

Wilmington CARES
Children's Art, Recreation and CARES Services



PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

On behalf of the staff of the Wilmington Public Schools CARES Program, we welcome you to this academic school year. This program is professionally staffed, with a child/staff ratio of 10:1. It is designed to complement the curriculum and activities of the regular school day, and is open to all students within Wilmington Public Schools from Kindergarten through Grade 5. We provide your child with an enriching environment with an emphasis on the needs of your child, individually. This safe, caring environment offers structured activities, which are designed to promote an individual child’s physical, intellectual, emotional and social well-being and growth.

The program consists of a range of activities, including outdoor play, arts and crafts, library time, movies, free play, computers, board games and puzzles. Children may also read a book, finish homework, or just enjoy quiet time under the supervision of our qualified staff.

This non-academic part of a child’s day is crucial to his/her social and emotional development. Self-confidence, self-respect and self-definition are encouraged. Making choices, developing responsibilities, learning to express his/her needs, and building friendships are important to a child’s development.

This handbook presents the policies and procedures of the CARES Programs. Knowing the policies and procedures will allow for a more beneficial experience for both you and your child. CARES is committed to providing any and all reasonable accommodations based on our physical operating constraints. The staff of the Wilmington CARES Program looks forward to a safe and successful year working with you and your child.

The CARES Program is conducted right at your child’s school. “Home Base” for each school is as follows:

Boutwell:	Cafeteria	Wildwood:	Cafeteria @ the North Int.
Shawsheen:	Cafeteria	Woburn St.:	Cafeteria
North Int.:	Cafeteria	West Int.:	Cafeteria

We will also make use of other space such as the library, gymnasium, playground, and cafeteria

2. PROGRAM SCHEDULES

SCHOOL DAY

NORTH/WOBURN	9:05-3:25
BOUTWELL	8:35-2:05
WEST/SHAWSHEEN	8:40-3:00
WILDWOOD	7:45-1:15

CARES BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

	<u>BEFORE</u>	<u>AFTER</u>
BOUTWELL	6:45-8:30	2:00-5:30
WILDWOOD	6:45-7:45	1:15-5:30
NORTH/WOBURN	6:45-9:00	3:25-5:30
WEST/SHAWSHEEN	6:45-8:30	2:50-5:30

PICK-UP TIME IS NO LATER THAN 5:30 P.M. PLEASE ALLOW YOURSELF ENOUGH TRAVEL TIME. IF YOU WILL BE LATE DUE TO TRAFFIC OR OTHER COMMITMENTS YOU MUST MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUR CHILD TO BE PICKED UP BY SOMEONE ELSE.

CONTACT INFORMATION/ SITE PHONE NUMBERS

BOUTWELL (978) 815-1503

WILDWOOD (978) 815-1504

SHAWSHEEN (978) 815-1505

WOBURN STREET (978) 815-1507

NORTH INTER. (978) 815-1508

WEST INTER. (978) 815-1509

CARES OFFICE (978) 284-6111

3. PARENT SECURITY CODE INFORMATION

Wilmington Public Schools and CARES work hard to make our buildings secure in order to keep our children and staff safe. One of those steps is to keep our schools locked during all CARES Programs.

Pin pads for CARES will allow parents entry for drop-off and pick-up. You will be issued a code that will give you entry into the building during CARES hours only. In order to make this program successful, we ask that you follow the guidelines below. Failure to follow these safeguards can jeopardize school safety and your pin code access may be terminated.

1. Please share your code only between parents or with the person who picks up or drops off your child on a regular basis.
2. **DO NOT** share this code with your child.
3. Do not share your code with someone who may pick up or drop off once or on a rare occasion. Those people can call the CARES cell phone to ask someone to answer the door, ring the CARES doorbell located at most provided by the CARES staff at your school.
4. You must still sign your child in and out for CARES when you let yourself in, please go directly to the usual sign-in or out location and CARES staff will help you from there. Please refrain from letting others into the building using your code.
5. Please keep the CARES cell phone number plugged into your cell phone so that you can call us in the event that the system or your code fails for any reason.
6. If your code has been compromised in any way, please notify the CARES office immediately at 978-284-6111.

4. APPLICATION PROCESS

- ◆ Registration and payment is online through **Community Pass**.
- ◆ Enrollments will be accepted throughout the school year and children will be placed based on space availability. However, only registrations submitted by program deadlines will be guaranteed a placement.
- ◆ Children must be attending Wilmington Public Schools in kindergarten through grade 5.
- ◆ Enrollments are accepted for all children enrolled in Wilmington Public Schools. Wilmington residents will be accepted for vacation weeks and summer programs.

b. Emergency Contacts

It may be necessary to contact you during your workday in case of emergency. It is imperative that you keep your child's emergency record updated. Please notify the Program Coordinator, in writing, when changes occur in your address, phone numbers, change of work positions, schools or follow the alternate arrangements doctors, health information, etc. Also, it is imperative that you have a friend or neighbor designated to serve as back up to the parents and guardians in emergency situations. Each site has a separate phone number to use in case of emergency.

5. TUITION AND PAYMENT POLICIES

a. Tuition/Schedule Changes

- ◆ CARES – Yearly tuition is divided into **ten equal payments** that cover the 180 days that school is in session.

- ◆ There is a non-refundable \$20.00 registration fee for **each** CARES Program during the school year. (Note: The registration fee for our summer program is \$30.00.)
- ◆ Payments are made through the Community Pass account by credit card or check.
- ◆ In the event of absences from the program, refunds will not be given. (This includes absences for suspension.)
- ◆ Schedule changes will be accommodated if space is available. Written notice for schedule changes must be submitted to the Program Coordinator or Program Assistant **two weeks prior to the beginning of the month before tuition is posted.** No credits or reimbursements for schedule changes or withdrawals made after tuition is posted which is the first of every month. If you choose to withdraw or drop days after tuition is posted you are responsible for the tuition posted.
- ◆ **Schedule changes will not be accepted for a partial month.** There is a \$10 change fee for each request, up to 3 times per school year. For safety reasons, we cannot accommodate rotating schedules or a schedule with different days each week.
- ◆ **Extra Sessions:** Extra sessions, outside your child's regular schedule, are allowed for emergencies on an as needed basis provided space is available, and your child is already enrolled in the program needed (i.e. an extra morning for an AM child or an extra afternoon for a PM child). Please contact the CARES Office to arrange for the time required. If CARES Office is unavailable and you have an emergency situation, please contact the Site Coordinator at your child's school.
- ◆ There is an additional fee for extra days of \$10.00 for before school session \$20.00 for after school session. Payment will be added to your Community Pass once confirmed. You may not "swap" a scheduled day for an unscheduled day.
- ◆ ****Please Note:** Early Release Days prove to be very challenging to staff since teachers and aides are absent from CARES in order to participate in curriculum development and parent conferences. As such, children only qualify to attend if it is their regularly scheduled day. If you drop a day that falls on an ERD, unfortunately your child is no longer eligible to attend those ERDs and no credits or refunds will be given. There are additional fees for early release days. ERDs must be chosen and paid for at the time of enrollment. We cannot add ERDs after the registration deadline.
- ◆ **Vacation & summer Programs.** There will be **NO REFUNDS/CREDITS OR SWITCHING DAYS** after the registration deadline. We cannot guarantee any additional weeks after the registration deadline.

b. Late Payments

There is a nonrefundable **\$20.00 surcharge** on all tuition not received by the 7th of each month. Past due tuition may result in suspension of services and withdrawal of a child from the program until all fees are paid in full. Continual late payment of tuition may be cause for termination of services.

c. Late Pick-up

Pick-up time is 5:30PM for all after school programs. Parents who pick up their children after 5:30 will be subject to a **late fee of \$15.00 for the first 5-10 minutes and \$1.00 per minute thereafter.** Time is based on the cell phone clock at each site. **Three (3) offenses in a year from July 1st to June 30th will result in an early pick up by 5:00 for two weeks. Any late pick up after your first three offenses will result in the suspension of your child's enrollment in the program for one week. If the problem continues thereafter, your child's enrollment may be terminated.**

If you have two children at one site, you will be responsible for a single fee. If you have children at more than one site and are late to each site, you will be responsible for paying the late fee at each school.

In case of inclement weather, please allow enough travel time to account for heavier traffic.

Late fees will be added directly to your Community Pass account.

d. Returned Check Policy: There is a \$25.00 processing fee that will be applied to your CommunityPass account for NSF checks.

6. PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

a. Absences

A major responsibility of the CARES Staff is to know if a child is absent. **It is imperative that the parents notify the Site Coordinator by calling or texting his/her CARES telephone, at least one hour prior to the start of the After-School program.** You will also need to make an additional call to your child's school to notify his/her classroom teacher that s/he will be absent. This will assure the staff of the safety and whereabouts of the child. **(Do not assume that if you informed your child's classroom teacher, the CARES staff will automatically be made aware of an absence. You must make 2 calls.)** Please identify yourself, give your child's name and school, the date of the absence, and state the reason why your child will not be at After-School. **If your child is dismissed from school, you must notify the CARES Program that s/he will not be attending. Please do so by calling/texting the Site Coordinator as soon as possible. Please note: Parents who do not notify the CARES staff of their child's absence will be assessed a \$20.00 finder's fee. Continual non-communication for absenteeism (3 offenses) may be grounds for suspension from the program.**

If your child attends school but will not be at CARES she/he must provide the regular classroom teacher with written notification. In addition, the parent must notify the CARES Site Coordinator as outlined above.

If a child does not report to our program on a scheduled day, and we have not received direct notification from the parent of an absence, we will initiate our Missing Child Protocol. If the classroom teacher and/or secretary have not been made aware of a change in the child's after school schedule either, his/her parents will be immediately notified.

Note: In the event of absences from the program, refunds will not be given. (This includes absences for suspension.)

b. Sign-in and Sign-out Procedures

Parents must sign in their child in the daily log each morning for Before School. **CHILDREN MAY NOT BE DROPPED OFF.** Parents must bring their child directly to the staff member in charge of attendance when they arrive in the morning. If you have any special instructions or information that would help us make your child's transition from home to school smoother, please inform us at this time. The staff will not call from the Before School Program to locate a child who has not arrived.

Parents must sign out their child in the daily log each afternoon. Parents must report directly to the staff member in charge of dismissing their child from After School. Parents and guardians must show picture identification when asked. Dismissal time is a good time to check on your child's progress.

Please park in designated spots at pick-up and drop-off. Please do not leave children unattended in your car and be certain to turn your car off while you are away from it.

c. Release of Children

Children will only be allowed to leave the program with persons listed on the enrollment form. If anyone not listed on the form is to pick up your child, you must supply us with written authorization in advance. **If someone other than yourself is picking up your child, you must notify the Site Coordinator.**

Please be sure to let that person know that they will be required to show identification. Your child must be picked up by an adult, with a valid ID, who is at least 18 years of age. (Siblings over the age of 16 may dismiss with parent approval).

Children will not be permitted to leave any program alone.

Children will not be permitted to leave the program with anyone who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. If the situation warrants, the staff may ask the parent to call a friend/relative or a ride share service.

If there is someone who may not pick up your child, or someone with whom you do not want your child to come into contact, please inform the Site Coordinator at the CARES Program in addition to the school. Please provide legal documentation to the Program Coordinator (in addition to your child's school) if there are parental restrictions. We must have legal documentation on file in order to deny a parent's access to his/her child. Do not assume that information provided to the school office is shared with the CARES staff.

A child will not be permitted to sign into a program if they did not attend school on a given day.

d. Impaired Driving Policy

The safety of the children in our care is our top priority. Dealing with impaired parents can be a very real concern. The staff at the CARES Programs will follow these procedures if they have reason to believe that a parent, friend or relative who arrives to pick up a child in our care is impaired.

1. Address the adult in a private area whenever possible.
2. Staff, preferably the Site Coordinator or a Team Leader, will say:

'We are concerned that you may not be able to operate your car as well as you usually can.'
'We'd like to call someone to have them take you and your child home-perhaps someone else can pick up your car later.'

3. IF the person refuses, we will say:

'We can't stop you from leaving with your child, but we are very concerned about your safety and your child's. If you leave with your child I will call 911 right now, give them your license number and a description of your car, and tell them that we believe the driver may be impaired and has a child in the car.'

Please note that legally, we cannot stop a parent or guardian from taking their child. If staff have taken the steps above and have been unsuccessful, they will document the incident. If we have clear proof of the drinking or impairment, as mandated reporters, we must report the incident to child services.

e. Withdrawal

Notification for a child to be withdrawn from the program must be given, **in writing**, to the CARES Program Coordinator at least **two weeks** prior to the withdrawal. Parents who fail to do so, will be responsible for the tuition once it has been posted.

f. Termination and Suspension Policy

Enrollment of a child may be terminated at any time; if, in the judgment of the Program Coordinator, further participation in the program is not in the best interest of the child or the program. Services to your child may be terminated or suspended for the following reasons including, but not limited to:

- ◆ A child's behavior and discipline issues that affect the health, welfare and safety of him/herself, other children and/or staff
- ◆ A parent or guardian's maltreatment of staff, including but not limited to, using profanity or foul language directed at the staff member or within the context of a discussion
- ◆ Lack of program support or follow through by parents or guardians
- ◆ Inappropriateness of program to meet the needs of the child
- ◆ Non-adherence to program policies, including failure to pay tuition when due, continued late pick-ups, non-communication of absenteeism, or other violations.

The Program Coordinator will contact parents prior to a suspension or termination. However, if a parent or child's behavior is found to endanger his/her own safety or that of other children or staff in the program, immediate suspension will result.

g. Snack

Afternoon snack time is a time for nourishment, communication, and relaxation. It is a transitional time from the school day to play and is a regular part of each child's day. A variety of nutritious snacks are provided. Children are offered one snack and one drink. You may provide food from home if you prefer. Special dietary restraints must be communicated to the staff by note or discussion when you pick up your child.

If you prefer to send food from home, please be aware of any restrictions that your school has with regard to peanut products

Please do not send any food from home for breakfast, lunch or snacks that must be heated. Staff will not be available to prepare or heat food from home.

IMPORTANT NOTE RE: FOOD ALLERGIES: If your child has food allergies, and s/he will participate in any of the breakfast or snack programs, please take the time to discuss the options with the School Nurse and the Food Services Coordinator. We ask that you provide us with a signed and dated note listing those foods offered that are approved for your child's consumption.

h. Personal Property

Children are responsible for taking all of their belongings with them at the end of the day. Any personal property that remains will be taken to the lost and found. Staff will help children to keep their belongings organized, but will not be responsible for lost property. As such, it is preferred that children should not bring toys, money, games, electronics, etc. to the program. Any items brought to school (lunch box, back-pack, books) should be labeled clearly with the child's name.

i. Dress Policy

Please be sure to label your child's clothing (hat, mittens, coats, jackets) with his/her first and last names. **In the cold weather, children may be reminded to dress properly before they can participate in outdoor activities.**

j. Homework Policy:

Children will be provided with time, a quiet area and help to complete their homework. However, it is not the responsibility of the staff to require a child to do their homework or to search through backpacks

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to see what a child has for homework. It is up to the parent/guardian and the child to agree to take advantage of this opportunity or not. Our staff will certainly encourage children to use this time to their advantage, but we will not be responsible for a child's homework.

k. School Cancellation/Delays/Emergency Dismissal

The CARES Program follows the regular school calendar.

When school has been *cancelled* due to inclement weather for the Wilmington Public Schools, the CARES Program will also be cancelled.

In the event that a school opening is *delayed*, the before school session of the CARES Programs are cancelled. The afternoon session is conducted as usual.

In the event of an *emergency early dismissal* the after school session of the CARES Programs will be cancelled.

If the Program Coordinator deems it necessary to cancel any CARES Program due to inclement weather or an emergency on a day that school has not been cancelled, a decision will be made by noon. We will make every effort to notify parents by telephone as quickly as possible; however, **we encourage you to listen to the radio for cancellation notices when the weather conditions are poor.**

There will be no credits given for snow days, delayed openings or early dismissals.

7. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

a. Behavior Management Philosophy

The CARES Programs provide all children with the opportunity to grow and learn in a social environment. Children will have the opportunity to learn and hone many life skills such as self-control, problem solving, communication and respect for self and others. Behavior management techniques are employed in a positive and consistent manner. Children are expected to be responsible for their own behaviors and will be encouraged by staff to do so. CARES does recognize that some students may require additional supports to ensure safe and appropriate access to our programs, and has the ability to consult with support staff. Staff will encourage positive behavior by: respecting every child, listening to every child, understanding every child, setting limits for every child, recognizing positive behaviors, recognizing personal situations that influence each child and starting each day anew.

Depending on the situation, staff may take the following steps in an effort to address unacceptable behavior and correct the situation. We reserve the right to skip any of these steps if the situation warrants.

b. Discipline Procedures

The CARES Program adheres to the policies and procedures stated in the Wilmington Public Schools Elementary Handbook. The discipline policy is designed to encourage positive behavior through careful adult supervision. The program's rules and simple guidelines are explained to all children, and they are expected to follow them. Parents are notified if children are having behavioral problems, which need to be addressed by parents and staff. It is our intent to maintain an environment that is safe, friendly and

comfortable to all staff and children. If students are demonstrating unacceptable or inappropriate behavior that interferes with this environment the following procedures will be taken.

- 1) If student behavior is disruptive to the group, the student and staff member will discuss the behavior privately and create a plan to change the behavior.
- 2) If the student's misbehavior continues, the staff may elect to remove the child from the activity for a set amount of time. The student and staff member will agree when the child is ready to rejoin the group.
- 3) If the disruptive behavior continues, the staff member will report the behavior to the Site Coordinator (more serious incidents may be documented on an Incident Report). The Site Coordinator will assess the situation and determine further action which may include:
 - ◆ Consulting with additional support staff.
 - ◆ Observing the student and preparing a Student Behavior Plan.
 - ◆ Discuss the behavior with a parent or guardian
 - ◆ Notify the Program Coordinator of the situation
- 4) When necessary, the Program Coordinator will be notified for further action. The Program Coordinator will review all information and schedule a parent conference, if necessary. The conference discussion may include:
 - ◆ Behavior management plan review
 - ◆ Specific parental intervention
 - ◆ Temporary removal from the program if deemed necessary
- 5) If the plan is not followed, another conference will be held to reassess the plan, reestablish a commitment to the plan on the part of the parents and student, and reevaluate the appropriateness of the student's participation in the program.
- 6) Disruptive behavior may result in the removal from the program for a period of time from 1-3 days depending on the situation. Before returning to the program, a conference to include the Program Coordinator, the Site Coordinator, the student and a parent/guardian is required to develop a revised behavior management plan to consist of rewards and consequences relative to a particular behavior over a specified period of time. The behavior management plan should be clear to all parties, most especially the child involved. If the child does not follow the plan he or she will be removed from the program on their next scheduled day.
- 7) Permanent removal from the program may occur depending on the seriousness of the situation.

The following behaviors are unacceptable and a child may be removed from the program (temporarily or permanently): leave the group without a staff member knowledge/permission, hit a teacher or another child, use inappropriate language, abuse of school property, insubordination, harassment, verbal abuse or intimidation or theft.

Children will be immediately removed for bringing drugs, alcohol or weapons to the program, or when their behavior endangers his or her own safety or the safety of others in the program.

****In addition – CARES students and staff must adhere to all policies within the Wilmington Public School Student Handbook.***

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

a. Child's Health Information

If a child has a known health condition (asthma, diabetes, seizure disorders, etc.), please be sure to make us aware of what may cause the condition and the proper protocol should an incident occur when your child is in our care. Parents are required to provide any medication directly to our program (in addition to your child's school) and the appropriate forms and procedures for its use have been completed.

b. Child Sickness Plan

The CARES Program abides by the same health rules as the Wilmington School Department concerning dismissal from school due to illness/injury. To provide for the safety and health of all children, we request that parents take responsibility for providing transportation home within 15-30 minutes if your child has a temperature or contagious disease.

If your child stays home or is sent home sick during the regular school day, s/he may not return to the CARES Program the same day.

If your child is dismissed from school for a scheduled appointment and is not back in time for the end of the school day, they can return to CARES for the afternoon, if the Site Coordinator has been notified, and it is within a half an hour of dismissal.

If your child has an allergy, or is taking medication, it is essential to provide the information upon registration in writing or when there is a change in your child's health status. If your child has an illness or communicable disease, such as the flu or chicken pox, please notify the staff so we may keep track of illness trends. Should your child come to the CARES Program with signs of mild discomfort (slight headache), quiet rest time will be provided.

We will make every effort to have a nurse available on an as needed basis to administer medication and to attend to any ongoing medical needs. However, nursing coverage is not guaranteed. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to alert the Program Coordinator and CARES Nurse, in writing, of any specific medical needs.

c. Medication Policy

Please refer to the WPS elementary handbook for information pertaining to the dispensing of medicine. Included in this handbook are the necessary forms to apportion medication to any child. Epi pen or emergency medication for allergic reaction must be kept on hand at the school for any CARES child who is known to have an allergy. **No medication will be accepted or administered unless accompanied by the necessary completed form.**

d. Emergencies

Each emergency situation will be evaluated and acted upon according to what is in the best interest of the child. **In the event of a serious injury, the following procedure will take place:**

Parents are notified and ambulance is called. An adult (either staff or parent) will accompany child in the ambulance.

e. Toileting Procedures

Children must be fully toilet trained. In the event that your child has an accident a staff member will help guide them to clean themselves. If the Site Coordinator feels that the child cannot properly clean themselves or if the accident requires an adult to clean the child more thoroughly, a parent will be asked to come to the school to clean their child or may dismiss their child for the day.

9. PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMUNICATION

a. Parent/Guardian Involvement

Partnerships with families are a very important part of our program. Therefore, we make every effort to keep you informed of our activities at CARES. We will send home periodic newsletters with your child and will post information on a parent bulletin board at your child's school. We ask that you make an

effort to read these communications, and invite you to ask questions and offer your suggestions. Drop off and pick up are good times to discuss your child's individual needs with our staff.

b. Staff Complaints

It is very important to us that all parent concerns are addressed quickly and resolved with the child's best interest in mind. If you have a concern about a CARES staff member that you have been unable to resolve with that person, please refer the issue to the Site Coordinator at your child's school. The Site Coordinator will document your concern and notify the Program Coordinator. If the concern was resolved with the Site Coordinator, a statement of resolution should be included in the documentation. If the issue was not resolved at this level, the Program Coordinator will call the parent directly within 48 hours of receipt of the concern.

c. Questions and Comments

The staff who care for your children here at the WPS CARES Programs are committed individuals who take their roles very seriously. We want to know anything that is important to you with respect to your child's experience in our program.

Please address questions directly to your Site Coordinator or the Program Coordinator via phone call or letter.

WPS CARES Programs do not operate during, holidays, or whenever the Wilmington Public Schools announce a general school closing (such as inclement weather.) See school calendar. We do, however, offer separate vacation programs during the February and April vacations as well as during the summer months.

Questions may be directed to:
Patty Boggia
CARES Program Coordinator
(978) 284-6111
Patricia.Boggia@wpsk12.com

Notice of Non-Discrimination All educational and non-academic programs, activities and employment opportunities at Wilmington Public Schools are offered without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness, age and/or disability, and any other class or characteristic protected by law