

College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center Parent Handbook



917 S. McDonough Street Decatur, Georgia 30030 (404) 370-4480
<https://collegeheights.csdecatur.net/>

Sarah Garland, Principal
Erynn Mathews-Davis, Instructional Coach

College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center

School District Information

Dr. Gyimah Whitaker
School Board

Superintendent
Ms. Carmen Sulton- Chair
Mr. Hanz Utz- Vice-Chair
Ms. Tracey Anderson
Mr. James Herndon
Ms. Lorraine Irier

Overview

College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center (CHECLC) offers comprehensive services as a public school for children birth to age five for children residing within the City of Decatur. The school was founded for the purpose to close the achievement gap by providing a high quality early childhood program for all children. The importance of early intervention and a supportive learning environment in the early years along with the benefits of having a diverse and inclusive setting to provide this intervention are priceless benefits for the children that attend College Heights, as well as their families and the community.

College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center has two (2) infant, two (2) one year old, two (2) toddler, three (3) preschool, and eight (8) Pre-K classrooms. College Heights has an enrollment of 280 students enrolled using multiple funding streams (general fund from taxpayers, tuition from parents, federal special education, and Georgia lottery for pre-K).

College Heights offers services to children, 3 to 4 years old, who have a variety of special needs. The preschool special education program is inclusive with the regular preschool/Pre-K program. We believe that including children with special needs in regular preschool classrooms offer them the opportunity to model the social, language and play skills needed to succeed in school. The preschool, and Pre-K inclusion classrooms enrich the lives of all children by bringing them together in an environment that teaches acceptance, respect, and the appreciation of individual differences.

Each year administration, teaching staff, and advisory council members work together to develop a School Improvement Plan (SIP), which serves as a guide and focus for the school. We encourage you to visit the school website (<http://eclc.csdecatur.net>) to view additional information about our school's learning community. We look forward to another successful year with our students and families and invite you to engage in your child's school and classrooms and experience quality early childhood learning at its best.

Our Mission

College Heights Early Childhood Learning Center cultivates an atmosphere where children take their first steps in building an authentic love of learning through developmentally appropriate practices in an environment that fosters family and community involvement.

College Heights Parent Norms

At College Heights, parents are vital stakeholders. The responsibility for children's educational development is a collaboration among parents, staff, and community members. Parent involvement helps extend teaching outside the classroom, creates a more positive experience for children and helps children perform better when they are in school.

Norms are agreed-upon definitions of productive behaviors and mindsets that should be usual, or "the norm," whenever a group is working together. Together, the staff, student and parent norms will allow our school community to support and foster the College Heights mission.

1. **Parents/guardians prioritize getting their children to school on time.** The school is invested in providing a quality experience for every child, and that starts with having them present so they can fully benefit from the intentional day planned for them. Parents make every effort to support this goal and communicate with their teacher(s) when they encounter any challenges.
2. **Parents/guardians collaborate with their classroom teachers to set individual goals for their child(ren).** The school is committed to preparing every child for kindergarten success! Setting goals as a parent-teacher team and engaging in opportunities throughout the year to discuss progress is a critical part of that aim.
3. **Parents/guardians appreciate staying "in the know."** The school prioritizes communications and is mindful of limiting emails and newsletters to content essential to ensuring a great experience for every child. Additionally, parents work with their teacher(s) to determine the best form of communication for classroom-related updates, questions, or concerns (i.e., communication folders, newsletters, daily sheets, emails, etc.).
4. **Parents/guardians feel comfortable and encouraged to provide feedback.** Striving to be a "best in class" learning center, the school follows a continuous quality improvement model that relies on receiving feedback. Parents serve as an essential source for both positive feedback and opportunities for reflection and growth. Whether through formal surveys, parent-teacher conferences, or simply an email to one of the school's administrators, parental input is key in supporting the school's progress.
5. **Parents/guardians support a "safe sharing" space.** When circumstances call for greater discretion, parents know they can reach out directly to the school's principal, program director, or the College Heights Parent Advisory Council Chairperson and feel assured their feedback will be handled with finesse and sensitivity.

Sharing feedback and concerns:

Parents can directly email teachers for specific questions, concerns, or positive feedback related to their child's progress or classroom activities. For more immediate or detailed discussions, parents can schedule phone calls with teachers. Teachers typically provide their availability or preferred times for calls. Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year in December and May and provide a dedicated time for in-depth discussions about a student's academic progress, behavior, and overall well-being. Parents can share feedback and work collaboratively with teachers.

For concerns that cannot be resolved with the teacher or involve broader school policies, parents can request a meeting with school administrators. Requests should be made in writing to the school

principal. If the principal cannot resolve the issue, there may be an opportunity to meet with district-level personnel. The City Schools of Decatur has a formal grievance policy that outlines the steps for addressing unresolved complaints. You can find the policy on the csdecatur.net website.

Conflict resolution and mediation process:

College Heights ECLC is committed to building and nurturing a positive, equitable, and connected community where relationships are valued and harm is repaired. We believe that when conflict arises, our focus should be on understanding the impact of actions, addressing needs, repairing harm, and rebuilding relationships, rather than solely on punishment. This policy outlines our commitment to utilizing restorative practices as a primary approach to conflict resolution, fostering a culture of empathy, accountability, and healing within our community.

We will utilize a range of restorative practices to address conflict, tailored to the specific situation and the needs of those involved. These may include:

1. Affective Statements and Questions
2. Informal Restorative Conversations
3. Restorative Circles
4. Restorative Conferences

Requirements for Entrance

Families must meet one of the following criteria in order to enroll their child at College Heights.

- You must reside within the city limits of the City of Decatur with your child, and your child must be at least six (6) weeks old.
- You must be a full-time employee of the City Schools of Decatur.

Program Information:

0-3 Program: your child must be at least 6 weeks of age. Parents must complete and submit an application packet along with the applicable registration fee (\$50.00) to the CHECLC office.

Pre-K program: your child must be 4 or 5 years old by September 1, in order to be eligible for the Pre-K program. Parents must complete and submit an online Pre-K application (www.csdecatur.net). A lottery is held in March to determine children awarded pre-K slots. Children not selected during the lottery will be placed on the waitlist.

Pre-k students are placed into classrooms using a blind placement process. This means that students who are current College Heights preschoolers and students who enroll from the community are all sorted into eight pre-k classrooms. The classrooms are balanced by using age/birthday, gender, previous preschool experience, and other information provided on the Prek Parent questionnaire form. Twins are placed in separate classrooms unless otherwise requested by the parent. The goal of blind placements is to ensure a fair process to provide balanced classrooms (to the best of our ability). Once classrooms are sorted, the class is assigned to a Pre-K teacher through a lottery process.

For students who are **currently** enrolled in College Heights, the preschool teachers complete an additional teacher placement form that provides specific information about students' social emotional development, universal screening data, and a place where the teacher can provide anecdotal information (such as peers the child would/would not be successful with). The Preschool

Teacher Questionnaire is in addition to the Pre-K parent questionnaire form and is valuable information that is used to complement the blind placement process. This process closely mirrors the process of our CSD K-2 schools and 3-5 schools.

Required Documentation for Enrollment: Parents must provide a certified birth certificate from the county or country where the child was born, proof of the child's immunization (DHR Form #3231), two proofs of residence in the City of Decatur, picture ID of the parent/guardian, and a copy of the child's social security card.

Waitlists: CHECLC maintains a 0-3 and a Pre-K waitlist for each program. We give sibling preference on the waitlist and a 10% discount on the 2nd child (and any additional child) when both children are enrolled in the 0-3 program. The discount is applied to the older child enrolled in the program.

Student Check-in & Check-out Procedures

All building entrances are locked. Parents and visitors must be buzzed in to gain entrance. Parents in our 0-3 program must sign their child in and out each day. Parents must stop at the front desk, sign their child in/out and obtain a visitor's badge. Parents will escort their child to the classroom. We kindly ask the parents in our preK program to refrain from walking to their child's classroom unless the child is tardy or is dismissing early. Children in our preK program should arrive to school using district transportation, car pool rider or walker.

After School Program

The After School Program (ASP) operates between 2:30 pm - 6:00 p.m. while following the City Schools of Decatur school calendar. In order to attend the ASP, students enrolled in the ASP must be present during the instructional day (8:00-2:30). The ASP does not provide drop in services. In order to be eligible for the ASP students must be enrolled in the College Heights ECLC pre-K program. Parents must complete and submit an enrollment packet, along with a \$50.00 applicable registration fee, prior to being accepted into the program. Available ASP spots are selected through a lottery process. College Heights ECLC maintains a waitlist for the ASP. Students will be offered spots throughout the year as they come available.

In order for the College Heights Pre-K aftercare program to ensure the safety of the students enrolled, after school services are available to students who can independently navigate the classroom and playground without individualized assistance and support. For children who have disability-related needs requiring greater assistance, we will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for the student to participate. College Heights will engage in an interactive process with the parent to discuss needed or requested accommodations.

The ASP staff is experienced and trained in the areas of curriculum, health, and safety standards. Background checks are completed on each staff member prior to the first day of school. The ASP is directed by Mr. Justin Hellstrom. Please refer all questions, suggestions, and concerns to Mr. Hellstrom at justin.hellstrom@csdecatur.net

Camps (Pre-K Only)

College Heights offers camp services for fall break, winter break, and summer break (month of June only) to Pre-K children enrolled at CHECLC. Registration packets can be obtained through the website or at the school's front desk at least up to 4 weeks prior to camp start date.

College Heights ECLC Curriculum and Instruction

The birth through Pre-K programs implement the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS) and follow an instructional framework gleaned from several scientific research-based instructional programs:

- High Scope
- Montessori Inspired Approach to Early Childhood Education
- Inquiry-Based Learning
- Foundational Early Literacy Framework
- Conscious Discipline® Social Emotional Framework

High Scope

In a HighScope preschool program, teachers ignite children's interest in learning by creating an environment that encourages them to explore learning materials and interact with adults and peers. The focus is on supporting early learners as they make decisions, build academic skills, develop socially and emotionally, and become part of a classroom community. Active learning is at the center of the HighScope Curriculum. It's the foundation of young children gaining knowledge through their natural play and interactions with the environment, events, and other people.

In the HighScope Preschool Curriculum, learning is focused on the following eight content areas:

1. Approaches to Learning
2. Social and Emotional Development
3. Physical Development and Health
4. Language, Literacy, and Communication
5. Mathematics
6. Creative Arts
7. Science and Technology
8. Social Studies

Montessori Inspired Approach to Early Childhood Education

Young children learn best in a playful environment and through the manipulation of toys. The Montessori approach to early childhood education is a method that introduces problem solving, independence, and sensory perception through reality oriented learning materials. This scientifically research-based approach encourages development through all of the domains as teachers facilitate imaginative play using real to life lessons. As a result, young children grasp concepts that otherwise are foreign to them.

Inquiry-Based Learning

Students are encouraged to ask questions about what they notice in their world. Teachers engage students in longer investigations developed from students' authentic questions. Beginning with scientific activities, students learn how to generate meaningful questions. Teachers scaffold students in ongoing inquiry based projects and in shorter inquiries into everyday situations. Children have the opportunity to engage in research, collect data, and develop theories about their world.

Foundational Early Literacy Framework

We nurture your child's early literacy development through a framework that focuses on essential building blocks. This includes developing **oral language** (speaking and listening), building **vocabulary** (understanding words), and fostering **comprehension** (understanding stories). We

also focus on **phonological awareness** (recognizing sounds in words), **alphabet knowledge** (learning letters), and **print concepts** (understanding how books and print work). These areas, supported by the Science of Reading, are crucial for future reading success.

Conscious Discipline: Schoolwide Social Emotional Learning Framework

College Heights ECLC implements Conscious Discipline, which is a comprehensive self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning, and discipline. Conscious Discipline integrates classroom management with social-emotional learning, utilizing everyday events as the curriculum and addressing the adult's emotional intelligence as well as the child's.

Conscious Discipline uses 7 skills to transform everyday discipline issues into teachable moments. These moments are our opportunity to teach children the social-emotional and communication skills necessary to manage themselves, resolve conflict and develop pro-social behaviors. The 7 skills are:

1. Composure
2. Encouragement
3. Assertiveness
4. Choices
5. Empathy
6. Positive Intent
7. Consequences

Conscious Discipline was developed by Dr. Becky Bailey. Her company is dedicated to creating positive environments for children, families, schools and businesses. For more information, please visit Dr. Becky Bailey's website at: <https://consciousdiscipline.com/>

Teacher/Student Classroom Ratios

College Heights follows the National Association for the Education of Young Children recommended guidelines for teacher/child ratio. To the extent possible, the program follows these guidelines.

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| ● Infants (birth through 18 months) | 1:4 with a class size of 8 children |
| ● One's (18 months-24 months) | 1:4 with a class size of 12 children |
| ● Toddlers (24-36 months) | 1:6 with a class size of 12 children |
| ● Preschoolers (three years of age) | 1:9 with a class size of 18 children |
| ● Pre-Kindergarten (four years of age) | 1:11 with a class size of 20 children |

Program Calendars

Please refer to the 0-3 school calendar and the Pre-K school calendar for closings during the school year. School calendars are posted on the school and district website.

Arrival and Dismissal: Hours of Operation

School Program	Age of Children	Start Time	End Time
CSD 0-3 Tuition Program	6 weeks to 3 years old	7:15 a.m.	6:00 p.m.
Pre-K Program	4 years old	8:00 a.m.	2:30 p.m.
Pre-K Special Education	4 years old	8:00 am	2:30 pm
Preschool Special Education	3 years old	8:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.
After-school Program	Pre-K	2:30 p.m.	6:00 p.m.

Pre-K Attendance Policy

The Pre-K program is a full-day, Monday through Friday, program, which follows the City Schools of Decatur K-12 calendar. Children are expected to attend on a regular basis. Attendance regulations are determined by the City Schools of Decatur (csdecatur.net) and The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (decal.ga.gov).

After Three Absences

- Excused Absences: The attendance designee will mail the three-day notification letter to the parent or guardian.
- Unexcused Absences: The attendance designee will mail the three-day notification letter to the parent or guardian.

After Five Absences:

- Excused Absences: The five-day notification letter will be sent by the Director's designee to the parent or guardian.
- Unexcused Absences: The five-day notification letter will be sent by the Director's designee to the parent or guardian. A telephone call will be made by a member of the school's attendance committee to the parent or guardian to schedule an attendance intervention meeting to address the unexcused absences and to remediate the problem.

After Seven Absences:

- Excused Absences: The seven-day notification letter will be sent by the Director's designee to parent or guardian.
- Unexcused Absences: The seven-day notification letter will be sent by the Director's designee to parent or guardian. A referral will be made from the school's attendance committee to the district's school social worker for further interventions and monitoring.

After Ten consecutive absences the student is subject to losing his/her Pre-K spot.

Excused Absence –

A Pre-K child who is absent from school for an entire day shall bring a signed note or email from his/her parent/guardian explaining the reason(s) for the absence. A child shall be counted present if in attendance at least one half of the required instructional time. The teacher or Principal shall determine whether or not the absence will be excused or unexcused on the basis of the state board rule indicating that absences from school may be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness or attendance in school endangers a child's health or the health of others. Appropriate documentation is required upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is excused.
2. A serious illness or death in a child's immediate family necessitates absence from school. In the event of a serious illness in a child's immediate family, appropriate medical documentation regarding the family member will be required upon return to school for the purpose of validating that the absence is an excused absence.
3. A child whose parent or legal guardian is in military service in the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, and such parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for or is on leave from overseas deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted excused absences, up to a maximum of five school days per school

year, for the day or days missed from school to visit with his or her parent or legal guardian prior to such parent's or legal guardian's deployment or during such parent's or legal guardian's leave. Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to require a local school system to revise any policies relating to maximum number of excused and unexcused absences for any purposes. (O.C.G.A. §20-2-692.1)

4. Observation of religious holidays necessitates absence from school.
5. Conditions render attendance impossible or hazardous to child's health or safety.

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of the attendance/truancy protocol is to increase academic achievement and reduce truancy among children in the school system in compliance with the mandates of Bright From the Start. Teachers will keep a daily record of each child's presence, absence, tardiness, and early departure. An absence, tardy, or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the stated reason. A copy of the appropriate documentation will remain on file at the school for verification, if needed, for at least two years. Parents must provide written documentation for all absences from school within 3 days of the child's return to school. If no written documentation is received, then these absences, tardies, or early departures will remain unexcused and appropriate attendance procedures will be followed.

Tardy Policy

Excessive tardiness is not permitted. The City Schools of Decatur and the Bright From the Start Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning defines chronic tardiness as late arrival or early departure more than once per week. Inability to resolve the problem after assistance has been offered will result in a referral for dismissal to the Bright from the Start Office of Early Care and Learning.

Tardies/Early Check-out:

1. After eleven or more unexcused tardies: A letter will be sent from the school administrator to the parent or guardian regarding missed instructional time.
2. After fifteen unexcused tardies: The school administrator will contact parent to set up a conference to discuss reasons for tardies and to review the Bright From the Start excessive tardiness policy.

Parents of Pre-K: Upon arrival, pre-K students will independently walk to their classroom locations. Staff will be posted along the hallways to supervise student transitions. So that we can support student independence and program safety we kindly ask our preK parents to refrain from entering the building during arrival periods. Teachers are supporting student routines and are unable to engage in parent conversations during arrival periods. Teachers will share their dedicated planning time when they are able to respond to parent communications.

If you arrive after 8:00 a.m., you must stop by the front desk, sign the Pre-K tardy sheet, and pick up a late pass before walking your child to the classroom. Your child will be considered tardy for that day. Classroom teachers begin their daily routine by starting with morning meetings. A child's enrollment may be jeopardized if tardiness, early departure or late pick-up, issues are consistent. Children can not be dropped off after 12:00 pm.

Parents are expected to pick-up their child promptly by 2:30 p.m. Children who remain in the building after 2:30 p.m. are considered late pick-ups. The following is our policy for late pick-ups:

- The 1st time a parent or an authorized supervising adult is not present to receive their child, a verbal warning is given.
- The 2nd time this occurs, the parent must meet with the child's teacher to discuss the issue.
- The 3rd time this occurs, a late fee of \$20 will be charged and due at the time of pick up.

Parents of 0-3 year olds must escort their child/ren to their classrooms when dropping them off at CHECLC. All children must be signed in and out daily in their classrooms by an authorized individual. Parents of toddlers (2 year-olds) and preschoolers (3 year-olds) are strongly encouraged to have their child/ren at school by 9:00 a.m. every day in an effort to establish a consistent, daily routine with limited interruptions.

Pre-K Drive-Thru (arrival)

A drive-thru service is offered to Pre-K parents in the morning and in the afternoon. The morning drive-thru is open between 7:30 am and 7:50 am. The following procedures are in place in order to ensure the safety of all of our families and students:

- Parents must help any child who is not independently able to unbuckle. Once the child has transitioned from the car, staff will escort the child to the front of the building. Staff are strategically placed inside the building to support students walking to their classrooms.
- **Please place your child's car seat at the rear passenger side of the vehicle.**
- The drive-thru closes promptly at 7:50 am and a sign stating "Pre-K drive-thru is Closed" will be placed in the front of the school. Parents who arrive at the school at or after 7:50 am must park and walk their child/ren to the front desk. **DO NOT PARK IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL.**
- Please do not drop your child off at the front door when school staff is not on duty. Children must be escorted to their classrooms by an adult at all times.
- **Buses arrive on campus at 7:25 am. If buses are parked it is illegal to pass a bus with an activated STOP sign. Drivers passing a parked bus are subject to a ticket automatically generated by the bus cameras.**

Pre-K Drive-Thru (dismissal)

Car riders will be dismissed at 2:10 pm and must be picked up by 2:30 pm.

- Parents will be given a drive thru number at the start of the school year. Please display your child's number when using the afternoon drive-thru to pick up your child/ren at dismissal.
- Staff will escort your child to your car. Parents are responsible for buckling their student into the car seat.

Park and Walk Agreement

- If you are walking your child to his or her classroom, park in the lower lot to the right upon entering the school driveway.
- **YOU MAY NOT** park in the handicap spaces unless you have a current handicap sticker displayed in your vehicle.
- **YOU MAY NOT** park in the fire lanes at any time.
- **YOU MAY NOT** park behind another vehicle that is parked in a parking spot in the parking lot.
- Please do not park in any assigned spaces in front of the building
- For safety reasons, please drive slowly through the parking lot at all times.
- Students whose classrooms are located in the building or cottage A should be dropped off at the front entrance. Students located in cottages C and D may walk/enter through the ramps at the cottage entrance.

Pre-K Bus Transportation

City Schools of Decatur provides transportation for Pre-K children who live more than a mile from the school. For information concerning your child's school bus route, please go to the City Schools of Decatur's website to access bus route information. There may be several pages listed so please scroll down until you locate your address.

If you have any questions concerning your child's transportation, please contact the transportation director, Ms. Lowanda Bowman, at (404)371-6677 ext. 4010 or by email at lbowman@csdecatur.net

0-3 and After School Tuition Payment Policies

Upon enrollment, parents are required to complete the 'Payment Options and Procedures Agreement', which outlines the financial agreements made between the parent/guardian and the City Schools of Decatur. Please refer to the agreement for payment methods, options, and consequences for non-and late payments. **Students will be immediately disenrolled due to nonpayment of tuition.** Tuition rates are subject to change from year to year. If College Heights is closed due to unexpected health, weather or safety issues (snow, ice, loss of electricity, etc.), payment is expected for missed school days. Receipts and account summary are provided upon request. Please make all requests to Caretha Hall (cahall@csdecatur.net).

Late Pick-up Fee

Children attending the infant, toddler, and preschool programs or the after school program must be picked up no later than 6:00 p.m. If a child is not picked-up by 6:00 PM each day then a charge of \$20.00 late pick-up fee will be added to the account. Late fees must be paid immediately upon pick up.

Intervention and Student Support

College Heights recognizes children's development will vary greatly and is committed to supporting those who are identified as "at-risk" in language, pre-academic, physical, and social-emotional development. Staff effort to assist these children may range from informal collaboration to formal group interventions. When varied and repeated efforts to support children are not successful, teachers may begin the Multi Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process by meeting with the instructional coach to begin planning and identifying areas of need and developing new strategies for the classroom teacher to implement.

Professional Learning Communities : Teachers meet and collaborate weekly to plan instruction, review student work, and discuss data to support every child's learning and development. These meetings allow teachers to share insights and plan instruction that meets individual needs, providing support or enrichment as necessary in areas like academic/ language, social/behavior, physical development, or health.

Joint Instructional Planning: Teachers meet on a weekly basis to plan instruction, review children's work, and discuss data. The purpose of these meetings is to share children's work and assist teachers in planning instruction for all children, especially children experiencing pre-academic, language, social/behavior, physical, or health-related issues or to plan strategies to enhance and challenge others.

MTSS Referral Meeting: Teachers may request an MTSS referral meeting with the MTSS teacher and instructional coach. During this meeting, the teacher presents the child's strengths and areas of concerns and shares data and work samples as evidence of areas of concern.

MTSS Team Meetings: After the child is referred and the teacher is in consultation with parents, the MTSS team will meet to discuss the child's performance in the classroom. As part of the process, goals will be identified and implemented to assist the child in meeting expectation for proficiency. The plan shall identify the desired levels of performance in the child's specific areas of weakness and the teacher will provide frequent monitoring of child's progress.

Program Classroom Transitions

College Heights promotes continuity of learning in all aspects of what we do; our regular, close communication with you will ensure we work together and that your child is ready for the next step in his/her development. The classrooms are designed to prepare your child with the physical, emotional, and developmental skills necessary to be successful.

Children remain in their assigned classroom throughout the year. Every August children matriculate into their new classroom based on the child's age. Prior to the start of the child's new classroom, staff prepares the children to transition to their new learning environment. Pre-K children visit their K-2 school during the month of May and parents attend a parent orientation in the evening to receive important information for their rising kindergartener. 0-3 staff dedicate the month of July to classroom transitions. As part of this process, children take part in transition sessions three (3) times a week at various parts of the day with a small group of their peers. The children will be accompanied by their teacher who will be present to provide any support needed.

Child Find

Child Find is a screening process to support families who live in the City of Decatur but whose child does not attend CHECLC. Parents who feel that their preschool child may need some early interventions and support may contact the school and schedule their child for a preschool screening that will be held at CHECLC on the following dates:

- August 28, 2026
- October 23, 2026
- December 11, 2026
- February 26, 2027

All children will be screened by specialists in the following areas:

- Speech and language
- Motor development
- Pre-academic skills
- Play and social skills

This information may lead to specific strategies in any developmental area. These interventions can be implemented by private childcare center staff and/or parents and supported by College Heights preschool special education staff. Children enrolled at CHECLC will be supported by the school's Student Support Model process.

Progress Reports and Parent Conferences

Parents receive written progress reports during the school year, which is intended to keep parents informed of their child's growth and development. In addition, two parent-teacher conferences are scheduled, one in December and one in May, during each school year. Teachers will contact parents when it is time to schedule conferences.

During conferences, teachers will share your child's progress with you, highlighting the growth observed each semester. Teachers will also provide suggestions for ways to support and enrich your child's learning experience at home. We welcome and encourage parents to schedule additional conferences with their child's teacher at any point throughout the year to discuss their child's development.

Comprehensive Assessment Overview

Our teachers are committed to understanding and supporting each child's individual development. Through professional learning in student assessments, they gain expertise in creating activities and environments that meet the unique needs of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and Pre-K students. By focusing on each child's capabilities, temperament, culture, and learning style, teachers provide a personalized and enriching learning experience.

We are committed to carefully tracking each child's development. Therefore, all children participate in universal screenings within two months of joining our program, and we conduct formal assessments three times annually. These assessments are administered by trained staff and involve observing children in various learning environments such as the classroom, playground, and cafeteria. In addition to formal assessments, teachers also gather informal information to develop a well-rounded understanding of each child. This includes collecting notes, work samples, and photographs that capture children's learning and development.

We assess student growth, development, and progress using a variety of information, including:

- **Infant and Toddler Development Milestones Checklist** helps teachers and parents track children's skills, comparing them to typical growth. It covers areas like language, social-emotional, cognitive, early literacy, and physical health. Teachers observe children and, with parent input, mark skills on the checklist as they are seen. This tool helps identify what children are achieving and any potential developmental delays.
- The **BRIGANCE® Early Childhood Screen III (3–5 years)** is a collection of quick, highly accurate assessments and data-gathering tools to use with children three through five years of age. All assessments in the Screen III have been nationally standardized, producing scores that are highly reliable, valid, and accurate. Assessment items in the age-specific screens are norm-referenced as well as criterion referenced and cover a broad sampling of a child's skills and behaviors. Key developmental areas include: Physical Development, Language Development, Academic Skills/Cognitive Development (Literacy and Mathematics).
- **Get Ready to Read-Revised** is used with all preschool students to collect data on early literacy development. This 25 question assessment incorporates visual and auditory items that allow children to demonstrate their skills in: print knowledge, book knowledge, phonological awareness, and phonics.

- **STAR Early Literacy** is used with all Pre-K students to collect data on early literacy development. The STAR Early Literacy test is intended for young children, typically in pre-kindergarten through third grade, who are still developing foundational literacy skills. It assesses kindergarten readiness in the areas of phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge, and early comprehension skills.
- **Portfolios and Documentation** is used with all infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Portfolios and documentation are collections of your child's work and observations that showcase their learning and development over time in our infant, toddler, and preschool programs. These records help us track individual progress and share meaningful milestones with you.
- **Work Sampling System** is used with all Pre-K children and is an ongoing criterion-referenced observational assessment used in Georgia Pre-K classrooms to track and assess child development. It focuses on documenting and evaluating skills, knowledge, and behaviors through observations of students in their natural learning environments.

Teachers value the partnership with parents in assessing children's learning. We actively seek parent input and information, recognizing that your insights are essential to understanding your child's development. Parents will be kept informed about upcoming assessments and are welcome to share observations or concerns about their child's learning at any time. For record-keeping purposes, student assessment data is securely stored in the City Schools of Decatur's student information system, Infinite Campus. This data helps us evaluate our program's overall effectiveness and informs our school improvement plan. At the end of the school year, all testing materials are securely destroyed.

Home and School Communication

Teachers welcome the opportunity to talk with parents concerning their child's growth and development. One of the most difficult times for teachers to talk, however, is in the morning when children are being dropped off. Parents are welcome to schedule a conference with teachers at any other time.

Parents may leave messages for teachers during the school day with the school manager, Caretha Hall, at (404)370-4480, or contact the teacher via email: first name initial last name@csdecatur.net (ex. JDoe@csdecatur.net).

Student work and all other written communication from the school will be sent home on Thursday in your child's folder. The school newsletter will be sent electronically every Thursday.

Parent Portal

The Parent Portal gives parents and guardians access to Infinite Campus, CSD's student information system. Parents can check balances, tardies, and absences. Pre-K parents will receive parent portal information prior to the start of school. Parents in the 0-3 program can sign up for a Parent Portal password at Meet & Greet or the first week of school. You only need to sign up once; passwords stay the same year to year.

Emergency Safety Drills

The school practices safety drills throughout the school year. Safety drills include: fire, tornado, and lock down drills. In each classroom are posted charts that indicate the exits and safe areas to be used for fire drill and tornado drills. A fire drill is held twice in the first month of school and then once every month thereafter. Children are expected to file out of the building in an orderly manner without talking or running. Classes will remain on the grounds until the “all clear” signal. All schools participate in the state-wide tornado drill, and each school has a safety plan for other emergencies.

School Closings

City Schools of Decatur will use an automated calling service to notify families of emergency dismissals and school closures. The calling service will utilize the phone number(s) that have been provided to the school through your child’s registration materials. It is your responsibility to notify the school of any change in contact information.

Outdoor Exposure on High Pollution Days

Exposure to air pollution can cause short term and long-term health effects. Children are at increased risk of these health effects because they tend to be more physically active, their lungs are still growing, and they are more likely to have asthma or acute respiratory illnesses which can be aggravated when pollution levels are high. The Air Quality Index (AQI) was designed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is used to determine how clean or unhealthy the air is. Its levels help the public determine when air pollution reaches unhealthy levels. Outdoor activities may be restricted if AQI levels are high. The level of physical activity and level of pollutants are taken into consideration when making restrictions. Since our intentions are to keep the students and staff in the safest environment possible, it is our policy that hallway and corridor doors of the school shall be kept closed at all times. According to the US EPA an AQI of 151-200 is “unhealthy” for the general public and therefore children should avoid prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion. Therefore scheduled outdoor times will be modified to low intensity activities and/or shorter time periods. The US EPA classifies AQI levels above 200 as “very unhealthy”. At this level all scheduled outdoor time will be held indoors.

Health and Nutrition

College Heights is a nut-free school environment. Menus are accessible on the district website at the beginning of each month. Students enrolled in our preK program may choose to purchase breakfast or lunch. Meals are paid for through tuition for our 0-3 students. Please inform the school nurse and cafeteria manager if you have any students with food allergies or dietary restrictions by the first day of school. Parents are welcome to provide lunch for their child/ren from home. Parents are not allowed to send food items that need to be refrigerated or heated as the classrooms are not equipped to keep them hot or cold. The cafeteria offers a vegetarian option everyday as a choice for students.

Immunization Form

All children enrolled must provide the school with a current immunization record (form 3231) or supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family’s beliefs upon entry into any program. All children without current immunization records after attending 30 days of school will be dismissed from the program until immunization requirements are met.

Eyes, Ears, and Dental

All children enrolled in the pre-K program at CHECLC must provide the school a completed Georgia Department of Public Health Form 3300. Form 3300 must be on file with the school within 90 calendar days of the start date.

Health History Information

Each child must have a completed health information form on file. The health form will be sent home with your child/ren during the first week of school. The form needs to be updated every year and returned to the school as soon as possible during the first two (2) weeks of school. If your child has special health needs (allergies, asthma, diabetes, seizures), please contact the nurse within the first two (2) weeks of school to inform her of the needs, usual plan of care, and to provide updates anytime there is a change in the plan of care. The health information form as well as the allergy, asthma, diabetes and seizure care plans can be downloaded and printed from the School Health webpage (<http://csdecatur.net>). Click on Parents>Forms/Downloads.

Medications

When a child needs any OTC medication (including Tylenol, ibuprofen, Benadryl, or dietary /herbal supplements) a written and signed prescription with administration instructions is required from the child's health care provider. The parent may bring this in or the doctor can fax it to the school. The parent will complete and sign the medication administration release form. No stock OTC medications are kept at the school. The medication should be brought to school in the original manufacturer's container. The label must include the name of the medication and strength of medication. The child's name should be written legibly on the label.

For chronic conditions such as asthma, severe allergies, seizures or diabetes that require rapid response with prescribed medication a plan outlining the procedure signed by the physician will be kept on file with the medication and a signed parental permission.

Sick Policy

College Heights ECLC adheres to the sick policy set forth by Bright From the Start. The goal of staff at CHECLC is to maintain an environment that promotes health and wellness through frequent, thorough hand-washing, cleaning/sanitizing surfaces to decrease the number of germs to a level the body can handle and individualized assessment of children who appear ill. Parents can help with infection control by including frequent and thorough hand-washing in the daily routines at home, especially before and after eating, after diapering or toileting, handling bodily fluids, contact with animals, playing in dirt, sand or on playgrounds. Children should be excluded from the program setting for the reasons outlined below:

Note: The following list covers most common illnesses, but is not inclusive of all reasons for exclusion.

- Illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than faculty can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children
- Fever (100° accompanied by other symptoms such as lethargy, irritability, constant crying, difficulty breathing, diarrhea, vomiting).

Note: An infant less than four months of age will be excluded if he or she has a fever of 100° and should receive medical attention as soon as possible

- Any child with a fever over 100 will be excluded and should receive medical attention as soon as possible.
- Diarrhea — two or more stools with blood or mucous, and/or uncontrolled, unformed stools that cannot be contained in a diaper/underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting — green or bloody, and/or two or more times during the previous 24 hours
- Rash with fever or behavioral changes, unless a physician has determined it is not a communicable disease
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), until the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after treatment has begun
- Pertussis (whooping cough), until five days of treatment with appropriate antibiotics

The child will be assessed in a private area to determine the nature and severity of their symptoms. A school nurse or designated trained staff member will conduct this assessment. The child will be moved to a designated "health room" or isolation area away from other students and staff. This area should be supervised by an adult. For children's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion, children should be picked up within 1 hour of notification. **Children should remain home for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to school.** The child needs to remain out of the center for the remainder of the day he/she is sent home and the following day (i.e if a child is sent home on a Tuesday then he/she can return to school on Thursday).

Required Conditions for a Child To Return to School:

- When he or she is free of fever (without the aid of fever-reducing medication), vomiting, and diarrhea for a full 24 hours
- When he or she has been treated with an antibiotic for a full 24 hours (unless otherwise specified)
- When he or she is able to participate comfortably in usual program activities, including outdoor time

Meals and Snacks

CHECLC is a nut-free school environment. At the parent's request, students will receive a hot breakfast and lunch through the school cafeteria. Menus are accessible online on the school or district websites. Please inform the school if your child has any food allergies by contacting the school nurse, who will develop and monitor a special program to meet the student's needs.

Parents are welcome to provide lunch for their child/ren from home. The administration requests that all parents honor the peanut-free school zone by not sending in peanut products such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, peanut butter crackers, etc. Please send food items that do not need to be refrigerated or heated as the classrooms are not equipped to keep them hot or cold. The cafeteria offers a vegetarian meal as an option for students. Meals sent from home must meet the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Pre-K parents receive information on meal prices at the beginning of each school year. Families may apply for free/reduced meals at the beginning or anytime during the school year. Families **must prepay for meals by the day, week, or month through the parent's Infinite Campus portal**. Staff are not permitted to accept payment for nutrition services. For more information about the School

Nutrition program, including how to pay for your child's meals online, please visit Nutrition Department website at <http://www.csdecatur.net/nutrition/>

Students enrolled in the 0-3 program will have an afternoon snack provided by the nutrition department. **In order to be equitable across the classrooms, staff are not permitted to ask any parent enrolled in our 0-3 program to purchase or contribute to a second snack.**

Pre-K Program Snack Program

College Heights is dedicated to providing access to healthy snacks and ensuring food security for all students. The College Heights PreK program has a school-wide snack program. Classroom teachers will provide continuous opportunities throughout the school year for parents to volunteer and provide snacks for their child's classroom. Each classroom will have a community snack bin, and during their designated snack time, each child may choose one snack from this bin each day to enjoy!

Tips for choosing healthy snacks:

- Look for snacks with whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- Opt for lower sugar options.
- Consider snacks that are nut-free and pre-portioned.
- Snacks that combine a carb and a protein keep kids satisfied longer!

Healthy snack suggestions:

- pretzels, crackers, granola bars, breakfast bars, raisins, beef jerky, etc.
- cheese sticks, yogurt tubes, apples, bananas, cuties, berries, etc.
- baby carrots, smart food popcorn, skinny pop, fig bars, mini-muffins, etc.

Individual items or individually wrapped items are preferred to ensure that everyone receives the same amount. Please **refrain from** sending sweet treats (*i.e. candy, cakes, cookies, etc.*) for snack time.

Potty Training

CHECLC staff assists parents with potty training when students begin to show signs that they are developmentally ready. Once children demonstrate the following signs of readiness, complete and successful potty training can take less than two weeks:

- Child's diaper stays dry for 2-3 hours between wettings
- Child has a desire to use the potty (takes own diaper off and sits on the potty independently)
- Child understands toileting process by using language or gestures to use toilet when feeling full or tummy aches

Children are completely "potty trained" when they can consistently, accurately, and independently perform the following tasks:

- Pull pants up and down;
- Verbalize the need to go to the bathroom; and
- Take care of toileting needs with minimal assistance – this includes wiping self, flushing toilet, and washing/drying hands.

Potty Training Process

Once children demonstrate signs of readiness, staff will begin discussing the potty training process with parents. Consistency with students and flexibility with the teachers are most important in this process. Teachers take children to the potty at regular intervals within the classrooms daily schedule.

At CHECLC teachers use the following procedures:

Children begin to wear panties/underwear underneath pull-ups and are taken to the potty at 1 ½ to 2-hour intervals. If a child's underwear is constantly wet, he/she is not ready for step 2. The staff does not recommend the use of pull-ups without the panties/underwear because they feel and act just like a diaper. Teachers continue to take children to the bathroom supplying words to them for toileting. Teachers offer praise and encouragement for effort and success until children are completely independent.

CHECLC staff have found that some children will successfully potty at home first or at school first. And, at times staff will observe children regressing at least once during the process. Good communication between home and school is imperative throughout the potty training process.

Rest time

Per Bright from the Start, all children are required to have a daily "rest time". Children will rest on covered mats or cots which are three feet between sleeping spaces. Parents are responsible for providing the child's blanket. Bedding is labeled with the child's first and last name and cleaned weekly. Children who do not fall asleep after 15 minutes will be offered a quiet activity that can be completed on their mat or cot. Parents shall refrain from requesting teachers to keep their child awake to accommodate home bedtime routines.

Infant Sleeping

Providing infants with a safe place to grow and learn is very important. For this reason, College Heights has created a policy on safe sleep practices for infants up to 1-year-old. We follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission to provide a safe sleep environment and reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Sleep Position:

- Infants will be placed flat on their backs to sleep every time unless there is a physician, signed sleep position medical waiver up to date on file.
- Parents may bring in a store-purchased, velcro closure sleep sack. Staff are not permitted to swaddle the infant with a blanket.
- Toys, blankets, stuffed animals, or other items are NOT allowed in the crib.
- Devices such as wedges or infant positioners will not be used since such devices are not proven to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Infants who use pacifiers will be offered their pacifier when they are placed to sleep, and it will not be put back in should the pacifier fall out once they fall asleep.

- While infants will always be placed on their backs to sleep, when an infant can easily turn over from back to front and front to back, they can remain in whatever position they prefer to sleep.
- A child must be removed from the crib after no longer than 5 minutes of continuous crying. Once a child is twelve months of age and able to walk he/she will transition from the crib to a cot or mat.

Infant Feeding

Moms that breastfeed their infants are welcome to utilize the breastfeeding room located outside of the infant classrooms. If parents send prepared bottles of breast milk or formula, it must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name and date. Class bottles are only allowed with a silicone cover. Infant feeding plans must be posted and updated every 30 days by the parent. Infants unable to sit unsupported are held for bottle-feeding. Propped bottles are not allowed and children are not permitted to walk around the room with a bottle or sippy cup. Teachers must discard any contents remaining after feeding therefore suggest to the parents that bottles be filled with the amount the child will drink. Infants younger than 12 months are not provided cow's milk and only whole milk is provided to children between the ages of 12 and 24 months unless an allergy is on file. No infant foods are allowed to be warmed in a microwave oven. As solid foods are introduced, parents are requested to bring labeled containers of food. The child's first and last name and date must appear on the label. Once the child can transition to table food he/she will be served meals off of the school menu.

Family Engagement Opportunities

CHECLC is committed to engaging all families in their child's education through a variety of school events and classroom opportunities. The Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) provides financial support to selected activities that contribute and support the school's mission and school improvement plan. By joining the PTO you are providing funds for classroom materials, field trips, teacher grants and facility improvements.

Family Engagement Events

The PTO board and other staff members plan yearly events, which provide family engagement opportunities.

- Read to Me a Thon
- Winter Event- Smore Roast
- Silent Auction
- Spring Picnic
- Community Dine Out events

Any parent interested in volunteering at CHECLC, contact the school at (404) 370-4480 for more information.

Advisory Council

An Advisory Council was established at CHECLC to function at the level of an advisory body to the administration and partners of the school. The purpose is to link communities, schools, and parents closer together in efforts to solve difficult education problems, to improve the quality of teaching and learning, to provide support and guidance to staff and administrators, and to provide an avenue for parents to be a part of the decision-making process.

The advisory council has very specific roles:

- advise and make recommendations on matters related to school improvement and student achievement
- assist in maintaining a school-wide perspective on issues
- act as a link between the advisory council members and the community and parents
- assist in creating the school budget
- assist in the hiring process
- analyze data and make recommendations towards school programs
- assist in creating school calendars
- assist in creating the School Improvement Plan

The school administration will provide information about the Advisory Council meetings through the school newsletter. Official meeting minutes will be published on the school website. Parents and community members should feel free to contact advisory council members on matters related to student achievement, school improvement, school process and procedures, curriculum and assessments, school budget priorities, school-community communication strategies, methods of involving parents and the community, and school discipline and attendance.

Each year new parent representatives are recruited to serve on the Advisory Council. A notice is sent home in August requesting interested parents, who are willing to serve as a council member, to contact the school Director. Active council members are posted on our school website.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do parents need to send to school with their child?

All materials are provided by the program. Children sometimes have accidents, so an extra set of clothing with the child's name on each item should always be kept at school. Book-bags are helpful in transporting materials. Please check with the teacher about other items such as blankets or large towels for nap-time.

2. How should children dress for school?

Children should wear casual, comfortable clothing that allows them to be active. Clothing should be washable so that children can comfortably engage in activities such as painting and playing on the playground without being concerned about “getting their clothes dirty”.

3. When can parents contact teachers?

Teachers are busy teaching during the day and are free to check emails any time between 7:30 a.m. and 7:45 a.m. or between 2:45 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Please expect a response within 48 hours.

4. Will students be provided meals?

Yes, breakfast and lunch will be provided to all children enrolled in the 0 to 3 year old tuition program as part of their tuition payment. All Pre-K children will be offered breakfast and lunch if the parent chooses to purchase their meals through the school district. Otherwise, parents may provide their child's meals as long as it meets the Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines and does not include peanut products. .

5. Can students with special needs be served by CHECLC?

Yes. Individualized Education Plans (IEP) can be implemented at CHECLC. Please contact the Director of Special Education, Michelle Lowe (404) 371-3601 for details.

6. Will there be a rest time?

Yes, mats will be provided for each child for rest time. You may send a light blanket or a large towel to cover your child during this time. Please refrain from sending stuffed animals. For children sleeping in a crib, blankets are not permitted. Parents may send in a store-purchased wrap or swaddle with Velcro or zip closures.

7. Can parents bring a treat to school for their child's birthday?

Parents often request that they be permitted to bring treats to school to celebrate their child's birthday. Sharing this special day with other classmates is great; however, the administrative staff asks that parents follow these simple guidelines:

- Contact the teacher 48 hours in advance
- All food brought to the classroom must be store bought (not homemade) and meet the needs of any child with identified food allergies
- All food must be free of any peanut product
- For parties held outside school, do not distribute invitations in school unless you are inviting ALL of the children in the class.

Other Topics of Interest**Equity Information**

City Schools of Decatur is committed to a safe and healthy school environment for students and staff. Intimidation, harassment, persecution, or any other improper form of discrimination is not acceptable. In the event that anyone feels his/her rights have been violated, he/she is entitled to appropriate due process procedures without any form of retaliation. The Board of Education of the City of Decatur does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or gender identity in its employment practices, programs, activities, or student placement. The school system shall not discriminate on the basis of gender in its athletic programs.

The Superintendent has designated equity coordinators to handle inquiries/complaints related to nondiscrimination policies according to established procedures. These coordinators are named annually and their contact information are available below. Coordinators are named for each of these areas: Title II (access to vocational education programs), Title VI (race, color, or national origin), Title IX (gender), and Section 504/ADA (handicapping condition).

Photo Consent

City Schools of Decatur may from time to time record the likeness of children by photographic, video, audio or other means. The likeness of children may be used by City Schools of Decatur for purposes of news, advertising, promotion, school and school district websites, yearbooks or any

other lawful purpose. No compensation is given for such use of children likenesses, and parents and children are not entitled to any use of said photographs, videos, audio recordings or other children likenesses nor are parents or children entitled to any reproduction of the same. Such reproductions of students' likenesses are the property of the City Schools of Decatur and that City Schools of Decatur has the perpetual right to use, crop, edit, or otherwise treat said reproductions at its sole discretion. Any parent, legal guardian who does not consent to the use of his or her child's likeness must execute the opt-out form made available with this handbook and on school district Web sites and return it to the principal within (5) days of the commencement of each school year.

Residency

The school system takes the issue of student residency very seriously. Procedures have been put in place to provide consistency among the schools, including a registration process at the City Schools of Decatur central office for new students. Included in these procedures are the requirements that new children provide two acceptable documents to show proof of residency and that all children live within the city limits of Decatur with a parent or legal guardian.

If a Decatur resident has legal guardianship of a student, the child must reside in the resident's home. While the school system reserves the right to verify any information provided at any time, the following residency checks have been put in place: (1) residency checks when children transition from one grade configuration to another; (2) residency checks when concerns have been reported; and (3) random checks of residency. By signing the handbook acknowledgement, I realize that City Schools of Decatur may take steps to verify my address, including, home visits, review of public documents and contacting other government agencies, without further notification.

School Safety Zones

School safety zones are established within 1,000 feet of all schools. It is unlawful for any person, unless authorized by law under certain circumstances, to carry any weapon or explosive compound within a school safety zone or at a school building, school function, or school property or on a bus furnished by the school. If any person is in violation of this law, proper authorities will be called immediately to have the person removed from the premises. Disruption of or interference with the operation of a public school shall be considered a misdemeanor. It is unlawful for any person to remain within the school zone when that person does not have a legitimate cause or need to be there. Failure to leave the premises when requested is grounds for a charge of a misdemeanor. This also applies to members of the press.

Sexual Abuse or Misconduct Reporting

Any teacher, counselor, or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school Director or Director's designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school principal or principal's designee within 24 hours. If the Director is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the Executive Director of Schools, Dr. Maggie Fehrman.

Any school administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A., 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The report should be made by telephone and followed by a written report in writing, if requested, to a child welfare agency providing protective services, as designated by the Department of Human Resources, or, in the absence of such agency, to an appropriate police authority or district attorney.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. 19-7-5 shall be investigated immediately by the school or school system personnel. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the school principal or principal's designee shall make an immediate written report to the superintendent and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division.

Special Education

City Schools of Decatur provides special education programs utilizing a continuum of delivery models to all students who meet the eligibility requirements as mandated by federal and state laws. A student or youth from 3 through 21 years of age is considered to have a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) if the student or youth meets the eligibility criteria in any of the 12 program areas: autism, deaf/blind, emotional and behavioral disorder, deaf/hard of hearing, intellectual disability, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, significant developmental delay (ages 3-8), specific learning disability, speech-language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment.

Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, gives parents, guardians, and eligible students, as defined by the act, the following rights:

1. The right to be told by the school system of their rights under this act
2. The right to prevent disclosure of personally identifiable information without prior written consent except to school official with a legitimate educational interest. School official person is a person employed by the Board as an administrator, supervisor, teacher, instructor, or support staff member (including health and medical staff); a member of the Board, a person or company with whom the Board has contracted to perform a special task, including, but not limited to, an attorney, auditor, educational or other consultant; a volunteer performing a task or function as directed by a person employed by the Board; or a therapist. Legitimate educational interest is defined as a direct or delegated responsibility for helping the student achieve one or more of the educational goals of the District, or if the record is necessary in order for the school official to perform an administrative, supervisory, or instructional task or to perform a service or benefit for the student or student's family.
3. The right to inspect and review educational records
4. The right to challenge the content of any educational record and to have certain hearing rights if administrators deny their challenge
5. The right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office to which complaints may be made is the following: Family Policy Compliance Office, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20202-4605 (Policy JR: Student Records)

