

Waits River Valley School

PRE-KINDERGARTEN



Family Handbook
2024-2025

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Welcome to the Waits River Valley School Pre-Kindergarten Program



Our program is a not-for-profit, center-based, State-licensed Pre-Kindergarten Program located at the Waits River Valley School serving children ages 3-5 who reside in the towns of Corinth and Topsham. The program consists of a public Pre-Kindergarten from 8:00 a.m. to 2:50 p.m., Monday through Friday. The program is led by a certified teacher and support staff personnel. Identified special education students are seen by specialists per their IEP (Individualized Education Plan).

If your child qualifies for multi-year program access, his or her spot is guaranteed for the duration of their program age eligibility or until he or she is withdrawn from the program.

The program is licensed through the State of Vermont, Department of Children and Families, Child Development Division. A copy of licensing regulations are available to anyone interested and can also be accessed online at www.dcf.state.vt.us/cdd/. Reports and notices regarding our licensing will be posted in the classroom.

welcome

Waits River Valley School Prekindergarten Staff

Classroom Staff:

Ashley Jacobs, Early Childhood Educator
Amanda Osgood, Classroom Paraeducator

Other Early Education Staff:

April Simpson, Art
Thomas Chapin, Music
Anna Peart, Library/Media
James Graham, Physical Education

Other WRVS Staff:

Carlotta Perantoni, Principal
Carla Horniak, Nurse
Lisa Thompson, Office

OESU Staff:

Early Childhood Support Team

Capstone Head Start Staff



Philosophy

We believe that high-quality early childhood programs provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, language, and cognitive development of young children, while responding to the needs of families.

We believe that child-initiated, child-directed, teacher-supported play is essential to quality education for young children. Our program is designed to foster a trusting relationship that allows and encourages children to make choices, develop preferences, take initiative, risk failure, set an independent course for problem-solving, and accept help without sacrificing independence.

We believe that working with the families is an integral part in the child's healthy development. Through working with parents and collaborating with other community agencies, the needs of the child can best be met. Fostering a good relationship with parents is of utmost importance to us. It is through this nurturing of the whole child and the family that we seek to provide a program that will encourage the optimal growth and development of each young child.

All Pre-Kindergarten children are welcome in the program and we will make all efforts to offer accommodations and modifications that assist your child as needed to fully participate in preschool. We are able to differentiate our instruction in order to include all students throughout the day. If you have any concerns about your child's development please do not hesitate to talk to the Director.

Our curriculum balances child-initiated exploration with purposeful teacher-directed activities, addressing the developmental needs of the whole child. In our classrooms, children engage in experiences that integrate the Arts, Literature, Numeracy Skills, and Scientific Discovery within a social context that supports the development of self-regulation, cooperation, and self-confidence.

Goals

The primary goals of the Waits River Valley School Pre-Kindergarten Program are to:

- Provide an environment that respects children.
- Foster the development of positive self-esteem and social emotional growth.
- Support and promote positive relationships with peers and adults.
- Plan and implement a wide variety of multi-age and multi-level materials and activities.
- Offer opportunities for children's active exploration of their environment through play.
- Maintain confidentiality surrounding children and their families.
- Strengthen the relationship between families and school.
- Prepare students for Kindergarten through academics, motor control, and socialization.

Definition of Family

In this handbook we refer to a family as a parent, legal guardian, sponsor or anyone else who provides for the well-being, best-interest, and responsibility of the child in our care.

Enrollment

Children whose parents or legal guardians are residents of Topsham or Corinth, VT are eligible to enter Pre-Kindergarten at the beginning of the school year provided they have reached the age of three (3) on or before September 1st of that year. Children who are age eligible for Kindergarten will not be retained or enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten, unless a team discussion/decision for the best interest of the individual scholar and their programmatic needs..

The enrollment process is completed with our school registrar/secretary. After all registration paperwork (including proof of residency, immunizations, and documentation of the child's date of birth) has been submitted, your child's teacher will be in contact with you to confirm your child's start date. Enrollment in our Pre-Kindergarten Program is done through a lottery with completed registration paperwork between February 22, 2024 and noon on March 22, 2024.

Each application is viewed as an individual request and the lottery process does not guarantee sibling acceptance. Children who are three years old and enrolled in the program will maintain his or her enrollment status until they transition into Kindergarten.

Waiting List

A student is placed on the waiting list when the classroom is at capacity. The students are placed according to the date registration paperwork is received. The parents will be contacted when an opening becomes available during the school year. The waiting list, for each school year, is "cleared" upon the closure of that academic year. The waiting list for the following school year will be based upon those applicants who apply for the incoming/current academic year. Families may submit registration paperwork at any time to be placed on the waiting list. Priority is given to students who fall into the "at-risk" category.

Definition of "At-Risk" Children

- Children who are developmentally delayed by at least 25% of their chronological age in one or more of the five developmental domains (language, social-emotional, cognitive, physical or adaptive).
- Children who are on an IEP or have transitioned from CIS.
- Children who are from a non-English speaking family or are ELL.
- Children who are economically disadvantaged (at 185% of Federal poverty guidelines).
- Children who have a history of abuse, neglect or family violence.

Enrollment Files

According to Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations (3.4.4 Children's Files), the following information must be in an onsite file at the Waits River Valley School Pre-Kindergarten.

3.4.4.1 - The program director shall maintain a complete and up-to-date enrollment file on-site for each child enrolled in the Vermont Center Based Child Care and Preschool Programs (CBCCPP). A complete file shall contain at minimum the following information:

- A completed child's admission form signed and dated by the parent that includes the first date the child attended the CBCCPP and the 32 days and hours the child is regularly scheduled to attend the CBCCPP; (WRVS registration form)
- The child's name, current home address, and current home telephone number; (WRVS registration form.) If any change to this information occurs, please notify a staff member as it is imperative that we have up-to-date contact information on file.
- Identification of child's home language; (WRVS registration form)
- The child's date of birth; (WRVS registration form)
- Name, address, and all applicable current telephone numbers for parents; (WRVS registration form)
- Name, address, and all applicable current telephone numbers for at least two (2) other people designated by the parents as emergency contacts; (WRVS registration form)
- Names for all persons authorized to pick the child up from the CBCCPP; (WRVS registration form)
- Record of an annual physical and health history as required in the rule 5.1.2 of these regulations that includes the name and telephone number of the child's primary health care and dental care providers (if the child has a dental care provider); Preschool provides these to parents to be signed by PCP.
- A description of any special medical, developmental, emotional, or educational needs of the child including allergies, existing illnesses or injuries, previous serious illnesses or injuries and any prescribed medication including those for emergency situations; (WRVS health form)
- Written authorization from the parent for the CBCCPP to be able to obtain emergency medical care and transportation; (WRVS registration form)
- Child's immunization record or Vermont Department of Health approved exemption document as required in the rules in section 5.1.3 of VCCL regulations; (WRVS health forms)
- If applicable, a copy of court orders on custody and visitation arrangements as required in the rule 3.6.4 of VCCL regulations;
- If applicable, any obvious injuries discovered and documented on daily health check as required in the rule 5.3.2 of these VCCL regulations.

Fees and Payment

The Waits River Valley School Pre-Kindergarten Program is publicly funded, meaning it is free for families who live in the towns of Corinth or Topsham. If an out of district family wishes to enroll their child please contact the school to inquire.

Orientation

Our process for entering the Pre-Kindergarten program allows for a gradual start so that everyone becomes familiar with the program. This process usually begins in the Spring with a Pre-Kindergarten Screening & Open House.

In August, a “Meet & Greet” offers a visit to your child’s classroom. When school begins, half of the class starts on one day and the other half starts the next day. This smaller group size allows children and staff time to get to know each other before the full group attends. We encourage families to visit our library and playground to help your child become familiar with the school building and outdoor areas.

When children enroll after the start of the year (and there is a “spot” available), a visit to the classroom with a parent/guardian is scheduled. The child is invited to attend 2-3 days in a week before attending the full week program thereafter.

Pre-Kindergarten Hours of Operation and Calendar

The Waits River Valley School Pre-Kindergarten Program follows the Waits River Valley School calendar included in the WRVS Parent/Student Handbook and online, except for the start of the year. Spring conferences will include an opportunity for you to complete a parent/family survey, assisting us in the design of our goals and action planning for the next school year. Please see the Pre-Kindergarten newsletters or blog from your child’s teacher for additional dates the program is closed.

Daily Schedule

Each day, your child will have choice time, teacher-directed time, physical activity, meeting/circle, and snack/breakfast and lunch. Please see your child’s teacher for more specific information about the classroom schedule. Every effort will be made to have educational play and motor activities outside daily; please be sure your child comes to school dressed accordingly.

Attendance

We believe that regular attendance is important for your child’s optimal growth and development. The daily schedule is carefully planned to provide varied experiences. Please notify the school office at 439-5534 when your child will be absent from school. Arrival and dismissal will be at the upper gym entrance.

Release

Children will only be released to parents, legal guardians, or others authorized by the child’s parents or legal guardian. All families should have a current release form on file; valid identification which includes a photograph will be required. **Adults must sign their children in and out each day in the book located by the doorway to the classroom.**

Emergency School Closing/Delay

WRVS has adopted an electronic notification system whereby families will be notified of such events as school closings, and other emergencies deemed appropriate by the school administration. The success of this program is completely dependent on accurate and updated contact information provided to the school by families. Additionally, closure or delayed opening will be posted on WCAX.

Emergencies

The Waits River Valley School Pre-Kindergarten Program follows the Emergency Response Plan created by the school's safety team. Please contact the Principal if you have any questions.

Safety of Children

- Children will be actively supervised by a staff member at all times throughout the day.
- The outside play area will be supervised so that all children are visible to a member of the teaching staff at all times. Children will be actively supervised going to and coming from the outside play area and the classroom.
- A monthly fire drill will be held.
- A yearly lockdown, evacuation, and emergency safety drill will be held.
- Emergency Operation Plans/Crisis Plans are located in each classroom in the event of an active intruder or any other emergency
- Parents will be notified of the full evacuation and lockdown by the classroom teacher and/or the Principal.
- A staff member trained in first aid, CPR, and recognition of the communicable disease is available at all times. A first aid kit is always on-site.
- If a child becomes ill, they may be sent to the Nurse's room. They will remain with a staff member until a parent or caregiver comes to get them.

Sharing Information

Young children are often affected by events and changes in their environment. Children may not be able to express their feelings or relay significant information. In order to help your child deal with changes, please keep us informed of any events such as:

- Illness or hospitalization of family members.
- Pregnancies and births.
- Deaths of family members or close friends.
- Changes in family structure within the home.
- Plans for moving.
- Extra stimulation such as visitors or celebrations.

Note: As staff members, we are unable to share information regarding the details of the day with grandparents, aunts, uncles, babysitters, or other people who may pick up your child. All that staff is allowed to share relates to the type of day the child had. You must have a release signed to provide details to the person requested.

Confidentiality

All records concerning children at our program are confidential and will only be released with a parent/guardian's written consent.

Breakfast & Lunch

Pre-Kindergarten students will be served breakfast and lunch while at school. For the 2024-2025 school year, **meals from our cafeteria will be offered FREE to all children and we encourage every child to participate.** During meal times we work on conversation skills, manners, and talking about nutrition. Children who are 'picky eaters' at home will often try new foods and expand their palate while in a group setting. We will talk about being adventurous eaters and why we don't want to "yuck someone's yum." Research shows that young children need up to 15 tries of a new food before they decide that they like it and eating while at school is a great way to foster healthy food choices. We ask families to **NOT send in food from home, unless your child has a medical need.**

Water Bottle

A water bottle will be provided for each PK scholar.

Nutrition and Snacks

Participants will have a snack/breakfast and lunch. WRVS has been granted continued opportunity to be able to provide free meals to all students. You may choose to access free breakfast and lunch or send healthy options from home.

We will encourage children to open packages and feed themselves. When you send food to school with your child, please be sure to follow the school's wellness policy outlined in the WRVS Parent-Scholar Handbook. Children are not allowed to bring candy into school.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy you must notify us in writing. Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician. Epi-pens and other medications need to go through the school nurse. A caregiver who is trained in first-aid for choking is present at all meals.

Birthdays

To avoid hurt feelings, invitations to birthday parties should not be delivered at school unless everyone in the group is invited.

Sometimes parents send special snacks for birthday celebrations (or other special occasions); these are very welcome. Please let the staff know ahead of time so that we can accommodate children with allergies and special diets.

Clothing

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, including sand, and other sensory activities. Our outdoor space is called our “Forest Classroom” and is used as an extension of the indoor classroom. We will play outdoors for an hour on most days and children need to have outer gear for the season. Please see the teacher if you need support in gathering winter or seasonal gear.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate footwear and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities. We ask that children have “indoor shoes” that are either easy to close Velcro shoes or Crocs. These indoor shoes help keep our classroom clean and dry throughout the year.

Please send a change of clothing (labeled with your child’s name) with your child to be stored at school. We have extra clothing in case of accidents. Please wash and return them to us if your child borrows them.

Toys from Home

Toys from home should not be brought to school. If a child does bring a toy from home, they will be asked to keep it in their backpack until the end of the day. However, we understand that certain items (blankets etc.) are developmentally appropriate and function as a security item. If your child has an item like this, please let the staff know, and it may be brought to school until your child is ready for a gentle parting.

Family Involvement

We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program and we believe parent participation is a vital component of a child’s school experience. Parents provide valuable input that helps to ensure a successful transition between home and school. Parents are encouraged to become actively involved.

- A background statement completed prior to entry into the program provides important information about each child.
- Home visits can be arranged between parents and teachers for an opportunity to exchange information and interact with children on an individual basis.
- Parent conferences are held twice a year which will review the student’s progress. Additional conferences may be scheduled at the request of a parent or teacher.
- Parents and teachers work together to create a goal for the best interest of the student.
- Transition to the Kindergarten plan will be discussed with the family during conferences.
- Transition due to a move or major change in the family’s life can be written into a plan at a conference or a scheduled meeting.
- Parents are welcome to become involved in informal ways such as sharing a special talent with a class or going on a field trip. Formal registration within the OESU Volunteer Program must be completed PRIOR to any scheduled participation. (Contact Lisa Thompson, 439-5534 for more information)
- Parent meetings will be scheduled as needed.

We emphasize the importance of communication between parents, families, teachers and children. The Home/School Folder is one of the primary modes of communication that is used in our program. Each child will have a folder that travels between school and home. At school, any notes about your child and updates about his/her learning will be placed in this folder. Families can also use the folder or email to tell us about what is happening at home or communicate any questions or concerns. Please feel free to call or email the teaching staff in your child's classroom if you have any immediate concerns. Parents and guardians have access to their child without prior notice and have access to their children's records (rule 3.4.4.6 in VT Child Care Licensing Regulations.)

Communication & Family Partnership

- **Daily Communications** - We will have communication at pick up and drop off times. If you feel that you will need more time to talk with a staff member please let us know so we can set up a meeting for 7:45 or 2:50 to coincide with arrival or departure.
- **Bulletin Board** - There is a parent bulletin board near the cubbies that has our daily schedule, most recent newsletter, lunch menu, copy of the Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations, and any other important information.
- **Friday Communication Folder** - Each week we will send home a "Friday Folder" for families. The materials in the left pocket need to be returned to school and the materials in the right pocket are for you to keep at home. Please return your child's folder on Monday.
- **Newsletters** will go home monthly in your child's folder. There will also be a copy posted on the bulletin board.
- **Email** - We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.
- **Parent Resources** - If you are interested in a particular aspect of child development please let us know and we can provide resources.
- **Family Visits** - We encourage families to visit our program (COVID regulations being followed). Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving. Please contact the teacher to find out the current COVID policy since visitors may be restricted.
- **Conferences** - Parent/Teacher conferences occur twice a year. During these conferences we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time and we encourage you to communicate any concerns.

Outings and Field Trips

Field trips are designed to be developmentally appropriate and individualized for Pre-K scholars. K-8 field trips are not part of Pre-K programming.

Weather permitting; we conduct up to 60 minutes of supervised outdoor play once a day for all children. Children are accounted for at all times. From time to time, there will be planned field trips. This program does not transport children for field trips. We typically organize a Spring trip and will provide information several weeks beforehand. Parents/guardians must accompany their child on the field trip.

Bus Transportation

WRVS will only provide transportation for Pre-K scholars who are 4 years old. We do not alter the buses after the start of the academic year, if your child turns 4 during the academic year- we ask that you continue personal transportation until the start of the next academic year.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism and inclusion are vital for all children because it sets social goals and promotes respect for all people and the environment we live in. We utilize books, music, games, and a wide range of activities as aids to teach our children respect for our world and the diversity of life upon it.

Toilet Learning

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports the child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24-months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions, and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

Health

Your Pre-Kindergarten child should come to school in good health and be fully able to participate in all activities, including outdoor play. Any Pre-Kindergarten student who is ill or injured may be dismissed through the Health Office. The school nurse will notify families of the child's illness/injury and if required, dismissal should occur as soon as possible.

On your child's admission form you are asked to designate at least two people that may be contacted to pick up your child when you are unable to be reached. Please make sure you have notified these emergency transporters that they have been listed. As well, it's a good idea to alert emergency contacts if you know that you will not be available to arrive promptly at the school in case you are called to do so.

Symptoms requiring your child to stay at home are (but not limited to):

- Fever of 100.4 or above in the past 24 hours.
 - **Note: The child may return when he/she is fever free and after being kept home for at least 24 hours.** This means that your child will be out of the program for one full day after being sent

home. Remember, giving your child medication to bring down their fever and then sending the child to daycare afterwards is not acceptable, as the child is still ill and contagious to other children. We will not admit children who are ill and possibly contagious. Admission is at the discretion of the caregiver, not the parents.

- Has vomited in the past 24 hours
- Has green/yellow discharge coming from nose or coughing up mucus. This could be a sign of infection.
- Unidentified rash (unexplained and/or with fever or behavior change)
- Weeping or oozing eye drainage
- Blood or mucus in diarrhea or stool
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Impetigo (a contagious skin disease, until 24-48 hours after treatment begins)
- Swollen glands and/or sore throat
- Strep throat (until 24 hours after treatment begins and no fever for 24 hours without suppressant)
- Common cold (when accompanied by inability to participate in all regular activities, persistent crying, persistent coughing, difficulty breathing, extreme irritability, continuous drainage, or green or yellow drainage from nose, fever)
- Ear infection (when accompanied by inability to participate in all regular activities, persistent cry, or any fever)
- Any contagious illness (i.e. conjunctivitis, chicken pox, strep throat, Hand, Foot, Mouth, etc.)
- Infestation (lice, Scabies, fleas,)
- CHILD MUST BE ABLE TO NORMALLY PARTICIPATE IN ALL REGULAR ACTIVITIES
- A child with a communicable disease will not be accepted for care until s/he has received appropriate medical treatment and is no longer contagious. A doctor's note that the child may return back to childcare is REQUIRED for all communicable diseases. In the case of strep throat, conjunctivitis or impetigo, for example, 24 hours on a prescribed medication is required before a child may return to childcare. With chicken pox, a child's poxes must all be completely scabbed over before returning. If your child has head lice or nits, s/he must be treated and all nits removed before reentering the childcare.

Wellness

All students must be in compliance with State immunization requirements and annual well child exams. WRVS must have a copy of these medical services on file. Please provide the school nurse with any updates/changes in your child's health information, such as an updated annual exam, new immunizations, medications, or allergies. If you have questions regarding your child's health and attendance please call Carla Horniak, the school nurse, at 439-5534.

Children are required to wash their hands upon arrival, after using the bathroom, before/after eating and after blowing their noses.

Medication Policy

The Waits River Valley School medication procedures require the use of a written physician's order for school administration of prescription medication. As well, a written permission from a parent/guardian to have the medication administered in school. The permission form and detailed prescription medication procedure are included in the WRVS Parent/Student Handbook. The following information must be provided: name & date of birth of the child, any medication allergies, name of medication and dosage as well as administration schedule and route (mouth, nose, inhalation), reason for medication, start and end dates of medication, and any special instructions.

If non-prescription medication is to be used during school hours, the school nurse must be notified and a written permission with instructions for administration from the parent/guardian must accompany the medications. Medications may not be transported to school by your child.

For further information regarding health concerns, refer to the WRVS Parent-Scholar Handbook.

Injuries/Accidents

In the event of an accident or injury, first aid will be administered by the classroom teacher or school nurse. The nurse or teacher will complete an accident report. If the injury is minor, you will be notified at the end of the day through the accident report. If there is a serious accident, you or the emergency contact will be called immediately and/or appropriate emergency care will be sought. If warranted, emergency medical services will be called or your child will be transported to emergency care. For any injury that requires a visit to a medical or dental professional, a copy of the accident report will be sent to Child Care Licensing within two (2) working days.

Your child's daily program will include outside play (except when the temperature is below 10 degrees, factoring in the wind chill). If you choose to use sunblock, we ask that you apply this at home. If you want reapplication at school, please send in a labeled bottle with your signature and written directions of when you want the sunscreen applied (for example: "during the fall and spring months"). This permission must be updated annually. Children are not permitted to apply sunscreen independently.

Behavior Management/Discipline Policy

Classroom environments are structured to encourage positive behavior; redirection of children occurs in a positive manner, keeping in mind the child's interests and motives. In Pre-Kindergarten, we emphasize and teach age-appropriate social skills and behaviors to all children. Each staff member establishes a positive, supportive relationship with each child and provides children with good role models of appropriate behavior. Clear, consistent behavioral expectations are established including being kind to each other and being respectful of others and of the environment. The Pre-Kindergarten staff use a variety of ways to help young children learn self-control, independence, and cooperation. Some of these strategies include:

- Redirection, encouragement, and reinforcing appropriate behaviors
- Allowing children to make choices within the behavioral guidelines.
- Modifying the environment to minimize potential conflicts and to promote learning.
- Guiding and assisting children in learning ways to solve problems/conflicts themselves i.e. using their words (talking), changing materials or moving to another space.
- “Take a break” allows children to calm themselves in a safe manner. This might look like a child doing a quiet activity at a table, reading a book, or sitting quietly away from the group.

If a child exhibits a challenge with behavior, the following steps are taken:

- The teacher talks with the child about the problem behavior, explaining why it is a problem.
- The teacher then offers alternative behaviors, strategies, materials, and gives the child choices within the behavioral guidelines.
- The teacher observes, assesses the child, the group and the environment and makes changes accordingly.
- The teacher discusses the situation with the child’s family via telephone call or note home (or both).

Positive Guidance

Following our philosophy of positive guidance with children, it is our practice not to expel a child, but rather collaborate with the family to meet the child and family’s needs, as well as the needs of our program. Children are encouraged and guided to treat each other and adults with respect, self-control, and kindness. Each student at the WRVS Pre-Kindergarten has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly environment
- Be treated with respect and understanding
- Receive the help and support of caring adults

When a child becomes verbally or physically aggressive we intervene immediately to protect others in the classroom. Our approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When positive guidance is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. If a child is unable to self-regulate and is not responding to our positive guidance strategies the adult will support a child to find a space that is safe for him or her as well as others in the classroom. The adult then assists the child to help calm him or herself using positive guidance strategies and supports. Some children require more guidance and support to grow socially, emotionally, and behaviorally. Together with parents, the team may decide that positive guidance strategies are not adequate to support a child’s social emotional development. Individualized supports may need to be put in place for a child to be successful.

Suspected Child Abuse

All school employees are mandated by law – VSA 33 §4911 to 4920 – to report to a local child protective agency, known or suspected child abuse within 24 hours of notification or suspected child abuse. Parents or guardians

who wish to file a complaint against a school employee or other person that they suspect has engaged in abuse of a child at a school site may contact the school district office. The parent or guardian may also file a formal report with a local child protective agency.

Waits River Valley School Policies

In addition to the Waits River Valley School Pre-Kindergarten Program guidance we also follow the policies for the Waits River Valley School. These policies can be found in the WRVS Parent-Student Handbook and on the school's website <http://www.wrvschool.org>).

Vermont Early Learning Standards

Our curriculum is based on the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS). These standards emphasize the importance of learning through play and exploration. We have copies of the standards on hand and the Agency of Education has additional information online. You can learn more about the VELs at:

<https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-early-education-early-learning-standards.pdf>

Educational Support

The Early Education Team is committed to a comprehensive system of educational services that will result in all children succeeding in the classroom. Your child's teacher may discuss additional supports and services, instructional strategies or accommodations if there are concerns. Additionally, your child's teacher is available should you have any concerns.

Special Education & Child Find

School Districts are responsible to identify, locate and evaluate any child who may have a disability. This is done through "child find" activities, such as public notices in newspapers and social media, communication with other community agencies, and through developmental screenings. When a referral for evaluation is needed, the responsibility is determined by the child's age.

- Children aged birth-to-three are referred to Children's Integrated Services-Early Intervention.
- Children aged 3 through 5 are evaluated by the local educational agency (LEA) where the child resides. If eligible, services are offered based on the outcome of the child's IEP meeting for students in a public school setting and in the private schools within the school district boundary.
- Students aged 5 through 21 who are parentally placed in independent elementary and secondary schools outside their LEA of residence, are provided Child Find by the LEA where the independent school is located.

When a child is found eligible for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the school district is responsible for offering services within the boundaries of the school district. If a parent declines these services or places their

child in a program outside of the school district, there is no obligation for service provision. For more information, visit: <http://education.vermont.gov/student-support/special-education>

Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal civil rights statute prohibiting discrimination against students with disabilities and guarantees them a free and appropriate public education. Every entity, including public and independent schools, that receives federal funding, directly or indirectly, is subject to the requirements and there is no federal or state funding provided to assist schools in complying with Section 504 yet public and independent schools receiving federal funds, directly or indirectly, are individually responsible for compliance with Section 504. Federal regulations prohibit schools and private programs from excluding students with disabilities for whom they are able to provide an appropriate education with “minor adjustments.” Section 504 is a civil rights statute and not a special education statute, and thus has a broader scope than the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Students with disabilities receiving special education services are protected under Section 504 but not all Section 504 students are eligible for special education. With regard to pre-kindergarten, the pre-kindergarten program that the child attends, not the school district, is the responsible party for Section 504. For more information, visit: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) & Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA)

is a Civil Rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. For more information, visit: <https://www.ada.gov/>

Hazing, Harassment & Bullying

WRVS is committed to providing all of its students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect. For more information, please see the Orange East Supervisory Union policy titled “Policy on the Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students” CODE: F20.

Special Issues

SMOKING - State of Vermont law expressly prohibits the use of tobacco products anywhere on school property at any time by any person, adult or child. Your compliance with this law is mandated by the Agency of Education. This includes any and all tobacco products outlined in the WRVS tobacco policy.

ASBESTOS - Waits River Valley School is an ASBESTOS free school.

LEAD - The water system at Waits River Valley School is inspected regularly and is LEAD free. Test results can be found at <https://leadresults.vermont.gov/>.

Concerns

Should you have questions or concerns about the program, about school procedures, or if you need assistance regarding your child, please talk with your child's teacher. Should further assistance be needed please contact the Principal. If the issue is still not resolved, the next person to contact is the Superintendent. If you continue to have concerns you can contact the Vermont Child Care Consumer Concern Line at 800-649-2642. We are interested in knowing your thoughts, questions, concerns, and suggestions.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement

This handbook may be updated from time-to-time; notice will be provided as updates are implemented.

Please sign the acknowledgement below, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the Waits River Valley School Pre-Kindergarten prior to enrollment.

Thank you for acknowledging the policies and procedures we have established for the safety and welfare of all children in our care. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.

Please cut along the dotted line and return the section below to your child's teacher. Thank you.

I have received the Waits River Valley School Pre-Kindergarten Family Handbook. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself with the Family Handbook and to ask for clarification of any policy, procedure or information that I do not understand.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Pre-Kindergarten Staff Signature

Date