

THIS IS THE WAY LEARNING CENTER



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Trust • Understanding • Communication • Teamwork

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This is the Way Learning Center Employee Handbook establishes policies, procedures, and working conditions that will be followed by all This is the Way Learning Center employees as a condition of their employment at the school. The Standards of Conduct describe the expected actions and behaviors of employees while conducting school business.

This is the Way Learning Center values the talents and abilities of our employees and seeks to foster an open, cooperative, and dynamic environment in which employees and the children alike can thrive. The school provides an Open-Door Policy under which employees are encouraged to take problems to the next level of management if they are unable to resolve a situation with their direct supervisor.

Employment at This is the Way Learning Center is on an “at will” basis, which means that you, the employee can be dismissed for any reason (that is without having to establish “just cause” for termination), and without warning, as long as the reason is not illegal.

This is the Way Learning Center will make every effort to notify employees when an official change in policy or procedure has been made but employees are responsible for their own up-to- date knowledge about school policies, procedures, and working conditions.

This is the Way Learning Center is an equal opportunity employer. Religion, age, gender, national origin, race, or color does not affect hiring, promotion, development opportunities, pay, or benefits. Play to Learn Childcare provides for fair treatment of employees based on merit. The school complies with all applicable federal, state, and local labor laws and statutes.

Please review the policies, procedures, and working conditions described in this handbook. You will be asked to affirm that you have read, understand, agree to abide by, and acknowledge your receipt of this employee handbook and employee Standards of Conduct.

MISSION

This is the Way Learning Center provides exceptional learning experiences in a nurturing and safe environment for children 6 weeks to 5 years old. We are committed to educating, empowering and inspiring students to be confident, conscious, independent, innovative, critical thinkers in a challenging and ever-changing world.

VISION

We develop each child's potential through:

- Personalized learning that addresses each child's unique learning style
- Differentiated instruction, curriculum and assessment
- Fostering meaningful relationships with children and families
- Providing rich opportunities socially focusing on mutual respect and open-mindedness
- Cultivating independent thought that builds character and confidence

CORE VALUES

Core values are the essential and enduring tenets of This is the Way Learning Center. These guiding principles have a profound impact on how we think and behave. Our core values are the soul of who we are – the guide to all of our actions.

We believe equally in the values of:

- Thinking critically and working collaboratively
- Achieving personal and academic excellence
- Personalized learning
- Nurturing creativity
- Respecting one's self and others
- Encouraging open minds

TRUST

Our main priority is the well being and safety of the children. We want our parents to trust us as we trust them.

UNDERSTANDING

Our staff and families are doing their best for the children. We want to meet each family where they are and help where we can.

COMMUNICATION

Open and honest communication between the children's family and our staff is important for the developmental and social-emotional growth of the child.

TEAMWORK

We are all on the same team! We want the best for the children and we need to work together through the childrens' stages to set them up for success.

GENERAL PERSONNEL POLICIES

EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

This is the Way Learning Center expects all employees to work together in harmony for the good of the families that we serve. This employee handbook is given to you to outline your responsibilities, your benefits, and enhance your employment. Written personnel policies are made available to all center staff upon hire and are available to all staff while at the center.

Anti-Harassment Policy

This is the Way Learning Center is committed to providing a professional work environment free from any type or form of harassment. Harassment of any employee on the basis of his or her race, religion, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or the presence of any physical, mental or sensory disability is a serious violation and will not be tolerated.

Harassment can occur as a result of a single incident or a pattern of behavior where the purpose or effect is to create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating work environment. Harassment encompasses a broad range of physical or verbal behavior which may include slurs, comments, jokes, innuendoes, unwelcome compliments, pictures, cartoons, or pranks. Some examples may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Physical or verbal abuse
2. Racial, ethnic, or sexual insults
3. Ethnic or sexual jokes
4. Religious slurs or other slurs directed toward the group set forth above
5. Unwelcomed sexual comments, advances or innuendoes
6. Taunting, intended to provoke an employee
7. Requests for sexual favors used as a condition of employment or affecting any personnel decisions such as hiring, promotion, compensation, etc.

Sexual Harassment Sexual harassment is a type of harassment and occurs when the verbal and physical conduct is sexual in nature or is gender-based, that is, directed at a person because of gender. Sexual harassment, whether committed by supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, is specifically prohibited as unlawful and against This is the Way Learning Center's policy.

Sexual harassment includes: unwelcome verbal behavior such as comments, suggestions, jokes or derogatory remarks based on sex; physical behavior such as pats, squeezes, repeatedly brushing against someone's body, or impending or blocking normal work or movement; visual harassment such as posting of sexually suggestive or derogatory pictures, cartoons or drawings, even at one's work station; unwanted sexual advances, pressure for sexual favors and/or basing employment decisions upon the employee's submission to sexually harassing behavior in the workplace.

Employees who feel they have been or have witnessed other employees subjected to harassment of any kind are encouraged to immediately identify the offensive behavior to the harasser and request that it stop. If the employee feels uncomfortable in addressing the matter directly with the harasser, or if they have done so and the behavior does not stop, the matter should be immediately discussed with the Administrator/Program Director or any Board member with whom the employee feels comfortable.

All complaints will be investigated promptly, impartially and discreetly. Upon completion of the investigation, the appropriate parties will be notified of the findings. All employees found to have harassed an employee will be subject to appropriate corrective action, ranging from disciplinary action to termination. No employee will suffer retaliation in any form for reporting instances of harassment.

Responsibilities Include:

1. Employees: Bring to the attention of the Administrator/Program Director and/or a Board of Director who Officer, perceived or actual incident of harassment or witness of such.
2. Administrator/Program Director: Maintain a work environment free of intimidation and harassment and respond immediately and appropriately to any complaints or indications of such behavior. Investigate all initial complaints and report them to the Board of Directors.
3. Administrator/Program Director and/or Board of Directors: Administer the necessary disciplinary action toward any individuals proven guilty of such an act or who, knowingly, falsely accuse another of sexual or other form of harassment.

Zero Tolerance for Workplace Violence

This is the Way Learning Center will, within reason, do whatever is necessary to protect the lives and health of employees and provide a workplace free from verbal abuse, threats, or assaults that could cause or result in harm to those who are employed. This is the Way Learning Center has a definitive “zero tolerance” for violence of any kind, including threats of violence.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

This is the Way Learning Center advocates that our school be free from the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of controlled substances by employees. Additionally, employees are to work free from the effect of alcohol and other performance-impairing substances.

Drug testing may be required by any employee, who while on duty, demonstrates signs of being under the influence, and demonstrates inappropriate behavior suggesting impairment or who is observed consuming alcoholic beverages or drugs. Refusal to cooperate with drug testing and/or rehabilitation will result in immediate discharge. Violations of this policy will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Staff Qualifications

Our teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. All caregivers participate in an orientation class and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

SUPERVISION OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Young children are curious and active. Adequate supervision is essential to maintain a safe environment. All Teachers are responsible for ensuring that all children are supervised at all times. This includes supervision in the bathrooms. Children are never to be sent to the bathroom without a Teacher. This may mean that a Teacher, and at least two children, need to call for assistance or that a small group of children need to go for a walk. Furthermore, the teacher must stand inside the bathroom or at the door. This enhances safety and ensures that children are washing their hands after using the bathroom.

Toddlers must always be in direct sight of their teachers. Teachers must be able to see and hear the children in their group in order to provide adequate supervision.

Preschoolers, by nature, are gaining independence. This is to be fostered and encouraged. Teachers must always be available to provide care to all of the children in their groups. Teachers must always be positioned in such a way as to observe and supervise the entire group/room of children.

Groups of children must always have the proper number of adults. If a teacher needs to leave the room (bathroom, emergency, talk to a parent, etc.), the room must stay in ratio. Call for another person if necessary.

Student-Teacher Ratio

Children are always supervised. All teachers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness.

We maintain the following state standards for student to teacher ratios:

Age	Student to Teacher	Maximum Group Size
1-3 year old's	4 to 1	8
3-5 year old's	10 to 1	20

*Although the state sets these standards, Play to Learn Childcare tries to keep these numbers even lower with the help of part-time teachers.

****RATIOS APPLY AT ALL TIMES WHETHER THE STUDENTS ARE AWAKE, SLEEPING, IN OTHER AREAS, AND OUTSIDE.**

Ratio When Napping

When children are napping, the room must stay in ratio. If you are ready to leave the room and the person who is coming to relieve you is late, call the other classroom or the Director for help. Do not leave your room out of ratio. This is the responsibility of the person who is leaving and the person who is staying. We respect your need to leave, but the children must be properly supervised. The administration will deal with the late relief expediently.

Ratio Outdoors

If you are on the playground, on a walk, or anywhere else, the group must be in ratio. If you take a child away from an activity, make sure that you are not leaving a group out of ratio. Regardless of numbers, no group of children may leave the building with fewer than two teachers. One teacher may not take children out of the building, for any reason.

If you have any questions regarding ratios, please ask the Director. This is a very important issue.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT Aligned with NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)

Ethical Responsibilities to Children. Childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the human life cycle. Our paramount responsibility is to provide care and education in settings that are safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive for each child. We are committed to supporting children's development and learning; respecting individual differences; and helping children learn to live, play, and work cooperatively. We are also committed to promoting children's self-awareness, competence, self-worth, resiliency, and physical wellbeing.

Ethical Responsibilities to Families. Families are of primary importance in children's development. Because the family and the early childhood practitioner have a common interest in the child's well-being, we acknowledge a primary responsibility to bring about communication, cooperation, and collaboration between the home and early childhood program in ways that enhance the child's development.

Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues. In a caring, cooperative workplace, human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction is promoted, and positive relationships are developed and sustained. Based upon our core values, our primary responsibility to colleagues is to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs. The same ideals that apply to children also apply as we interact with adults in the workplace

Ethical Responsibilities to Community and Society. Early childhood programs operate within the context of their immediate community made up of families and other institutions concerned with children's welfare. Our responsibilities to the community are to provide programs that meet the diverse needs of families, to cooperate with agencies and professions that share the responsibility for children, to assist families in gaining access to those agencies and allied professionals, and to assist in the development of community programs that are needed but not currently available. As individuals, we acknowledge our responsibility to provide the best possible programs of care and education for children and to conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity. Because of our specialized expertise in early childhood development and education and because the larger society shares responsibility for the welfare and protection of young children, we acknowledge a collective obligation to advocate for the best interests of children within early childhood programs and in the larger community and to serve as a voice for young children everywhere. The ideals and principles in this section are presented to distinguish between those that pertain to the work of the individual early childhood educator and those that more typically are engaged collectively on behalf of the best interests of children—with the understanding that individual early childhood educators have a shared responsibility for addressing the ideals and principles that are identified as "collective."

GENERAL POLICIES

Confidentiality

All information concerning employees should be considered confidential. All information concerning children and/or families available to employees of This is the Way Learning Center should be considered confidential. Any breach of the confidentiality of any information is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Dress Code

Employees are expected to dress in a manner that promotes pride and respect for This is the Way Learning Center and for the children and families it serves. Good grooming practices and appropriate attire promote an employee's overall effectiveness in fostering and maintaining a positive image. Safety, positive role modeling and customer service goals are attained through these measures. The Administrator will reserve the right to send an employee home if the attire is not deemed workplace appropriate.

Proper attire consists of business to casual professional dress Monday through Friday. Shirts, sweaters, and cover-ups must support your professional attire. Clothing must not contain logos or pictures inappropriate for the workplace. Mid-regions should always be appropriately covered.

Personal hygiene and appearance must promote a professional and clean look. Childcare is a service oriented business and employees are expected to represent professionalism in the work environment. Special dress-up days will be considered and posted in advance.

Gossip Policy

Gossip is not tolerated at our program. Teachers that participate in or instigate gossip about This is the Way Learning Center, an employee, or family will receive disciplinary action. Gossip is an activity that can drain, corrupt, distract and downshift the school's productivity, morale, and overall satisfaction. It has the potential to destroy an individual and is counterproductive to any organization.

Although, most people involved in gossip may not intend to do harm. Gossip can have (more often than not) a negative impact as it has the potential to destroy a person's or organization's reputation and credibility.

Gossip is defined as:

- Talking about a person's personal life when they are not present;
- Talking about a person's professional life without a supervisor present;
- Negative, or untrue, or disparaging comments or criticisms of another person or persons;
- Creating, sharing, or repeating information that can injure a person's credibility or reputation;
- Creating, sharing, or repeating a rumor about another person; or
- Creating, sharing, or repeating a rumor that is overheard or hearsay.

Violations of this policy calls for a written warning, with further disciplinary action – including termination if further incidents are documented.

Smoking Policy

This is the Way Learning Center has a smoke-free policy in accordance with DCF Child Care Center licensing regulations. There will be no smoking within the Play to Learn Childcare building or grounds, including vehicles.

Solicitation

Employees may not solicit campaigns, collect contributions, or distribute literature to children or families for any purpose. Employees may not solicit campaigns, collect contributions, or distribute literature to other employees except when all employees involved are not on work time.

Safety

Safety is an ongoing process that seeks to avoid, reduce, or eliminate unsafe acts or conditions that may result in injury to children, parents or employees. Employees are to immediately communicate any recognizable hazards to the Administrator/Program Director.

Policies and Procedures

The Administrator/Program Director and the Board of Directors of This is the Way Learning Center have set forth various policies and procedures. Children and parent policies and procedures should be reviewed by reviewing the Parent Handbook that is given to each family. These policies and procedures are essential to the safe operation of This is the Way Learning Center and should be read carefully and kept for future reference. Play to Learn Childcare complies with all Connecticut State Licensing codes.

HOURS & PAY PERIODS

Recording Time Worked

Employees are required to record their hours each workday on time sheets and a master calendar located outside the center's office. You are required to record your arrival time and departure time accurately. Your work hours should be reflective of your scheduled hours and overtime must be pre approved. Time sheets are reviewed by the Administrator prior to submission to payroll. Any mistakes noted on the timecard, payroll or other items related to pay should be immediately brought to the attention of the Administrator/Program Director.

Copies of the W-4 forms and Employment Eligibility forms will be kept in the personnel files. It is the employee's responsibility to update W-4 forms as needed. Any employee who falsifies payroll records in any manner will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Absenteeism and Tardiness

This is the Way Learning Center values stability and consistency of quality childcare services provided by our employees, which relies on staff adhering to their scheduled hours. This is the Way Learning Center requires regular attendance by all employees. All time off must be approved by the Administrator/Program Director. Unscheduled time off should be used only in cases of illness and emergency. We hold employees accountable for non-scheduled absences while at the same time remain sensitive to family, medical, and personal emergencies. Excessive unscheduled absences will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees who are unable to work a shift because of illness should notify the Administrator/Program Director by 10:00 pm the night of or 6:00 am the morning of, if the employee is unable to report to work. Employees that are going to be late for work must contact the Administrator/Program Director as soon as possible. If the Administrator/Program Director is not immediately available, the employee should leave a message and a number where she/he can be reached. ***In all scenarios of absenteeism, the employee must arrange for coverage of the shift or shifts being missed.***

Employees will receive a notice indicating that you are late according to scheduled hours. Exceptions may be granted due to actions beyond the employee's control such as inclement weather or an emergency situation. **Three (3) late notices will result in a one-day suspension without pay. Three (3) suspensions due to lateness will result in termination. Employees that adhere to scheduled hours for six months without an infraction have the opportunity to remove prior late occurrence action from their record via documentation (it will not be stricken from their file).**

If an employee is off of work because of illness for more than three days, the employee is required to bring in a release from a health care professional certifying that the employee is able to return to work. Two consecutive days of unauthorized or unreported absence is considered job abandonment by the employee.

Meals

Mealtimes are considered a teachable time and teachers are expected to sit, assist and participate in an appropriate manner. Food from outside sources can be consumed only during employee break times.

Scheduled Hours

Schedules will be made in accordance with meeting licensing requirements in the room. When child ratios decrease, staff's shift could follow with supervisor's approval. Employees may be hired for a specific room; however, they should be aware that they will be trained for more than one room and will be expected to work in other rooms as needed.

Work schedules are mutually agreed upon during the hiring process. Employees are expected to work the hours assigned. Personal and vacation requests must be submitted at least two-weeks prior to the date requested for approval. Hours of work/shifts may be adjusted periodically in response to enrollment changes and/or to meet mandated staff/child ratios.

Pay Periods

The pay periods for employees of This is the Way Learning Center consist of fourteen (14) consecutive calendar days. Paychecks will be completed by the Administrator/Program Director for distribution to employees on the Monday following the end of the pay period. Deductions will be made for state and federal income taxes, Social Security and Medicare. Any other deductions must be approved by the Administrator/Program Director.

Wage/Salary Structure

Starting salary for all employees will be based upon education level and experience. An increase within the salary structure will be determined based on years of service and maintaining acceptable performance standards at the annual review.

In order to provide fair and equitable compensation, This is the Way Learning Center has established a formal wage and salary administration program. All adjustments made to the wage and salary administration program are approved by the Board of Directors.

Bonus

All monetary bonus pay is added within a line item in employees' checks. Employees who are terminated or terminate their employment with This is the Way Learning Center within the 90-days of receiving a bonus; the employee can be subject to reimburse the bonus pay. The amount can be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Probationary Period

The orientation period provides This is the Way Learning Center a period to evaluate the qualifications of a new employee during the first three months of service. New Staff will be given a tour of the facility and introduced to key personnel. New staff will be assisted with meeting children, families, and coworkers during the orientation period.

A complete orientation to policies, procedures, childcare, and safety will be provided for you during your first three months of employment. The orientation for new staff will include observations in the classroom and meeting families and coworkers prior to assuming responsibilities. The employee will be required to complete the "new hire" packet of forms before the first day of employment. These forms will be kept in the employee's personnel file. You will be offered certification in CPR/AED/First Aid, Shaken Baby Syndrome, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, and DCF Child Abuse and Neglect Training. These classes are a mandatory requirement for the job.

Orientation of new staff to be completed within one week of working with children includes:

1. Review of the licensing administrative code
2. Policies included in Play to Learn Childcare Parent Handbook and Employee Handbook.
3. Review of contingency plans including fire and tornado evacuation plans and the operation of fire extinguishers
4. First aid procedures
5. Job responsibilities in relation to the job description
6. Training in the recognition of childhood illnesses and infectious disease control including handwashing procedures and universal precautions for handling bodily fluids. Schedule of activities of the center
8. Review of child abuse and neglect laws and reporting procedures
9. The procedures for ensuring that all childcare workers know the children assigned to their care and their whereabouts at all times
10. Child management techniques
11. Procedure for sharing information related to a child's special health care needs including any physical, emotional, social, or cognitive disabilities with any childcare worker who may be assigned to care for that child
12. Review of procedures to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) & Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) prior to employee's first day of work
13. The procedure to contact a parent if a child is absent from the center without prior notification from the parent
14. Information on any special needs a child enrolled in the center may have and the plan for how those needs will be met

The orientation checklist will be signed and dated upon completion of the orientation and placed in the personnel file. Staff will be given a copy of the Employee Handbook during orientation. Training staff will be appointed to new staff to provide guidance and feedback during their first 90 days of employment.

In the event of a lengthy absence of a regular staff member from the center, a substitute staff will be assigned from within the center and will have met the requirements of a regular staff member.

Professional Development

All teachers are certified or in process of certification in Early Childhood Education and are highly qualified individuals. They are required to be certified in CPR and First Aid. Staff will receive training in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS), and DCF Child Abuse/Neglect. All This is the Way Learning Center staff are also required to obtain a required number of hours annually of professional development through classes, seminars, workshops, conferences, and other related early childhood events. Regular staff meetings are mandatory.

This is the Way Learning Center may provide continuing professional development hours during the mandatory staff meetings.

All staff will earn continuing education credit hours annually, which will total at least 1% of their total hours worked. Topics for continuing education may include but are not limited to:

Staff Meetings and Training

Staff meetings and training will be provided by This is the Way Learning Center. All employees are required to attend. Staff meetings and training may be held within the facility or at another location and will be paid time. Attendance at such sessions is seen as an important avenue for staff development and is mandatory unless excused for good cause by the Administrator/Program Director.

Performance Evaluations

Employees receive their first performance evaluation at the end of a three-month orientation period. Thereafter, your performance and salary will be reviewed once each year. Employees will meet with the Administrator to review and sign your review, which becomes a permanent part of your personnel file.

RULES OF CONDUCT & COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

When an employee disregards the rules established by This is the Way Learning Center or conducts herself/himself in a manner which is deemed unacceptable, the first approach (when practical) will be that of guidance. Counseling by the Administrator/Program Director is intended to assist you in correction of your conduct. This is the Way Learning Center's Board of Director Personnel/Finance Committee will be notified of all disciplinary actions. All matters of disciplinary procedures are done in private.

1. The first infraction will lead to a conversation with the Program Director or Owner. This will be a "verbal warning" that the behavior is not appropriate and corrective action will be necessary. This conversation will be documented on the Employee Disciplinary Action Form and signed by the Administrator/Program Director and employee. The form will be kept in the employee's personnel file.
2. The second infraction will lead to a "written warning" with the option of a one-day suspension without pay. The Program Director/Owner will document the behavior which is in error and the corrective action necessary to prevent further disciplinary action on the Employee Disciplinary Action Form. The form will be signed by the Program Director/Owner and the employee. A copy will be given to the employee. The original form will be placed in the employee's personnel file.
3. The third infraction will lead to a second "written warning" and a three-day suspension without pay. The Program Director/Owner will submit in writing a description of the inappropriate behavior and the corrective disciplinary action needed. The Program Director/Owner and employee will sign the document.
4. The fourth infraction will result in termination. In the case of termination, notice will be in writing and signed by the Administrator/Program Director and the employee.

We are not required to go through the entire four-step process and discipline may begin or continue at any step depending on the severity of the infraction. The nature and severity of any violation can be of such a degree as determined by management to eliminate any and all steps and dismiss immediately.

An employee may be subject to discipline or dismissal for any reason, whether or not set forth in this Handbook. In all cases, the determination of appropriate discipline, including dismissal, rests solely in the discretion of the employer and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. All steps are documented in writing regardless of the phase of the process.

****If a staff member is observed out of ratio at any time, it will call for immediate termination.***

Complaint Resolution

The Administrator/Program Director and the Board of Directors of This is the Way Learning Center will do its best to make your employment a good experience. If for any reason, you are unhappy or dissatisfied with the work, work conditions, or with management policies, you should contact the Administrator/Program Director to discuss the problem.

Paid Time Off/Holidays

A total of 3 days are provided each year for Full-Time Employees to use for unforeseen personal reasons, doctor appointments, or illness and may be used during the first year of employment but after the allotted 180-day probationary period. Once the allotted PTO has been used up, all absences will be without pay (based on contract day rate or hourly rate). PTO is not intended to be used to schedule vacations. PTO days cannot be used consecutively unless there is medical documentation from an attending Physician excusing you from working. School holidays may not be converted to PTO days.

This is the Way Learning Center will be closed for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Columbus Day
- President's Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Break: Day before Thanksgiving is ½ day (1pm pick-up), Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday
- Christmas Break: 23rd is ½ day (1pm pick-up), Christmas Eve until January 1st

Inclement Weather – School Cancellation & Closures

Inclement weather is considered an act of God and is viewed as unforeseeable. In the event of inclement weather and school is canceled and an employee has successfully completed the probationary period, employees will be paid based on 50% of the normal hours worked on the given day.

The same rule would apply for any other short-term school closures.

COVID OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The following policy and/or procedural changes will be followed by This is the Way Learning Center as set forth by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) during this public health emergency, and for as long as it is deemed necessary. As the situation continues to evolve, This is the Way Learning Center will always abide by the requirements set forth by the OEC, CDC, and the local and state Departments of Health. While we understand that some of these requirements might not be ideal for the traditional “child-care” setting and might cause disruption to your day, know that everything we are doing is to reduce the risk of spreading any infectious disease. While the provisions listed herein will be our current operating procedures, please be advised that things may change day to day. This is the Way Learning Center is doing everything we can to keep all our children and staff safe and healthy. If at any time you, the parent or guardian, decide to disregard or do not agree to follow any of the policies and procedures, then care for your child will be immediately terminated..

DAILY HEALTH SCREENINGS

All staff and children are screened daily for any observable illness, including cold, cough, respiratory distress, to confirm temperature below 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit, and to answer a series of health screening questions before entering the building.

Staff who have symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as

- Fever of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Dry Cough
- Shortness of Breath
- Chills
- Loss of Taste or Smell
- Sore Throat
- Muscle Aches
- Rash

Should stay home. testing is recommended for people with covid-19 as soon as possible after symptoms begin. People who are at risk for getting sick with covid-19 who test positive should consult with a healthcare provider right away for possible treatment, even if their symptoms are mild. Staying home when sick can lower the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including covid-19, to other people.

SICK CHILD & SYMPTOMS

If, during the day, any of the following symptoms appear, then your child will be separated from the rest of the people in the center. You will be contacted immediately and **MUST** pick up your child within 1 hour of being notified.

Symptoms include (but are not limited to):

- Fever of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Dry Cough

- Shortness of Breath
- Chills
- Loss of Taste or Smell
- Sore Throat
- Muscle Aches
- Rash

While we understand that many of these symptoms can also be related to non-COVID-19 related issues, we must proceed with an abundance of caution during this public health emergency. If your child becomes ill, you must consult your child's doctor. If a COVID-19 test is ordered your child must remain out until the results return. If the results are negative, the child may return with a doctor's note and following our policy symptom guidelines. If the COVID 19 test is positive, the child must remain out for a minimum of 5 days and have a doctor's note.

All other sick policies set forth in the This is the Way Learning Center Parent Handbook will continue to be followed as well in addition to this policy.

DROP OFF/PICK UP

Parents/guardians will not be permitted to enter the facility beyond the designated drop-off and pick-up area. All parents and staff must wear masks in the drop-off area. This procedure change is for the safety of all persons present in the facility and to limit to the extent possible everyone's risk of exposure. Please advise any Emergency Contact persons of this procedural change.

After your child passes his or her health screening, he or she will be escorted into the classroom by a teacher. When coming to pick your child up, please ring the doorbell and your child will be brought out to you with their belongings.

If there is an emergency requiring you to enter the facility beyond the designated drop-off and pick-up area, parents/caregivers **MUST** wash your hands immediately upon entering and wear a mask. While in the facility, you must practice social distancing and remain 6 feet from all other people, except your own child.

INTENSIFIED CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

As per our usual operating procedures, all cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting procedures will be in place. Communal spaces will be sanitized between groups (i.e. playground, gross motor room). When children will be vacating a space for an extended period of time (i.e. leaving classroom to go to playground) that space will be disinfected given there will be ample time for the disinfectant to sit and evaporate per the instructions of the disinfecting solution before children are to return to the room.

HAND/RESPIRATORY HYGIENE

Staff and children will continue to engage in regular handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and will be done:

- Coming in contact with any child
- When entering a classroom for the first time

- Before and after eating
- After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing
- After using the restroom
- Before handing food
- After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated
- After using shared equipment/toys

All staff and children will be required to do the following:

- Cover cough and sneezes with tissues or the corner of the elbow,
- Encourage children, when appropriate to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of their elbow,
- Dispose of soiled tissues immediately after use,
- Wash hands after each cough or sneeze.

FOOD SERVICE

ALL meals and snacks **MUST BE PROVIDED BY FAMILIES** and will be served in the classroom. This is the Way Learning Center will provide additional snacks as a backup.

COVID-19 EXPOSURE NOTIFICATION

In February 2020, COVID-19 was added to the list of Reportable Diseases. This is the Way Learning Center is required to report such cases of COVID-19 infection immediately to the Connecticut Department of Public Health and to the local department of health in Stamford.

If a child or staff member who has been present in the program is diagnosed with COVID-19, must notify families and staff about the exposure. Please be advised that we are **NOT** required to share with you the child or staff member's name but will share with you the date of possible exposure and classroom that may have experienced the exposure.

Parents must immediately notify This is the Way Learning Center administration if you become aware that any person with whom your child or yourself has had contact exhibits any of the symptoms. It is recommended to self-isolate, quarantine, or has tested positive, or is presumed positive for COVID-19. (Further, you must immediately notify This is the Way Learning Center administration if anyone from your place of employment is presumed positive or tests positive for COVID-19 whether or not you have had direct contact with that person. In any scenario of positive test results of a child, family, and/or teacher of This is the Way Learning Center, the following steps will be Contact local Health Department, Child/Teacher must have negative results before returning

PTO Approval Process

All scheduled paid time off must be approved with the Administrator prior to being taken. The Administrator reserves the right to deny requested PTO when deemed necessary for operational purposes such as scheduling or training. Approved PTO is contingent on available PTO hours and approval may be subject to change. In addition, This is the Way Learning Center has the right to deny PTO if there is a history of unforeseen absences which results in risking the student-teacher ratio for that day.

EMPLOYEE RESIGNATION

Employees must give a two-week written notice when voluntarily terminating their employment with This is the Way Learning Center. The two-week period of notice must be a working notice (vacation and personal days will not be used). The two-week notice will begin on the date the Administrator receives the written notice directly from the employee. If an employee does not give a two-week working notice, all vacation pay will be forfeited.

Employees who voluntarily terminate their employment with This is the Way Learning Center within the first year of employment will be required to reimburse the center for the training and development costs. The amount will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

STAFF HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Please sign this acknowledgment, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center.

The handbook may be updated from time to time, and notice will be provided as updates are completed.

Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the This is the Way Learning Center Staff Handbook and reviewed the Staff Handbook with a senior member of the This is the Way Learning Center staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Staff Handbook and to ask center management any questions I may have regarding any policy, procedure, or information contained in the This is the Way Learning Center Handbook.

I have read and agree to the above policies.

Recipient Signature

Date

TITW Admin Signature

Date