given to the AOE as required.

A child may be asked to leave the center if a family member is disrespectful or abusive to teachers, children, or families, or refuses to work cooperatively with the staff.

Daily Routine

Arrival, Attendance, and Departure

Arrival

If another family member or friend will be dropping your child off please let us know in advance when possible so we can assist them in the process. All children must **dropped off before 9:00 am**. In the case that your child has an appointment, contact the Director or Assistant Director at least two days in advance to notify us of the time

block he/she/they will be out. We do not allow children to return from their appointment during rest time (12:30-2:45). This is to avoid any disruptions in the classrooms during quiet time. We highly encourage families to schedule appointments for their children early in the morning or late in the afternoon to ensure they have a consistent school day. However, we understand how challenging scheduling appointments can be and the hardships it may cause. Please speak to the Director regarding returning your child after appointments.

Attendance

Please advise the Center at your earliest convenience if your child will be on vacation, sick or will not be attending Puffer when they are scheduled to do so. Payment is still required for this time. Please make every effort to have your child attend when they are healthy – they can't benefit from the program if they aren't here, and it is less stressful for a child to have a predictable routine.

Consistent preschool attendance has been connected to increased learning outcomes. We are required to report your child's attendance to your supervisory union as part of accessing Act 166/Universal Preschool funds.

If your child is absent from PreK for:

- an average of one PreK day per week over the course of two months or
- more than 2 consecutive weeks or
- the equivalent of 3 weeks

You may be at risk for losing your Universal PreK funding.

Departure

The doors will be locked to provide greater security to your children. Please simply push the door button, standing in front of the camera and a staff person will let you in. Once you have arrived to pick up your child at the end of the day please make contact with the staff member that is caring for your child to let them know that you and your child are leaving, and to sign your child out. Also, please make sure that you clean up behind yourselves if you have taken down any toys, books or miscellaneous items. Older siblings should not be left with staff or unattended during pick-up.

Children will only be released to the custodial parent/guardian for pick up. If you wish to have someone else pick up your child, we will need to know in advance who is picking up your child. The person will be required to show identification (such as a driver's license) before your child will be released into their care. This is to ensure the safety of your child. If you do not want a custodial parent to pick up your child there must be a

court document stating that the parent cannot be near your child in order for us not to release the child to the parent.

Clothing, Diapers, Toilet Needs

Clothing

Families are required to provide at least two changes of clothes for their child that are suitable for the weather (this includes appropriate footwear). In the winter be sure to have a pair of indoor shoes as well as boots for outdoor play. Please ensure that your child has appropriate outdoor gear for all seasons. In the in-between seasons, light jackets and layers mean we can add or subtract layers to adjust to the changing weather. Children should always have a raincoat available, as PCC&C is outdoors in all weather conditions that aren't extreme. In winter, children need to have a warm weatherproof coat, snowpants, thick socks, snowboots, waterproof mittens, a neck warmer and a hat. In summer, please send in a swimsuit and towel in the summer. Infants should have three sets of spare clothing. Please label your child/children's clothing to prevent loss.

Diapers

Families are required to send in diapers and the necessary accessories for their child. Families who choose to use cloth diapers must provide a diaper pail for the dirty diapers and bring them home at the end of each day. The pail must be brought home at the end of each week for a thorough cleaning. Please let the staff know if you have special instructions for your child's skin care during diapering. Staff will let you know when your child is low on diapers or other supplies but please check regularly and replenish supplies as needed.

Toilet Needs

The staff at PCCC&P will be happy to support and reinforce your child's toilet training needs. If your child is showing an interest or readiness for toilet training and you are beginning the process at home, please meet with the staff to share your suggestions to them. Staff will work with the family to keep the process consistent between school and home. During the transition please send in lots of extra clothing and underwear. Puffer Child Care Center suggests children be toilet trained before entering the pre-k classroom, except in cases where the delayed toilet training is identified as being a result of a documented special need.

Field Trips

The staff will request you to sign a general permission slip for your child to participate in local field trips and nature walks. This slip is part of your enrollment contract. When

there is a field trip planned that requires the use of vehicles, you will be notified in advance and will be asked to sign a special permission slip and leave a car seat for use. Chaperones for field trips are always appreciated. Anyone transporting children must have a valid driver's license and the vehicle must be registered and insured.

Toys and Books

Please leave toys from home at home. The exception to this is a comfort toy for nap time. From time to time there may be a special occasion or theme being explored at the Center and it may be acceptable for children to bring a toy at this time. If you have any questions feel free to discuss this with a staff person.

Books from home maybe brought in with the child's understanding that if they are reading it another child may want to read with them.

Meals and Snacks

While at Puffer your child will receive a healthy morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack provide under the Children and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). All children at Puffer are expected to enroll in this program. Menus will be posted on the family bulletin board but may change from time to time to make the best use of food on hand. Accommodations can be made to the menu if your child has special dietary needs due to allergies or developmental delays with a doctors note.

Nap and Quiet Time

A daily rest time is offered from 12:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. According to state licensing requirements, all children, except school age children, are offered an opportunity for rest; however, children are not required to sleep. To accommodate this requirement families must provide their child/children with a sheet and a blanket. If a child would like to bring a stuffed animal, doll or special pillow for rest time, this would be fine. Each room has a designated place for these items.

It is the center's policy to respect a child's need for rest. We will not wake a sleeping child early except under extraordinary circumstances, or if a doctor's note detailing the need is presented.

Those children who do not sleep will be given appropriate space and equipment for quiet play.

Per licensing requirements, infants shall not be swaddled for sleep. Sleep sacks are allowed, but all hoods, bibs, necklaces, and garments with ties shall be removed before placing the infant in the crib. Positioning devices can be used inside of a crib, but only when required by a health care provider. Instructions for use shall be sent in writing to the center and added to the child's file.

Holiday Celebrations

The staff at Puffer Child Care Center aims to be as diverse as possible in the classroom. However, with so many holidays there it is difficult to celebrate them all; due to this it is center policy that we don't focus much on the holidays. Please check with your child's teacher in advance if they plan on teaching a holiday. The staff is happy to help celebrate your child's birthday. Let a staff person know in advance if you wish to send in something special.

Communication

The staff at Puffer Child Care Center feels that families are their child's primary teachers. We recognize that children benefit from their family's involvement at the Center. Communication between staff and home should always be open and clear. Besides the fun, educational and exciting experiences that we will share with one another, occasionally school and parents will need to join forces and work together to solve problems or face challenges that arise. Daily communication with teachers will help build a relationship to best serve your child. Phone conversations are welcome but please set up a time with your child's teacher that will not disturb the classroom for anything other than a brief check in. Conferences can be set up between parents and teachers any time of the year upon request.

All classrooms primary system of communication is the utilization of the app BrightWheel. This includes but not limited to photos, videos, what your child ate, when they slept, etc. Please be aware that the staff use BrightWheel on classroom iPads, if your message is not responded to, please be patient. The teaching staff aims to update BrightWheel during rest-time, so it does not pose a safety risk during active supervision throughout the day. If you have any questions, please call and speak to the Director or Assistant Director regarding your message.

Concerns

Speak to your child's teacher with concerns or questions as they arise, or please set up an appointment with your child's teacher, as it may not be appropriate to discuss with children present. Our goal is to work together with all families to provide the best and most consistent care between school and home.

Parent/Guardian/Teacher Conferences

Parent/guardian/teacher conferences are offered twice per year. They will be held during the day, if possible, and parents/guardians can sign up to meet with the staff to review how their child is doing at Puffer. If a parent/guardian wishes to schedule a time other than the two times offered per year the staff or program director will be glad to

schedule a meeting. However, please raise concerns as they arise rather than waiting for scheduled parent/guardian/teacher conferences. To schedule a conference please speak to your child's teacher.

Discipline

At Puffer we believe that children are able to control their own behavior through the use of positive guidance, role modeling, mutual respect and consistent expectations. Each child is entitled to an emotionally and physically safe environment. Positive and age appropriate discipline techniques are used at PCCC. Developmentally appropriate expectations of behavior and modeling of appropriate and respectful behavior is employed. To empower children, each child is encouraged to work out their solutions to problems by searching within themselves. Staff will initiate thought-provoking questions to assist each child to formulate ideas and solutions of their own. Techniques used will be anticipation, redirection, positive reinforcement, and encouragement.

If a child does not respond to these methods the child may be brought to a neutral place within the classroom where the child can take the time to regain themselves and reflect on what took place. The child will be accompanied and given support through this separation. If a child continues to have difficulties, the parents will be notified.

The steps PCCC staff takes in assisting children with inappropriate behavior are:

- Behaviors are recorded and placed in child's personal file.
- Accidents reports are placed in the child's personal file as well as to parents of the recipient and the offender.
- Identifying information of children involved is confidential.
- Teachers work carefully one-on-one with child to empower them to change their behavior, so the other children and teachers feel safe at Puffer.
- The child's family is involved in these changes via phone calls, e-mails, notebook correspondence or personal contact.

Behavior Action Plans

The staff at Puffer will work with your child to guide and understand their behaviors. If there is a situation involving the needs of a child that cannot be addressed or supported with Puffer Child Care Center and Preschool, the Director will call a meeting with the teacher and parent/guardian as soon as possible. At this conference behaviors will be discussed, and a plan of action will be written to help remind both parents/guardians and staff of the consistent steps both parties have agreed upon to help the child. Check

in meetings by phone or in person will then be scheduled. Behavior incidents are tracked to assess triggers and reactions.

Policies Specifically Regarding Biting:

1. If a child has been bitten:
 1. Wash the area with soap and water
 2. Apply ice or cold pack.
 3. If the bite breaks the skin, notify parent.
 4. Write accident report

For Infants and Toddlers: We will give attention to the bitten child. We will remind the biter that biting hurts and we do not bite our friends. We will give the child something to bite on like a rubber teething ring. We'll ask child who has bitten to 'check in' with the bitten child to see if they are ok.

For Preschoolers: We will give attention to the bitten child. We will have the child who did the biting help to care for the injured child (e.g. hold ice, comfort). We will remind the child that we do not bite our friends and that we use words. In all cases, explanation will be given to the child in language that he or she can understand to explain why biting isn't ok, while reinforcing that he/she is not a 'bad' child, rather that they did something that is inappropriate. We will not force a child to apologize.

How will we handle the biting child?

1. We will look for the causes of the behavior and try to take a preventative approach.
2. We will shadow the biter in situations where we think the child might bite.
3. We will be consistent in our interventions, realizing it is a temporary stage of normal development.
4. We will communicate to parents about the incident. However, information about the 'biter' is confidential.

Health Policies

Immunizations

Prior to starting child care, a copy of your child's immunization record or a Medical/Religious exemption form must be received at the Center. This record needs to be updated as your child receives his/her well care and immunization series through your physician. The Department of Health annually requires a listing of immunizations each child has received.

When a Child Is Sent Home

Families are asked to notify the Center if their child will be absent due to sickness or family emergency at your earliest convenience. No child shall be admitted if in the opinion of the director/medical professional the child is too ill to attend child care. This includes children that

are not able to participate in regular classroom activities. Please help us prevent the spread of germs by keeping your sick child at home. Payment is still required for sick time on days your child is scheduled to attend Puffer. If it becomes apparent during the day that your child is unwell and not able to participate, you will be called to come and get your child. The expectation is that the child will be picked up within a one hour. This includes, but is not limited to: a fever of 101 degrees or over, vomiting, two instances of diarrhea, etc. Please see the following link for the excluded behaviors and symptoms in children.

<https://outside.vermont.gov/dept/DCF/Shared%20Documents/CDD/Licensing/CC-CenterBased-Regs.pdf>

While we recognize that lice are not technically a dangerous health issue, they are extremely distressing to families, and can cost quite a bit to eradicate. To ensure everyone's comfort and to reduce instances of lice being passed from child to child Puffer Child Care Center also maintains a 'no-nit' policy. If nits are discovered in your child's hair live or dead, your child will be sent home immediately. All belongings will be sent with them for cleaning. Your child may not return to the Center until he/she is nit-free and all belongings thoroughly washed and dried on high heat. Experience has shown that a good quality metal nit comb in combination with a nit treatment is the most effective method of removal.

Returning After Illness

To return to PCCC after illness, a child must be symptom free. A child must be well enough to participate in outdoor activities.

Parents are asked to notify PCCC if a child has been diagnosed with a contagious condition such as head lice, measles, chicken pox, etc. Parents also must present a doctor's note when the child returns. When a child has chicken pox, PCCC requires that the child must have had them for at least seven days and be crusted-over before returning to PCCC.

Doctors usually advise parents that their child can return to child care 24 hours after their temperature has returned to normal **without the assistance** of any fever reducing medicine. PCCC will follow this policy and not allow children to return unless they have been fever free for 24 hours prior to drop off.

For example, if your child was sent home due to illness on a Tuesday at 10:00am, and by Wednesday at 10:00am your child has been symptom free they may return on Thursday morning at drop off.

Medication

Prescription Medication

It is best practice for medication to be administered at home before coming to PCCC. If, however, medication is needed throughout the day, staff are trained in administration. Medicine must be sent in its original container accompanied by a legible doctor's note detailing administration, quantity and timing. The staff will provide you with a medicine form for your signature in order to administer any medication – prescription or non-prescription. Please fill out the entire form and make sure that the medication is handed directly to a staff person to be stored out of reach of children.

Non-Prescription Medication

Over the counter (OTC) medication may be given with a parent's written consent. It must be in its original container with administration details. If the OTC medication is required for more than two days, or if the family's administration instructions differ from that of the packaging, a doctor's note will be required.

Child Abuse

Reporting Child Abuse

State law requires PCCC staff to report any suspected incidents of child abuse and/or neglect within 24 hours of either receiving a report of, or suspicion of, abuse. Reports are made to the Agency of Human Services, Department of Children and Families office in Waterbury (1-800-649-5285).

Preventing Child Abuse

PCCC recognizes that parenting can be very challenging. The teachers and the Director are available to offer guidance and can direct parents to community resources such as counseling, outreach programs and resources such as the Parent's Stress Line and Home Companion Resource (802-229-5724), Vermont 211 (800- 727-3687), and Prevent Child Abuse Vermont (802-229-5724 OR 1-800-CHILDREN).

PCCC also takes its responsibility for child safety very seriously. To that end, it has policies in place to safeguard all children in its care. They include:

- An open-door rule whereby parents are always welcome to visit their children during the day and observe in the classrooms
- Background checks on all staff upon hire, and annually by the State of Vermont
- Not permitting staff to be alone with a child in a closed room
- Training teachers to listen to what children say and to recognize clues that a
- child might be in danger
- Procedures for staff to follow should there be any question of inappropriate
- conduct

Illegal Drug, Smoking, and Alcohol Policy

Illegal drugs, smoking and alcoholic beverages are prohibited at PCCC and at any PCCC function.

Confidentiality

Individuals and families have the right to privacy. Early Education providers must respect the child and family by not discussing information pertaining to others. All information about the children and families attending PCCC will be kept confidential. When asking about a child/ family staff will give you information on a "need to know" basis only. In order to discuss a specific child or family's needs with any outside agency, other parent, friends, etc. the parent or guardian must give permission in writing.

All information that is shared with the staff of Puffer Child Care Center and Preschool is held in strict confidence. Since all staff members work with all Puffer families, the director is responsible for sharing pertinent information with teachers. If a family does not wish to have information shared with all of the teachers it is their responsibility to notify the director.

Written records of each child's progress in our program are stored in a locked file cabinet and are not accessible to anyone but program personnel on a need to know basis. Parents/guardians have access to their child's files upon request.

Governing Regulations

Because Puffer Child Care Center is licensed by the State of Vermont, any issue that is not specifically addressed by the provisions of this handbook shall be resolved pursuant to the provisions of the Early Childhood Program Licensing Regulations, issued by the State of Vermont, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, Child Care Services Division, effected April 17, 2022.

Acknowledgment Form

I, _____, having enrolled my child/
children _____ in an PCCC program,
have read the Puffer Child Care Center Parent Handbook and agree to adhere to the policies
and procedures listed within as long as my child/children attend(s) PCCC.

Signature: _____

Date: _____