



Griswold Board of
Education

Griswold Early Education
Program

Family Handbook of
Policies and
Procedures



Revised 7.2026

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Section I – Guiding Philosophy

Introduction

Welcome to Griswold Public Schools. This handbook is part of our ongoing efforts to facilitate open communication between home and school. It should provide families and other caregivers with some basic information about the program your child is attending. Of course, if you have any questions not covered in this handbook, please ask the staff. Not only will you have your question answered, but you will be providing necessary feedback for improvements to this handbook. You will also receive an orientation packet containing calendars, classroom information and grade level information. Please sign the Family Handbook Agreement and return to school.

Program Description

The Griswold Early Education Program is an accredited program through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. NAEYC is the nation's largest organization of early childhood professionals. Accredited programs have demonstrated a commitment to providing a high quality program for young children and their families.

The Griswold Early Education Program is designed to provide quality preschool programming, as well as special education services, to our three, four and five-year-old children in Griswold who are eligible. The programs are designed as integrated special education programs. The program strives to meet the individual needs of each child participating. The Griswold Early Education Program employs a team approach to education and provides professional development each year to maintain quality standards. All new staff attend initial training in curriculum, leadership, assessment, diversity and special needs. Teaching staff (teachers and paraprofessionals) attend ongoing training in early childhood education and special education is conducted each year thereafter through training, consulting, and coaching opportunities. These

professional development opportunities are provided to improve our program's quality on an ongoing basis. The early childhood team meets weekly to coordinate the services and plan for the needs of the children in the program. In addition to the three classroom teachers and paraprofessionals, the team consists of the following other professionals:

Speech and Language Pathologist – Assesses, diagnoses and treats speech disorders (articulation, fluency, voice) and language disorders and/or delays (form, content, use of words to convey thoughts and wants/needs). Service is provided within the classroom, with peer models to facilitate skill development, as well as in a related services room.

Teacher of the Hearing Impaired - Services are contracted with local agencies.

School Psychologist - Assesses through direct observation cognitive development of special needs children, provides psychological evaluation as determined by PPT, provides consultative services to classroom teachers regarding intervention strategies and behavior management and collaborates with outside agencies and professionals as appropriate.

Occupational Therapist – Assesses, diagnoses and treats disorders of sensory integration/fine motor skills and serves as a consultant.

Physical Therapist - Assesses, diagnoses and treats disorders of gross motor skills (running, walking) as well as those skills involving balance, and serves as a consultant.

Nurse - Maintains health records, is available for first aid needs, and consults with outside medical professionals. The nurse functions as a medical consultant to the preschool and provides staff training and family communication to meet the health needs of children attending the program.

Program Philosophy

We believe that children need to develop socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically to be successful learners. The program is designed to develop students' competence in developmentally appropriate areas through play and active participation in a safe and orderly environment. Language experiences include: verbal expression, vocabulary use and comprehension, manipulating objects, and talking about actions and experiences. The language-based classroom promotes independence, self-esteem and the joy of learning life long skills. Children learn in environments which encourage and support diversity by cooperating with others and being aware and respectful of differences. Collaboration and communication with families enhance each child's growth and development.

Program Goals

- I. To promote growth in the following skill areas: fine and gross motor, cognition, social and emotional, physical health, language and literacy, creative arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- II. To meet children's needs at their developmental level within chronologically age-appropriate activities.
- III. To foster relationships that promote friendship and understanding of human differences.
- IV. To provide opportunities for children to learn through active exploration and child-directed choices.
- V. To facilitate specific skill development through play.
- VI. To provide resources for families as needed and maintain open communication between home and school.

These goals are addressed through a large variety of active learning, whole group, small group, and individual activities which are designed to foster success and independence. Each activity is designed with various developmental levels in mind to ensure the successful participation of each child. Teachers and paraeducators are responsible for the supervision of all students by keeping them in line of sight most of the time. Staff members engage in active supervision by constantly watching, listening, and moving through an environment which includes inside and outside play. An example would be frequent head counts, active engagement, and continuous visual screening at all times of children. When students may be out of sight (ex: when a student is in the bathroom), supervision by sound is permissible with frequent checks on the children who are out of sight. Teachers and paraeducators monitor and document the supervision throughout the day. For example, there is an adult seated for supervision at every table during snack time. Teachers and paraeducators also participate in centers daily to monitor students. Teachers and paraeducators document observations for progress monitoring as well as complete documentation for school/home notes. (A.6.17)

Program Evaluation

Griswold Early Education Program is evaluated each year through the Early Start CT Program Evaluation System and the NAEYC annual reporting procedures. In addition to these formal tools, collection of information from a variety of sources (such as Family Surveys and Teaching staff surveys) are utilized as part of a reflection process.

Curriculum

The integrated early education program is a language-based program which uses an interest center approach, designed to foster initiative and independence as well as socialization, language, readiness skills and motor development. The environment, combined with specific activities, encourages active participation in order to promote age appropriate skill development. The curriculum is based on curriculum standards outlined in the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) put forth by the

state of Connecticut. The Connecticut Documentation and Observation for Teaching System (CT DOTS) is used to assess children based on the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS). The ELDS and CT DOTS are used for the complete cycle of intentional teaching.

Using the ELDS, skills are taught to children through a play-based approach that is vital to a child's overall healthy development. Play teaches children about symbols, solving conflicts, and turn-taking. Not all children develop these skills naturally. Therefore, an important aspect of the Griswold Early Education Program curriculum facilitates growth in the area of play skills.

Staff use learning assessments and child development to guide our program improvements. Based on the data from our CT DOTS and CT ELDS, along with family input, and our readiness assessments used to track children's progress, we then make adjustments to our Learning Experience Plans and our program to help improve our program and children's learning. (R.5.02)

The following information outlines the key play areas in the classroom and illustrates the readiness skills that may be acquired in these play areas.

Play Space Key Experiences

Block Building

- talking with others
- choosing materials
- working independently
- expressing feelings
- describing objects, events and relations
- imitating
- investing and naming attributes
- number concepts
- role playing
- pretend play
- sorting

Literacy Center

- having fun with language
- listening and retelling stories
- representing experiences (flannel board)
- associating pictures with real objects
- experiencing privacy
- experiencing quiet, soft, slow activities
- a safe retreat

Dramatic Play Experiences

- discovering size/shape relations
- comparison and classification
- combining and manipulating materials
- describing objects, events, relations
- representing
- using objects in creative ways
- role playing

Sensory Table

- exploring activity with all senses
- comparing weights/volume
- sensory stimulation of sight, smell, touch, hearing, taste
- exploring various sensory materials
- manipulating Play-Doh
- using tools

Cooking/Snack Experiences

- working cooperatively
- developing self-help skills
- completing a task
- developing independence
- developing pride in one's heritage
- learning about nutrition
- problem solving
- math concepts
- creativity
- fine muscle control

Math Manipulatives/Experiences

- exploring materials
- choosing materials, activities

- using small muscles
- number, size, quality, position concepts
- fitting things together & taking them apart
- learning to locate materials
- identifying shapes and colors
- completing a task
- classification and separation
- acquiring skills with equipment

Outdoor and Gross Motor Experiences

- social skills
- enhancing self-esteem
- increasing independence
- making decisions
- planning and following through
- problem solving
- reenacting life experiences
- natural science
- large muscle skills
- eye-hand coordination
- improving balance
- increasing spatial awareness

What steps does the preschool staff take if my child is having difficulty with appropriate behavior?

Behavioral Strategies

In order to maintain a safe, nurturing, socially inviting environment, certain standards of behavior are expected. The strategies used in the Griswold Early Education Program are designed to guide and direct children toward acceptable behavior. It is important that children gain inner control rather than relying on an adult to control them or regulate their behavior. Teachers use techniques to teach children the consequences of their actions. Some of the positive discipline techniques used are:

Love and Logic – Techniques are utilized as described in Love and Logic Magic for Early Childhood by Jim Fay and Charles Fay.

Anticipate potential problems - The teacher knows that John has

difficulty with transitions, so prior to the time for cleanup the teacher reminds him that there are only a few more minutes of playtime. Visual schedules may be presented to help children anticipate as well as visual timers too.

Focus on the behavior rather than the child - Tell the child specifically what you like or dislike about what he or she is doing. "I like the way you wiped the table." (Rather than "You are a good girl for wiping the table.")

Redirect the child's behavior - "Tony, if you want to use crayons, let's get some paper for you to draw on."

Help the children to see the consequences of their behavior - "John and Mary, when you both pulled on the doll's arms, it broke and now nobody can play with it until it is fixed."

Give positive feedback - I like how you shared the toy with Jim.

Explain the choices available - "It is time for a quiet activity, would you like to read a book in the reading center or work on a puzzle?"

Encourage problem-solving - "Uh-oh, the juice spilled, what do we need to clean it up?"

Brief removal from the group - Is used for aggressive, dangerous, or extremely disruptive behavior. The area to which the child is removed could be a quiet area, usually visually separated from the group but in the same room, a space physically removed from the play center but within sight, such as a mat on the floor or the child's seat at the table. This "cooling down" period should be ended as soon as the child's behavior is under control (never more than 3-4 minutes without an attempt to rejoin the group). Follow it with one of the other techniques, such as problem solving, in order to promote the generation of the appropriate behavior. The role of the adult during this time is to be monitoring the child and next to the child at all times. The adult can help facilitate techniques, such

as taking deep breathes, “blowing out the candle,” “smelling the flower,” looking at a book, using a feelings chart, that will help the child rejoin the group and activity when they are ready to be safe.

If these techniques repeatedly fail to enable appropriate behavior, children will be referred to the Early Education Team for intervention planning which may include a written Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) which could then if needed lead to a referral to a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting which will be scheduled to discuss other options and special education eligibility. Under no circumstances is it permissible for staff to use any form of physical punishment (ex: hitting or pinching), psychological abuse (ex: name calling or frightening a child), or coercion (ex: pulling, pushing, or forcing a child) when redirecting behavior. All staff are PMT (Physical and Psychological Management) trained in the event a restraint is needed for safety.

As members of the Griswold Elementary School, the preschool at GES believes in treating students with dignity and fairness and that all students, like all adults, make mistakes and poor choices at times. We also believe that every child deserves the opportunity for a positive learning experience without having disruptions to their learning environment because of disruptive behaviors by others. Through the implementation of consequences for inappropriate behavior, it is our intention that these consequences will be positive learning experiences for the student. We also believe that one size doesn't fit all. For many behaviors, many considerations are taken into account before a decision is made regarding the consequence. Per school policy suspension or expulsion could result from the following behaviors: 1. A student in possession of a weapon, drugs, drug paraphernalia, or alcohol; 2. A student caught starting a fire or pulling a fire alarm; 3. A student who assaults or threatens to assault or otherwise harm another student or staff member; 4. A student who engages in hazing, harassment or intimidation, or any act that injures, degrades, or disgraces a student or staff member; 5. A student who willfully destroys or vandalizes school property. This policy is in compliance with federal and state civil right laws.

Conflict Resolution

Throughout the year, if there is a circumstance when families and program staff are negotiating difficulties and differences among interactions between one another, there are procedures in place. The first step would be a phone call or an email from the family with a request for a conference call or meeting with the teacher. During the meeting, the reason for the conference will be addressed and the teacher will offer a set of solutions. If the family is in agreement, the teacher will check in with the family daily, weekly, or monthly, depending on the agreement made during the meeting. Families will also be offered early childhood education materials/resources such as the OEC, NAEYC, CT ELDS, and/or CT DOTS (as appropriate and pending families concern). If the conflict/concern has not been resolved, then the next step would be a meeting with the principal, family, and the teacher. The last step would be a meeting with the administration which would include the family, principal, teacher, and superintendent if the family feels their concern/conflict have not been satisfactorily addressed. (A.2.03)

Family Involvement

Family members are invited to participate in the Griswold Elementary School community in a variety of ways.

Family members may volunteer in the classrooms, working with teachers and students. (All volunteers must be processed through our security system in the office. Proper identification is required). Family members may volunteer to help with material preparation, library tasks, and special projects and activities. All doors are locked and access to the building is through the main office. Doors at the GEEP entrance will be unlocked and opened during arrival and pick up times. Please reach out to your child's teacher if you would like to be contacted for volunteer opportunities as they arise.

***Please remember that all volunteers must maintain confidentiality of all students, families, and staff. Any information that is shared or observed within the school building or at any

school function must remain confidential.

Family members are encouraged to join the school (PTO) Parent Teacher Organization. This is an active group of families and teachers working together to enrich the educational opportunities for our students. Childcare is provided for school-aged children.

Families may join The District Partnership Advisory Council, made up of family members, teachers and administration working together on school issues. This committee serves in the capacity of an advisory council to the preschool program.

Regional Early Childhood Council offer an opportunity for parents to become involved in policy initiatives and community actions that affect the children of Griswold ages birth to eight.

Families are invited to participate in school sponsored as well as community sponsored parenting education activities throughout the school year. School sponsored events may include, but are not limited to, muffin morning, family reading nights, family game nights, family movie nights, book fairs, ice cream socials, and field day events.

Section II - Operation

The following section will address some questions you may have about your child's daily experience in preschool.

Enrollment, Admission, and Tuition Based

Griswold Early Education Program seeks and encourages the enrollment of all children in the community from diverse, racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds. Enrollment procedures are non-discriminatory and confidentiality is maintained in accordance with public school policy. Safeguards protect students and families from invasion of privacy in the collection, maintenance and dissemination of information, and to provide accessibility to recorded information by those entitled thereto.

Our program is tuition based. A sliding scale is available upon request for any family whose annual income is less than 75% of the State Median Income (SMI). For some families, use of this sliding scale could drastically reduce their tuition. Families who do not wish to present income documentation will be charged the maximum rate of \$10 per day for the partial day program. No tuition is charged for children who are eligible for special education services.

Families are encouraged to work toward having children toilet trained prior to entry into preschool. If children have not accomplished this goal by the start of the school year, teaching staff and families will work together to assist the child in becoming toilet trained. The program accepts children whether or not they are toilet trained. It is the responsibility of the family to provide toileting supplies.

In order to attend the Griswold Early Education Program, children must be in the age range of 3-5 years old and residents of the town of Griswold. Children who attend the Community Screening, complete an application, and submit grant-funded forms and income verification forms are considered for placement. Slots will be offered in classrooms until classrooms are full. The program

will offer slots to students who meet eligibility criteria based on income guidelines first. A waitlist is generated once slots are full. A lottery would be used to determine placement in the event that the number of students who attend screening, complete the application, and grant required forms, exceeds the number of available slots in the classroom. Children and families who miss the screening day may be offered entrance into the program later in the school year at specific times, should appropriate slots be available; however, it is highly encouraged that all children in the community attend the spring screening. Should program slots be available after placement of students who receive special education services, students in grant-funded slots, and four-year-old students eligible for kindergarten the following school year, slots will be offered to three-year-old peers. Each child is assigned to a specific classroom and teacher prior to the new school year. Every effort is made to create balanced classrooms and therefore, it will not be possible to make changes in your child's placement.

Enrollment Paperwork

To register your preschool child in the Griswold Public Schools copies of the following are needed:

- Proof of Residency
- Copy of your child's birth certificate
- Copy of your child's social security card

The following forms must be completed and returned to the GES office with the above:

- Griswold Early Education Program Application
- Griswold Public Schools - Student Registration Form
- Connecticut Early Childhood Health Assessment Record (including flu shot)
- Income Verification Forms

The Student Registration Form and the yellow Health Assessment Record must be completed and submitted before your child can start school.

Paperwork is reviewed by the school health office and assistance is provided to secure medical insurance or to respond to health questions or issues. **It is imperative that the yellow health assessment form be in the school nurse's office one week prior to enrollment and start date.**

Confidentiality

A child's health and safety and education file is confidential. A child's file is available upon request to the following people:

- Administrators and teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian to access the records
- The child's parents or legal guardians
- Regulatory authorities

Tuition Information, Payment, and Hardship

1. Tuition rates are based on the total cost of providing services for the full school year, and will therefore not be pro-rated based on holidays or absences. Fee calculation form and the fee calculation is reviewed with parent via email and parents sign a signature page.
2. Monthly tuition payments will automatically be charged to the parent authorized credit card, savings account, or checking account. If the transaction is declined, a non-sufficient funds charge of \$25.00 will be applied to the family's account, and the parent will be expected to provide updated charge information by the end of the first week of the month. Failure to do so will result in a late payment fee of \$15.00. Repeated late tuition payments and/or non-payment of tuition could result in the parent/caregiver's child being dis-enrolled from the program. A dis-enrolled student is welcome to re-apply to the program.
3. Definition of Hardship: The program does not have the funds to cover the parent cost of care. As such, hardships are expected to be temporary in nature. Factors contributing to serious hardship generally include: family tragedy, financial misfortune, serious illness, impacts of natural disaster, and other serious or difficult circumstances.

4. Hardship Application Procedure: In order to request a hardship, parents/guardians must submit a written request to Griswold Public Schools Business Office. The request must provide complete details of the circumstances preventing them from meeting their financial obligation to the school, along with a specific request of fee reduction, timeframe for reduction, and/or timeframe for repayment.

An initial needs assessment will be conducted to determine the level of support and services needed, along with a determination of whether or not the program can sustain the approval of a hardship accommodation at that time. Possible responses could include:

- a. Redetermination of fee if household circumstances have changed;
- b. Reduction of weekly tuition for a temporary period of time;
or
- c. Approval of a payment plan to assist a family in reducing a past due balance over a set period of time.

What will my child's day look like?

Daily Schedule

The daily schedule and routines form a basic structure for each day. The schedule offers a balance between active and quiet times, large group, small group and individual activities as well as times which are more teacher-directed and times during which children are encouraged to select their own activities. The consistency of the routines helps the children feel more secure because they quickly learn what comes next. Flexibility is built into the routine, so that special occasions, child-initiated interests and other interruptions are smoothly incorporated into the schedule.

A sample schedule for the partial day program:

1. Arrival/Transition/Individual Activities
2. Whole Group Literacy/Math Time
3. Learning Centers/Small Group
4. Outside/Gross Motor Time

5. Snack
6. Group Group Literacy/Math Time
7. Dismissal

A sample schedule for the school day program:

1. Arrival/Transition/Individual Activities
2. Morning Group
3. Snack
4. Learning Centers
5. Whole Group Literacy Time
6. Outdoor/Gross Motor Time
7. Lunch (2 hours apart from snack)
8. Toothbrushing/Rest Time
9. Whole Group Math Time
10. Snack
11. Outdoor/Gross Motor Time
12. Dismissal

Mealttime – Nutrition

The following is the Preschool Nutrition Policy: Griswold Early Education Program will seek to provide guidance and direction to families relating to the health and nutrition of their children. We will promote policies in our preschool program that encourage healthy food choices.

Practices:

1. Food brought from home must be healthy based on the CACFP guidelines for young children. Families will be provided with lists that outline suggestions for snack and lunch (school day only) as well as do's and don'ts.
2. If a child does not bring a snack that meets guidelines they will be provided with a healthy alternative and a reminder note sent to parents.
3. Cooking projects in the classroom will support the healthy snack guidelines.
4. Classroom teachers have developed units that focus on

- healthy choice and overall positive health habits.
5. Snacks/lunch that need to be refrigerated (ex: yogurt, cheese, milk) need to be accompanied with an ice pack in your child's lunchbox or backpack. If a meal needs to be kept warm, please consider placing their lunch in a thermos.

You will be asked to provide your child with a healthy snack, lunch (school day only) and drink each day that meets the requirements stated in the policy. Families can choose to purchase lunch for their child too. A list of suggested snack and lunch choices will be given out at orientation. Classroom cooking projects will help to educate children about the importance of healthy snacking. Every effort will be made to choose nutritionally sound foods for classroom celebrations. No "sugary" "junk food snacks" are permitted. **Due to choking hazards these foods are not permitted: hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.**

Food that comes from home for sharing among the children (eg. Birthdays/celebrations) must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers.

In the case of food allergies all necessary changes to classroom snack choices will be modified to ensure the health and safety of the child.

Toothbrushing

Children who enjoy two meals per day while at school must brush their teeth. Toothbrushes, toothpaste, and a toothbrush holder will be provided for every child.

Rest Time

All children who are enrolled in the school day classroom must be offered a rest time daily. Children who do rest are provided their own individual cot. Cots are organized so that children are afforded space from one another yet can be supervised by classroom staff. Families are asked to send in a small blanket and pillow. Blankets

and pillows must be taken home on the last day of the school week to be laundered and brought back the following week. For those children who opt not to rest, quiet cot and/or table learning activities are provided.

Outside Play

Growing young children benefit from daily exercise and fresh air therefore outside play is an important part of your child's day. Every effort is made to play outside daily unless the weather is severe. Please make sure your child has warm coats, hats, mittens, and pants during fall and winter and light jackets, hats and or sunscreen applied to them in warm weather. Staff do not apply sunscreen to any children. If you would like your child to have sunscreen, please make sure to apply it prior to their session. All children must wear a sturdy flat shoe or sneaker made for running and climbing. **Heels and open-toed shoes are not permitted.**

Field Trips

The Griswold Early Education Program takes several field trips throughout the year. Field trips are planned to enhance learning. Families are encouraged to attend field trips with their children. Permission slips will inform you if an adult will need to accompany your child or if a few chaperones will be chosen by the teacher. If you are unable to attend the trip with your child you may send another adult with your child (grandparent, aunt, or friend). **Field trip permissions slips must be returned by the deadline stated. If the permission slip is not returned by the deadline, your child may not attend that field trip.**

Digital Media

Families are asked to be mindful when taking photographs/videos at any school related event. Parents/guardians may take photographs/video *of their own child*, but do not have permission to photograph/video record of other children/staff. Posting of other children/staff on social media is therefore not permitted.

Clothing & Personal Belongings

All personal items should be labeled with your child's name. Your child should be dressed in comfortable, easy to fasten play clothes

and safe non-skid shoes. Playtime outdoors occurs frequently, therefore dress your child properly for weather conditions. Clothes will get dirty and/or wet due to the large variety of activities, so do not send your child in fancy clothes. Send an extra set of clothes (including socks, underwear) to school, in case of an accident. Children should carry their backpack or bag to school each day. This will allow us to send home any necessary information as well as your child's projects without getting lost or misplaced.

Attendance Policy

Enrollment in preschool in the Griswold Early Education Program is at family discretion. ***Once enrolled, however, attendance is not a discretionary matter.*** According to the policy of the Griswold Board of Education all Griswold Public School students are expected to be in school except for reasons of illness/injury with written verification, death in family, religious holidays, court appearances, school sponsored activity, college visits, suspension, other exceptional circumstance subject to administrative approval. Families should carefully review this expectation prior to enrollment as attendance is monitored. Should families not be willing or able to meet the attendance expectations, then they should consider alternative preschool experiences for their children. Regular school attendance is important not only to your child's success, but also a requirement of grant funding. Students who are chronically absent, without documentation of illness or extenuating circumstances, may be asked to dis-enroll from the program. Please provide written notification if you wish to withdraw your child from the program. This notification is to be submitted 2 weeks prior to the date with withdrawal; failure to do so will result in tuition being due for two weeks from the date that the form is received.

Punctuality to school is also requested. Arriving late to the classroom or being picked up late at dismissal time is disruptive to the classroom activities and to the responsibilities of the staff. Please be punctual. A fee of \$5 per child may be charged for each 5-minute increment that your child remains in the program past ending time. Excessive late arrivals may result in dis-enrollment from the program.

This policy is important to the development of each child, the

integrity of the program, and the formation of life long values on the importance of education and commitment. It should also be noted that we have many children and families interested in our program and wish to maximize our resources for as many students as possible.

If your child is being kept home for illness, or any other reason, please call the school, in accordance with school policy, to report that your child will be absent. Send a note, explaining the nature of the illness, when your child returns to school. Please notify us if any childhood diseases (such as chicken pox) are going through your household so that we and other parents can watch for symptoms in others. An ongoing monitoring of attendance will take place. Students who accumulate 5 or more absences/tardies that are not excusable under policy will be reviewed. A meeting will be held to discuss necessary changes and possible courses of action. Communication with your child's teacher is encouraged at all times to discuss any issues affecting attendance.

Health Policy

State law requires us to have a completed health form for each child on file the first day of attendance. Proof of immunization must be provided and the child must be in compliance with state requirements. Immunization records will be reviewed by the school nurse. If a family indicates on the student registration form that the child has no medical insurance, the school nurse informs and assists the family to secure medical insurance.

For the protection of our children and staff, we request that you do not send your child to school with a temperature or in any contagious state. Children who have a temperature over 100, diarrhea or vomiting will be sent home and/or should be kept home and remain symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to school. Children should be kept at home, or will be sent home when not feeling well enough to participate in the day's activities, including outside activities. It is important to keep your child at home when ill to minimize the spread of illness and to restore his/her health. Children should not be in school when they demonstrate the following signs of illness:

- cold with excessive coughing or colored discharge from nose and eyes
- vomiting/diarrhea
- conjunctivitis (pinkeye)
- impetigo
- ear infection
- head lice
- any communicable illness (strep throat, chicken pox, Covid, etc.) during the period of contagion.

If your child becomes ill at school, the school nurse will notify you at home or work. If she cannot reach you, someone on the emergency name list will be contacted. **Please keep the emergency names and phone numbers current.**

Vision & hearing screenings are provided at the community screening day and as needed during the school year. Dental screenings are provided in collaboration with UCFS.

Families that have questions or needs related to securing medical insurance, a medical home, on-going well-child care, immunizations, and health, dental and nutritional screenings can reach out directly to the school social worker or the teacher who will provide parent contact information to the school social worker so they may work together with local agencies to address these questions or needs.

If your child has an allergy:

1. Any student who has an allergy must have an official statement from his/her physician giving all pertinent facts concerning such allergy and treatment on file in the school health office.
2. Medication prescribed by the physician accompanied by “Authorization for Administration of Medicine by School Personnel” and “Food Allergy Action Plan” for food allergy, form must be on file with the school nurse on the first day of school each year.
3. For health and safety reasons, an identified allergic student will be excluded from school until these regulations are met.

4. If a student's allergy no longer exists, a statement from the physician or parent is required to release a student from school regulations.
5. All medication is stored and locked in the nurse's office. The administration of medication is done in the nurse's office by the nurse.

Emergency Closings and Early Dismissals

Listen to your radio station WICH or WCTY, local news and ensure you are signed up and receiving emails and calls from the school for school closings, or early dismissals. The Connecticut news stations on television also broadcast this information. If school is delayed, there will be no a.m. session, but the p.m. will run at the usual time. When there is an early dismissal, the a.m. children are dismissed at the regular time and the p.m. session is canceled.

In addition to the posted messages on radio and television, the Griswold Public Schools utilizes a telephone messaging service to personally communicate with parents and staff about emergency situations, school events and important issues impacting the students. On days when school is to be canceled or delayed, you will receive a morning call at the primary phone number that is on file at the school as well as an email if on file. Our website will also have the school cancellation status posted.

Safety Procedures and Emergency Response Plans

Safety measures are integrated into our daily routines. All doors are locked during the school's operating hours. The main entrance has a buzzer entry system and all visitors must report to the office upon entry to sign in with our Raptor system. Please be prepared to present identification and for the purpose of your visit. Any adult staying in the building must sign in and sign out and wear a visitor pass visibly.

Fire drills, evacuations, and lockdown procedures are part of a school safety plan and are implemented throughout the school year. Practice for the entire school population provides safety protocols to call upon in the event of emergency situations. Children are taught safe ways to act at home and in school.

Griswold Elementary School students will practice and follow Emergency Response Codes known as Code Red, Code Yellow, and Code Green. Students will practice fire drills throughout the year as well. Students will follow the Griswold Public Schools district policy regarding emergency response plans. (A.6.19).

How will I communicate with my child's teacher?

Family Communication

The Griswold Early Education Program has an open-door policy. While families are encouraged to visit, we ask that family members report to the office to comply with school safety policies. It is important that families and teachers participate in ongoing communication. The program encourages families to visit and participate during scheduled opportunities. The opportunities for family volunteers are made available throughout the year. The program utilizes several methods of communication so that information will be made available to all families. The classroom teacher maintains contact with families through an open house, notes, phone calls, conferences, and notices which are sent home with your child. Due to the amount of written communication being sent home, it is important that you check your child's backpack for their folder each day.

Please read our newsletters and postings in our entryway for valuable information regarding parent education, literacy, GED programs, and community programs.

How can I participate in my child's preschool experience?

Family Conferences & Progress Reports

Families are encouraged to share cultural and ethnic information with teachers to help promote diversity and understanding.

Families are also asked to complete CT DOTS Family Input information sheets monthly for teachers to provide their own observations from home which will help contribute to the child assessment process as well as family conferences. Families are also encouraged to email and/or make phone calls to the teachers to provide their own observations from home. Family conferences are made available in November and March for all children. Every effort will be made to schedule a conference at times convenient for families. At these meetings your child's progress will be reviewed. The Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS) and the Connecticut Documentation and Observation for Teaching System (CT DOTS) are used to structure observations throughout the year to monitor your child's development. Three written progress reports are provided yearly in November, January, and June. The progress reports include information about various areas of development including language, cognitive readiness skills, socialization, behavior and motor skills. A conference can be scheduled at any time if you have concerns. Families will also be asked to participate in conferences throughout the year if your child requires any intervention. All information shared by families is held in the strictest confidentiality by all classroom staff. (A.5.08)

Section III - Other

Early Start CT Grant

The State of Connecticut supports preschool slots at the Griswold Early Education Program through Early Start CT Grant Funding. Funding from this grant helps promote quality preschool education for children within the town of Griswold. The Griswold Early Education Program ensures the commitment to standards in the areas of curriculum, parent involvement, collaboration, nutrition, health safety, kindergarten transition, family literacy, and equal access.

Families are encouraged to participate in various interactive literacy events such as, Story Time at Slater Public Library, 211 Info Line workshops/trainings and GES literacy events. Families are supported by the team by offering referral information to

community programs such as, Adult Education, Job Training, English as a Second Language and Public Library.

Transition to Kindergarten Regular Education Students

Preschool students will have the opportunity to be involved in a variety of experiences to ease the transition to kindergarten. Preschool and kindergarten teachers work together to create programs that will build upon each other. Teachers meet frequently throughout the year to plan programs for children. The school will offer parent meetings, children's visits, and orientation all with the goal of making transition to kindergarten informative and enjoyable. All academic/program records are shared and transferred to kindergarten.

Screenings

All preschool children participate in a developmental screening to briefly assess skills in areas of language, cognition, gross motor, fine motor, and social- emotional development. The Griswold Early Education Program uses the Brigance Early Development Screener as well as the Ages and Stages Social Emotional Questionnaire. Community screenings are also offered as part of Child Find.

Special Education Procedures & Eligibility

When there are concerns about development, children are often referred to our Early Childhood Team either by a pediatrician, parent, teacher or one of several Early Intervention Programs such as the Birth to Three Program. A Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting is held to determine the need for evaluations and to review observations/evaluations. Once the team, which includes the child's family, determines that your child meets the eligibility requirements for special education, a determination for the amount and type of services required will be decided. If the team decides that placement in the Integrated Preschool Program would meet your child's needs, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed to address any areas of need through goals and objectives. Special education services and responsible providers are described on the IEP and are carried out either directly in the integrated classroom or in a related services room within the building. Use of a related services room for direct service is indicated in a child specific IEP. The goals and objectives will be reviewed at least annually at a PPT meeting.

Families of children who are receiving special education services are guaranteed specific rights which are described in detail in a pamphlet, Procedural Safeguards of Children in Special Education, which you will receive at each PPT meeting. Notify the Special Education Office at 376-7650 if you do not receive the pamphlet. Students may be referred to the Planning and Placement Team by anyone who has concerns about developmental, educational or behavioral issues for that student.

Transition from Preschool To Kindergarten for Children Receiving Special Education

When your child is ready to transition to a kindergarten-aged program at age five, you will be involved in a transition plan to ensure that your child's needs will continue to be met. Some children will be able to transition simply into regular kindergarten. Others may require additional assessment to determine the most appropriate program. A timeline of the general transition plan is described below.

A Planning and Placement Team (PPT) for those children who may possibly need further assessments to plan next year's program occurs. This meeting includes pertinent team members. If the team recommends further testing, the appropriate paperwork is complete, which must be signed by the parents before testing can begin. Necessary tests will be approved at the PPT meeting. Test results will be reported at a follow-up PPT meeting. If the PPT agrees that special education is warranted, an annual PPT is scheduled to develop an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan). If results indicate no need for services, the process is ended and your child will participate in the regular education Kindergarten transition.

Summer School (ESY)

Eligibility for the summer school program is determined by the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) after observing demonstrated regression or challenges with recoupment of skills on the part of the child, over vacations and school breaks. Summer school services are designed to foster skill maintenance over the long summer break. If your child is determined eligible for summer school, he/she will be transported to the program. You will be notified of beginning and ending dates and session times when the regular Preschool session has ended in June. During summer school, the staff will work on maintaining the skills your child has learned during the school year.

Transportation

Children with special needs are offered transportation by Griswold Public Schools. If your child is to be transported by the bus, you will receive information notifying you of the approximate time your child will be picked up and dropped off. If your child is going to be absent, it is your responsibility to call the bus company at 376-2860. It is the responsibility of the family to provide transportation for regular education students. Our program discourages idling vehicles (buses, families' automobiles) in our parking areas, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures. (A.6.14)

Hours of Operation

Griswold Early Education Program is in operation for the entire school year typically from September to June. The AM part day session is 2.5 hours (9:00-11:30) and the PM part day session is 2.5 hours (12:30-3:00). The school day session is 6 hours (9:00 0 3:00pm) Sessions run Monday-Friday with asynchronous learning days to allow for teacher training and conferences.

Supplies

Many of the supplies used in the classrooms are consumable and need to be restocked on a regular basis. Teachers will ask families to donate items throughout the year by wish list. Classrooms may request the following supplies:

- flour,
- salt,
- oil,
- cream of tartar (used to make play dough weekly)
- tissues

TO: Parents/Guardians
FROM: Griswold Early Education Program Team
RE: Family Handbook

You have been given a Family Handbook which contains information about preschool policies and procedures.

Please take the time to read this handbook and familiarize yourself with it.

Please sign below and return the bottom portion of this page to your child's teacher.

(Please cut here)

I have received and have read the Family Handbook.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Child's Teacher: _____