Salem-Keizer Early Childhood Programs Family Handbook

1850 45th Ave. NE
Salem, OR 97305

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OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Salem-Keizer Head Start, we believe every child is a capable learner. By working together with families, we help children build the skills they need to grow, succeed, and make sense of their world. We are committed to:

- Creating a safe and supportive place for children and families
- Respecting and celebrating diverse cultures and backgrounds
- Listening to and valuing families' ideas and voices
- Supporting children's health, learning, and development in every area
- Partnering with the community to provide strong, lasting support

YOUR RIGHTS AS A PROGRAM PARENT

As a Head Start parent, you have the right:

- To be welcomed in the classroom and treated with respect.
- To receive regular updates about your child's progress.
- To get guidance and support from teachers and staff.
- To learn about community resources for health, education, and family well-being.
- To understand how the program operates, including staff roles and the budget.
- To participate in decisions and programs that affect your child and family.

ATTENDANCE BOUNDARIES & MOVES

Policy: We aim to place children in their **neighborhood school** to build a strong home–school connection.

If You Move

- **Tell us right away.** Update your address and phone numbers with your child's teacher or Family Advocate.
- **If you move outside the Salem–Keizer service area:** We will help you connect with Community Action Head Start.
  - **Transfer priority:** Your family receives priority as a transfer family.
  - **Siblings:** Other children in your household will be considered for services as space allows.

Questions or Help

- **Contact:** your child's teacher, your Family Advocate, or the site office.
- **Language help:** Free interpretation and translation—ask your site office.

Become a Partner in the Program

At Salem-Keizer Head Start, staff value and expect the involvement of all parents in their child's education. Your participation helps make the program stronger and supports your child's growth and learning.

As a Head Start parent I can be involved in the program in the following ways:

- Attend 1 Classroom Orientation prior to my child starting class.
- Volunteer to attend monthly Parent Meetings to support my child's education and parent interests.

- Volunteer as a Policy Council Representative to represent my child's classroom.
- Schedule and participate in creating family goals and activities with my Family Advocate during home visits. (3 times per year)
- Schedule and participate in home visit activities with my child and my child's teacher. (2 times per year)
- We welcome you to volunteer in your child's classroom.
- Within 45-days of enrollment, ensure my child's developmental, physical, immunizations and dental screenings are up to date and follow-up care is scheduled.
- Participate in developing an individual learning plan during conferences 2 times per year. We encourage you to observe your child in the classroom in the fall and spring.
- Be on time and support good attendance by walking my child to their predetermined drop off and pick up location each day.
- Keep my child home if he/she is ill, call the teacher, and let them know about any absences.
- To keep my child safe, I will tell teachers and advocates about all changes to my phone numbers, address, or emergency contacts.

Volunteering in the Classroom

You are welcome here. Family volunteers help children learn and build a strong classroom community.

How to Get Started

- **Visit first.** Come watch the class. Notice routines and how adults guide children.
- **Schedule your next visit.** Talk with your child's teacher or the site office to pick a time.
- **Sign in when you arrive.** Follow your school's visitor procedures and wear a visitor badge.
- **Follow staff lead.** Ask how you can help. It's okay to learn as you go.

Ways to Participate

- Join small-group activities or centers.
- Read books with children.
- Help with simple classroom tasks (materials, transitions, clean-up).

Learn More

- **Talk with the teacher.** They can share tips and short resources about child development and classroom routines.
- **Attend site meetings.** Monthly meetings help you connect with other families and stay informed.

If You Have Questions

- **Contact:** your child's teacher or the main office at 503-399-5510

Parent & Volunteer Code of Conduct – Quick Guide

Salem-Keizer Head Start is committed to a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for children, families, and staff. When you visit, please follow these guidelines.

Be Respectful

- Speak kindly to and about others.

- Avoid threats, harassment, or inappropriate remarks.

Keep Children Safe

- Never strike, spank, or physically harm any child.
- Follow staff instructions for classroom and playground safety.

Follow Program Rules

- No alcohol, drugs, or tobacco on program property or during activities.
- No weapons or threatening behavior anywhere Head Start operates.
- Check in at the office and wear a volunteer badge when visiting.

Consequences

- Unacceptable behavior may result in being asked to leave the premises.
- Serious or repeated violations may lead to temporary or permanent exclusion from the program.
- Threats, abuse, or theft will be reported to law enforcement.

Thank you for helping us create a safe, welcoming environment for all!

Self Transportation Agreement

Head Start staff and parents are partners in your child's education. Safety is our number one concern for all children. Parents will follow the guidelines for self transportation and agree to:

- Arrive and pick up my child from class on time.
  - Part-Day times: 8:45am-12:00pm/12:45pm-4:00pm
  - Full-Day times: 9:30am-3:45pm/9:45am-4:00pm
- Walk my child to and from the predetermined drop off/pick up location.
- Sign in and out with my child's teacher.
- The designated person or parent who will pick up my child will bring photo identification with them to ensure that children are released to a parent approved adult.
- Keep my child home if he/she has live lice, 101° fever, vomiting, diarrhea or other communicable disease in the last 24 hours.
- Contact my child's teacher if I am late or have an emergency and cannot pick up my child on time.
- Keep my child's teacher and advocate informed of any changes in my telephone number, child-care provider, address or changes for authorized adults who may pick up my child.
- If I am 15 minutes late, my child's teachers will call parents and alternate contacts to arrange pick-up. If contact has not been made by the time the school office closes, the Department of Human Service and/or a law enforcement agency may be called to pick up my child.

I fully understand my responsibility when self-transporting my child.

I will transport my child to enable him/her to meet the requirements of regular attendance. If I fail to follow the self-transportation guidelines, I understand that my child could be withdrawn from the program.

EDUCATION

Your Home Is Your Child's First Classroom

You are your child's first and most important teacher. Everyday moments—folding laundry, shopping,

cooking—are chances to learn how the world works.

How We Support Your Child

Our program helps children build early learning and social skills. Teachers use routines, play, and guided activities to help children grow and get ready for school and life.

How You Can Stay Involved

- Stay in touch with your child's teacher.
- Visit or volunteer in the classroom.
- Talk at home about the day, artwork, and notes from school.
- Read reminders and flyers about upcoming activities.

Your involvement makes your child's experience meaningful and successful.

In the Classroom: A Typical Day

Welcome! When you arrive, children greet teachers and friends and join activities.

Please **sign in at the office** and wear a visitor/volunteer badge.

Getting Started

- Sit with the children. Join in reading a book, puzzle, or circle time.
- Follow staff lead. Ask how you can help.

Snack and Lunch

- **Handwashing first.** Model by washing your hands.
- Meals are **family style.** Encourage small portions; children can always have more.
- **Children pour their own drinks.** Spills are okay—they learn to clean up independently.
- Toothbrushing may follow meals. **Staff guide brushing; you can help with supervision and reminders.**
- **Ask staff about food allergies** before offering help with food.

Daily Schedule

- A posted schedule shows the flow of the day. Ask staff any time if you are unsure what to do next.

Free Choice Time

- Children choose activities that interest them.
- Read together, build, draw, or try play dough.
- Encourage effort: "Let's try a ball," "Can you make a long snake?"

Outdoor Play

- Join the fun—walk, run, jump, and play games.
- Help watch for safety. Follow staff directions.

Bathroom

- Children may use the bathroom as needed, depending on classroom layout.
- Volunteers **do not assist** children in the bathroom.

Dismissal

- Help children gather coats and backpacks if staff ask. Help walk everyone out to the pickup spot.

Classroom & Curriculum

Learning Through Play

Children learn best by doing. In our play-based classroom, play is the work of childhood. Through play, children explore ideas, solve problems, and build independence.

Clothing & What to Bring

- Dress your child in **comfortable clothes** that can get messy.
- Choose **easy-on/off** pants and jackets (simple buttons/zippers help with bathroom use).
- **Label** coats, jackets, and personal items with your child's name.
- We go **outside every day**—send layers, sun hats, or rain gear as needed.
- **Avoid flip-flops;** closed-toe shoes are safer for running and riding bikes.
- We use aprons for messy play, but spills happen—**pack an extra set of clothes**.
- If your child brings home school clothing, **please return it**.

Creative Curriculum

You will see:

- **Meaningful play:** blocks, sand/water measuring, painting, dramatic play (house, restaurant, doctor).
- **Big and small motor practice:** running, jumping, hopping; cutting, drawing, play dough, small block building.
- **Small-group work:** child-chosen and teacher-guided activities.
- **Early literacy:** seeing that reading and writing have purpose in daily life.
- **Teacher support:** adults observe, ask questions, add materials, and extend play.
- **Caring relationships:** teachers listen to children's ideas and feelings.

Meaningful Learning

Learning starts with a child's own world—family, language, and neighborhood—and grows from there. We support **social, emotional, cognitive, and physical** development every day. Health and wellness are part of our routine, including:

- Handwashing
- Toothbrushing
- Simple food preparation
- Naming and talking about feelings

Teachers keep observing and adjusting activities so each child's learning is meaningful and right for them.

Helping in the Classroom

Here are simple ways to support children during your volunteer time.

How to Support Children

- **Speak softly and calmly.**

- **Listen and reflect.** "You're excited about your tower!"
- **Get on their level.** Kneel or sit to make eye contact.
- **Encourage independence.** Offer choices; let children try first.
- **Step in only as needed.** Give a hint or small help, then step back.

See *Volunteering in the Classroom* for how to get started (sign-in, schedules, staff lead).

Conflict Resolution (Steps We Use)

1. **Stay calm and stop hurtful actions.**
2. **Name feelings.** Help them find words to describe their feelings.
3. **Hear both sides.** Encourage children to share their experiences
4. **Restate the problem.** "You both want the red truck."
5. **Invite solutions and pick one together.**
6. **Follow up.** Stay nearby and notice success.

If You're Not Sure

- Get a teacher right away for safety, bathroom needs, injuries, or big feelings.
- For safety and privacy guidelines, see *Parent & Volunteer Code of Conduct – Quick Guide* and *In the Classroom: A Typical Day*.

Family Nights

Family Nights are planned parent education activities designed to support you and your child.

What Happens at Family Nights

- Topics include **child development, nutrition, medical, dental, and safety**.
- Parents provide input on topics, ask questions, and suggest ideas to improve the classroom.
- Meet with your child's **teacher, advocate, and other parents** to discuss classroom issues, plan special activities, and learn more about your child's education.
- Parents elect **two representatives** from each site to share classroom ideas and represent the class at **Policy Council** meetings.
- Policy Council representatives report back at Family Nights so all parents stay informed about program decisions and updates.

Family Nights are a great opportunity to **connect with other parents**, engage in your child's learning, and help shape the classroom experience.

Home Visits & Parent–Teacher Conferences

This is dedicated time for you, your child, and the teacher to plan learning together. **You are your child's first teacher**, and these meetings help us partner with you. We offer interpretation services for free as needed.

Schedule

- Most families have **5 home visits** (2 from your teacher and 3 from your Advocate) **and 2 parent–teacher conferences** each school year.
- Timing may vary based on when your child starts.

Timeline & Focus

- **Fall Home Visit:** Get to know your child—interests, routines, and learning needs.
- **Fall Conference:** Review early observations, discuss progress, plan supports.
- **Spring Home Visit:** Check growth, update goals based on current interests and needs.
- **Spring Conference:** Celebrate progress and plan next steps for summer or next year.

What You'll Do Together

- **Plan and try simple activities** that support your child's learning at home and school.
- **Share updates** about skills, routines, health, and family experiences.
- Create or update an **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**—a short plan that guides classroom activities to meet your child's needs.

What You Can Do to Prepare

- Bring questions or examples (notes, artwork, photos).
- Think about your child's strengths and any concerns to share.
- Tell us about any changes at home that might affect learning or routines.

Language Policy & Goals

Our Approach

We honor each child's **home language** and help them learn **English**. New ideas start in the child's first language when possible, then we reinforce in English. If a child speaks a language other than English or Spanish, we work to meet their language needs to the best of our ability.

Goals

- Families are the **first teachers** of language and culture.
- **Keep and grow** the home language while learning English.
- A **strong first language** helps children learn a second language.
- Classrooms reflect children's **cultures, languages, and identities** in daily routines and materials.

What You'll See in Classrooms

- Adults who speak **English and Spanish** (and other languages when available).
- Books, labels, and displays that **match the languages and cultures** of our children and families.
- Real-life reading, writing, listening, and speaking built into **play and routines**.
- **High-quality books** in children's home languages.
- Family photos and familiar cultural items used for **connection and learning**

Communication with Families

- Parent bulletins and printed materials are in **English and Spanish**.
- We offer **free interpretation** for meetings. Ask your advocate for language support.

How Families Can Share Language & Culture

- Visit the classroom to read a story, teach a song, or share traditions in your **home language**.
- Send in family photos or everyday items that help your child feel at home.

How We Help Children Learn Language (What Teachers Do)

- Use **nonverbal cues** (pointing, gestures, visuals) and simple instructions.
- **Respond and expand** on what children say ("You built a tall tower. Tell me more.").
- **Model language** without requiring children to repeat.
- Talk about the **here and now**—what children are doing and seeing.
- **Repeat and rephrase** to support understanding.
- Offer **choices** and encourage children to speak with **peers** during play.
- Use **role play** and pretend play with consistent words for routines.
- Keep a **predictable routine** and vocabulary so children know what to expect.
- Introduce new ideas by connecting to **what children already know**.

Outdoor Play

Daily time outside to build big-muscle skills, practice social skills, and enjoy fresh air.

What to Expect

- We schedule **daily outdoor play** (weather permitting), with at least **20 minutes** of active play.
- Children use playground equipment, join group games, and learn sharing, safety, and teamwork.
- Staff supervise and model safe play.

How Families Can Help

- **Dress for the weather.** Layers, coats, hats, and sturdy shoes help children play comfortably.

See *Clothing & What to Bring* **for details.**

- **Health first.** If your child is too sick to play outside, please keep them home that day.
- **Label items** (coats, hats, gloves) with your child's name.
- **If weather is a concern** on days with unsafe weather, we adjust plans and provide active play **indoors**.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS & SERVICES

Here are the steps to keep your child healthy and ready to learn in our program. Some items are required **before the first day**; others happen during the school year.

Before the First Day (Checklist)

Please make sure your child has:

- **Up-to-date immunizations** and a completed **Oregon Certificate of Immunization Status (CIS)**.
- A **physical exam (well-child check)** within the last **12 months**.
- A **dental exam** within the last **12 months**.

Need help finding a clinic or dentist? Call your **Family Advocate** or site office. We can help.

Screenings We Provide (After Enrollment)

The following screenings are completed for all children attending Head Start during the school year. Screenings are standard tools developed by professionals and used by pre-schools throughout the state. Each specially chosen screening tool provides a holistic baseline for health and development for your child.

- Developmental Screening

- Behavioral Screening
- Mental Health Observation: Classroom & Individual
- Speech Screening
- Hearing Classroom Observation
- Vision & Hearing
- Heights & Weights

Oregon Immunization Law (Summary)

- Oregon law requires certain vaccines (for example: **MMR, polio, diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis, hepatitis B, varicella**; and **hepatitis A / Tdap** as required by age/grade).
- Schools post **immunization rates** twice each year (after school starts and after the **Statewide School Exclusion Day** in **mid-February**).
- Children who are **not in compliance** by Exclusion Day cannot attend until records are current.
- **Medical and non-medical exemptions** are allowed (documentation required).

Asthma Care at School

If your child has asthma:

Have your healthcare provider complete the **Asthma Treatment at School** form.

Provide any **inhaler/spacer** your child needs, labeled with their name.

Update the plan if your child's care changes.

If no plan is on file, staff follow district **Standing Orders** for emergencies.

Severe Allergies

If your child has a severe allergy:

- Have your provider complete a **Severe Allergic Reaction Emergency Plan** (lists allergens and emergency steps).
- Provide any needed **epinephrine** (labeled), and update the plan as needed.

For daily medication guidance, see the *Medication at School* section.

How We Support Families

- Help schedule **medical and dental** exams and treatments, if needed.
- Provide a **nutrition assessment** and feedback from a licensed nutrition professional.
- Share health and nutrition information at **meetings, newsletters, and home visits**.
- Serve **USDA-approved snacks and lunches** and teach healthy habits.
- Support any **health-related concerns** you have.
- Pre-K nurse will obtain orders for ATP, Seizure Management, etc.
- Pre-K nurse will make a health plan for chronic illnesses and reach out to you.

Family Responsibilities

- Keep health records and forms **current** with the school.
- Tell us about **new diagnoses, medications, or allergies** right away.
- Bring required **forms and medications** to the office in original containers.

If urgent health needs remain unaddressed after multiple attempts to reach you, we may be required to notify the **Oregon Department of Human Services** to ensure your child's safety.

Confidentiality

It is the responsibility of Head Start staff to maintain confidentiality and protect the privacy of children and families.

Confidentiality means we keep what parents and family members share with Head Start staff private. All written information is kept strictly confidential, unless parents authorize, in writing, for it to be released. Parents tell us exactly what information they wish to be shared and with whom to share it. Parents of Head Start children have the right to review child and family records, and to request an explanation for information in those records, as well as how the information is used.

Release of Confidential Information

Confidential information is released to other agencies and/or persons ***only*** with informed parental consent, in writing, and only for purpose of securing the services needed for Head Start children and families with the following exception:

> *Any employee who has reasonable cause to believe that any child with whom he/she comes in contact in an official capacity has suffered abuse, or that any adult with whom he/she comes in contact has abused a child, shall report or cause a report to be made immediately to Child Welfare or the local law enforcement agency.*

Head Start operates on the premise that staff (teacher, IA and advocate) work together as a team to meet the needs of your family. The focus of the educational team is to meet the needs of your child. The focus of the advocate is to meet the needs of your family. Knowing that child and family needs will overlap, the team will be sharing information that each has learned from talking with you as the parent or guardian. It is important for you to know that information shared with the Head Start staff is confidential, but it is your responsibility to only share information about your family that you are comfortable having shared with the team.

Health & Wellness: Should I Send My Child to School?

Short answer: Keep your child home if they are sick. Oregon health rules do not allow children at school when they have certain symptoms.

When to Keep Your Child Home

- **Fever 100.4°F or higher**
  - Return when fever is below 100.4°F for **24 hours without fever-reducing medicine.**
- **Vomiting (unexplained, any episode)**
  - Return after **24 hours** with no vomiting.
- **Diarrhea** (3 loose/watery stools in 24 hours, or sudden onset)
  - Return after **24 hours** with no diarrhea.
- **Stiff neck or bad headache with fever**
- **Any rash** (with or without fever)
- **Unusual behavior change** (very irritable, very tired, or hard to wake)
- **Jaundice** (yellow skin or eyes)
- **Weeping/oozing skin lesions**
- **Colored drainage from the eyes**
- **Thick green/brown nasal drainage with fever (100.4°F+)**
- **Trouble breathing or severe, ongoing cough**

- **Any symptom that keeps your child from joining normal activities**

If these symptoms are due to a **non-contagious condition**, bring a **note from your healthcare provider** so your child can attend.

If Your Child Gets Sick at School

- We will **care for your child** and **call you right away**.
- Please **pick up promptly**.
- Staff **cannot transport children** in personal vehicles.
- Make sure your **emergency contacts** are up to date.

Reporting an Absence

- **Call your site** to let us know your child will be absent and tell us why.
- Pre-K nurse (or your health care provider) can clear your child for a return to school after some illnesses.

Head Lice Policy

What this is: Head lice are common and treatable. We follow county health guidance to prevent spread and support families.

What We Do at School

- Staff **periodically check** for head lice.
- If we see signs, we **notify you** and share treatment steps.
- Staff **clean the classroom** and shared materials.

What You Can Do at Home

1. **Treat** your child (and any other affected family members) with an over the counter or prescription lice treatment. **Follow the product directions** or your healthcare provider's advice.
2. **Remove nits (eggs)** with a fine-tooth comb after treatment. Repeat combing daily for several days and **repeat the treatment** as directed (often 7–10 days later).
3. **Clean personal items:**
   - Soak combs/brushes in **hot, soapy water for at least 10 minutes**.
   - Wash **bedding, clothing, coats, hats, and scarves** used in the **2 days before treatment**. Use **hot wash and high-heat dry**.
   - For items that can't be washed, **seal in a plastic bag** for a period of time to ensure any lice/nits die off.
   - **Vacuum** upholstered furniture, carpets, car seats, and soft surfaces.
   - **Do not use lice sprays or foggers.** They can be harmful and are not necessary.

Returning to School

- After you complete the **first treatment** and your child **can participate comfortably**, contact your site for return guidance. We will re-check your child before being allowed back in the classroom.

Privacy & Communication

- We follow Health Department guidelines when sharing information about communicable conditions.
- Head lice can happen to anyone—**no one is at fault**. Let's work together to prevent spread.

Food Allergies & Dietary Restrictions

Policy (plain language): We create a plan to keep each child with a food allergy or dietary restriction safe. We follow USDA CACFP rules for meal substitutions.

What Families Need to Do

- **Tell us at enrollment** about any food allergies or dietary restrictions.
- **Provide a Medical Statement – for Accommodating Disabilities form** signed by a recognized medical authority and the parent/guardian.
  - The form must list: the food(s) to eliminate, the reason, and appropriate substitutions.

> ***Recognized medical authority:*** *Medical Doctors of Medicine (MD); Doctors of Osteopathy (DO); Doctors of Naturopathy (ND); Physician's Assistant (PA); Certified nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist; Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD); Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS); Doctor of Optometry (OD)*

What the Program Will Do

- **Notify classroom staff** and place an allergy/diet list in the **substitute teacher notebook** so all staff are aware.
- **Notify kitchen staff** of all allergies/dietary restrictions to ensure safe meals.
- **Train staff** on common food allergies and signs/symptoms.
- **Set up the plan before your child attends** class.

Meal Substitutions (CACFP)

- If a **required CACFP component** must be removed **because of a disability**, we **must have a Licensed physician (MD)–signed Medical Statement -- for Accommodating Disabilities** before making the substitution.
- We **may** make substitutions for participants with **medically certified special dietary needs** (not a disability) **when supported** by a Medical Statement – for Accommodating Disabilities form signed by a recognized medical authority.
- We will honor requests for substitutions **when the replacement is readily available** and **does not exceed the normal cost** of a Head Start–provided meal.

Other Special Needs (e.g., Cultural, Religious)

- Salem–Keizer Public Schools Child Care Programs **does not allow substitutions for lifestyle choices**.
- If you have cultural or religious food needs, **talk with your Family Advocate** so we can review options within program policy.

For emergency allergy care (e.g., epinephrine) and daily medication procedures, see *Severe Allergies* and *Medication at School* sections.

Medication at School

We prefer that children take medication **at home**. In special cases, **trained school staff** can help give medication during the school day.

When We Can Give Medication

- A staff member who completed **District Medication Administration Training** (often the teacher) may assist your child.

- A **backup staff member** will also be trained and kept up to date on your child's plan.

What Families Need to Do

- **Bring the medication to the office** (in person—do not send it in a backpack).
- Complete and sign the **required parent/guardian authorization**.
- Work with staff to create an **individualized medication plan** for your child.

How Medication Must Be Provided

- **Prescription medications** must be in the **original, child-resistant container** labeled by the pharmacist with:
  - your child's **first and last name**
  - **medication name**
  - **date** the prescription was filled
  - **prescribing provider's name**
  - **expiration date**
  - clear **administration, storage, and disposal** instructions
- Keep medication **away from food**; we store it in **closed containers** that are inaccessible to children and prevent spills.
- If refrigeration is required, we use a **locked medication box** in the refrigerator.
- **Minimize transporting** medication between home and school when possible.

What Staff Do

- Follow the **individualized medication plan** and your written authorization.
- Record each dose on the **Daily Medication Administration Record** (date, time, amount).
  - The record is kept in your child's **school file**; an additional copy of the plan is kept at **Central Office**.
- If anything unusual happens—**spill, reaction, refusal, or other concern**—we will **call you** and **document** it in your child's health record.

Changes or Stopping Medication

- Tell the **teacher or office** right away about **any change** to the medication or dose.
- To **stop** a medication at school, provide **written documentation** to add to your child's file.

Short-Term Exclusion & Return to School

To protect everyone's health, some illnesses require a **temporary stay-home** period and/or a **doctor's note** before a child can return.

When Children Must Stay Home (or Go Home)

Children are excluded from class and may return when they have a doctor's clearance.

- **Diphtheria, Hepatitis, Measles, Meningitis, Mumps, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Rubella**
- **Tuberculosis** (return when a provider confirms the child is no longer infectious)
- **E. coli O157:H7 or Shigella** infection
- **Mouth sores with drooling** unless a provider confirms **noninfectious**
- **Rash with fever or behavior changes** unless a provider confirms **noninfectious**

- **Stools containing blood or mucus**

Return after treatment has started

- **Impetigo** — after **24 hours** of prescribed treatment
- **Strep throat** — after **24 hours** of prescribed treatment
- **Scabies** — after treatment has begun

Return when symptoms resolve

- **Chickenpox** — when **all lesions have dried and crusted**
- **Fever 100.4°F or higher** — return when fever-free **24 hours without medicine**
- **Vomiting** (two or more episodes in 48 hours) — return after **24 hours with no vomiting**
- **Diarrhea** (two or more loose/watery stools in 48 hours) — return after **24 hours with no diarrhea**
- **Persistent cough** that prevents participation — return when the child can **comfortably participate**
- **Any illness** that prevents comfortable participation or requires more care than staff can safely provide

Head lice

- Return after **appropriate treatment** and when the child has **no live lice**. (We do not use a "no-nit" policy.)

If symptoms are due to a **non-contagious condition**, provide a **note from your healthcare provider**.

What Staff Will Do

- **Call you** if your child needs to go home; an adult will **stay with your child** until pickup.
- **Document** the illness, actions taken, and **return clearance** in the child's file.
- Follow **district and Marion County Health** guidance for reporting and provide fact sheets during outbreaks.

> ***Reminder:** Staff cannot transport children in personal vehicles. Keep emergency contacts up to date.*

Handwashing

Policy: Salem-Keizer Head Start Staff, volunteers, and children working in the classroom will teach and model proper hand washing practices and techniques as a preventative measure to lower the risk of contracting and spreading communicable diseases.

When to Wash Hands

- **When you enter** the classroom
- **Before, during, and after** preparing food
- **Before eating**
- **Before** helping with toothbrushing
- **After** using the bathroom
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **Before and after** giving first aid

- **Before and after** helping a child with toileting, diapering, or nose wiping
- **After** touching trash

Hand Sanitizer (When a Sink Isn't Available)

- Use an alcohol-based sanitizer **per CDC guidance**.
- **Adults supervise** children's use.
- Rub hands together until **completely dry**.
- If hands are **visibly dirty**, use **soap and water** instead.
- CDC guidance: cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html

Posting & Reminders

- Post the **handwashing steps** at **every sink** in the facility.
- Build handwashing into **daily routines** and transitions.

ATTENDANCE & SAFETY

Why it matters: Regular attendance helps your child learn routines, build skills, and feel connected to school. We know life happens—talk with us if you're having trouble getting to school.

Head Start requires 85% attendance; this means no more than 2 absences per month.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of regular attendance, but we are sensitive to special circumstances. Please contact your child's teacher regarding absences.

What Families Do

- **Report absences.** Call or message your child's teacher or the site office before class to tell us why your child is out.
- **If you are late: Check in at the office** first before going to the classroom.
- **Ask for help.** If attendance is hard, your **Family Advocate** will problem-solve with you.

What We Do

- If we don't hear from you, you may receive an **auto-dialer call** the day your child is absent.
- After **2 or more consecutive unexcused days**, the **teacher** will call.
- After **4 or more consecutive unexcused days**, your **Family Advocate** will call.
- If we still can't reach you, the **Community Partnerships Coordinator** will send a **letter of concern**.
- If attendance does not improve, we will create a simple **Attendance Plan** with you.
- If the attendance is still poor, a letter will be sent notifying the parent that the child will be withdrawn from the program.
- If a child is absent **10 or more consecutive days** without prior approval, they will be dropped from the program.

When to Keep Your Child Home

- Keep your child home if they are sick or unable to join normal activities. (see *Health & Wellness: Should I Send My Child to School?*)

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of regular attendance, but we are sensitive to special circumstances. Please contact your child's teacher regarding absences.

Extended Absences

How to plan time away from school and what happens if an absence is longer than allowed.

Policy: Children may have up to **2 weeks of excused absence** for a **family vacation** or **family emergency**. **Notify staff in advance** so we can excuse the absence and plan support. *(For emergencies, contact us as soon as you can.)* Your **Family Advocate** will create a simple **Attendance Plan** with you to stay aligned with the Head Start attendance policy.

Winter Break Option (Up to 4 Weeks Total)

If you take vacation time **around the district winter break**, you may combine your **2 excused weeks** with the school break for up to **4 weeks away** in total. Families can choose how to use the 2 weeks:

- Two weeks **before** winter break
- Two weeks **after** winter break
- One week **before** and one week **after**

> ***Important:** It's the parent/guardian's responsibility to **notify both the teacher and Family Advocate** of the planned dates.*

If the Absence Is Longer Than Allowed

- If a child is gone **more than the combined 4 weeks** (winter break + 2 excused weeks), the child **will be unenrolled** so we can offer the spot to the next child on the waitlist.
- When you return, if you inform staff you want to rejoin, your child will be **re-enrolled at the next available opening**.

Ongoing Monitoring

- Staff monitor attendance daily and follow the **Attendance Policy** steps.
- When family issues or emergencies arise, please **notify the teacher and Family Advocate** so we can make a plan.

Child Not Picked Up

What happens if a child is not picked up on time, and how we keep children safe until an adult arrives.

Keep Your Contacts Current

- At enrollment, we collect **parent/guardian and emergency contacts**.
- After enrollment, **update your contacts right away** with your child's teacher and Family Advocate.

If a Child Is Not Picked Up on Time

1. **We call parents/guardians** using the numbers on file.
2. If we cannot reach a parent, we **call the emergency contacts on file**.
3. If no one can be reached by the time the school office closes, and we have made reasonable efforts to contact all adults on file, we will **call the Department of Human Services (Marion Co. 503-378-6800)** to pick up the child.
4. We will **notify the Coordinator, Teacher, and Family Advocate**.
5. When possible, staff will **leave a message** for the parent/emergency contact with the child's location.

Staff **cannot transport children** in personal vehicles. An adult will **stay with the child** until pickup.

How Families Can Help

- **Arrive on time** for pickup.
- If you will be **late**, call your site as soon as possible.
- Make sure **phone numbers and authorized contacts** are up to date.

Snow & Ice: School Schedule

How decisions are made: Salem–Keizer Public Schools sets closures, delays, and transportation plans for Head Start during snow or icy conditions.

How to check: Look for updates on the district website, district alerts, and local news/radio.

If There is a 2-Hour Delay

- **AM (morning) classes: Canceled**
- **PM (afternoon) classes: On normal schedule** unless the district announces a closure
- **Full-day classes: Start 2 hours late** (bus pickups also 2 hours late)

If Schools Are Closed

- **Head Start is closed.**
- **All home visits, parent meetings, and field trips** are **canceled** for that day.

CHILD SAFETY & PROTECTION

Definition: Abuse means injury or harm to a child by other than accidental means.

Child Abuse & Neglect Policy Policy:

Head Start staff are required by law (ORS 419B.005 through ORS 419B.045) to report any cases of suspected or identified child abuse. Head Start staff will preserve confidentiality of all records pertaining to child abuse in accordance with state law. When possible we want to give families the opportunity to seek help for problems they might be having. If the parent/parents approach us seeking help and informing us of abuse, we give the parent the opportunity and support to make the initial report to DHS.

Performance Standard 1302.47

- I understand that Head Start staff are legally responsible to report suspected child abuse & neglect to Department of Human Services (DHS) or local police department.
- I (Parent/Guardian) understand that if I approach Head Start staff, seeking help and informing them of abuse, staff will provide support to me to make the report to DHS.
- I understand that if Head Start staff must make a mandatory report, the strictest confidentiality will be maintained and Head Start desires to continue to provide continuity and support to my child during these very important developmental years.

What Oregon Law Requires

> *"Any public or private official having reasonable cause to believe that any child…has suffered abuse, or that any adult…has abused a child shall report or cause a report to be made."*

What This Means for Families

- Our first priority is **your child's safety**.
- If a staff member **suspects abuse**, we are **required by law** to report it to **Child Welfare**.
- You can call **Child Welfare yourself**. We can help you make the call if you ask.
- After Child Welfare meets with you, we can **talk together** about next steps and how we can support your family.
- We **respect your privacy** and share information **only as required by law**.

Our Approach to Support

We believe parents and caregivers have the main responsibility for their children's care. When families face challenges, we:

- Offer **parenting and family support** through your **Family Advocate**.
- Connect you to **community resources** and counseling.
- Continue to support **you and your child** during and after any report.

If You Need Help Now

- If anyone is in **immediate danger**, call **911**.
- For concerns that are **not urgent**, talk with your **Family Advocate**, your child's **teacher**, or the **site office**. We can help you connect with Child Welfare and other supports.

Behavior & Guidance

Here's how we create a safe, nurturing classroom and teach skills like self-control, empathy, and problem-solving.

Our Approach

We build positive relationships and help children:

- Take responsibility for their actions
- Think for themselves and express feelings
- Care about others and solve problems together

What Staff Do

- **Set simple, consistent rules** (and involve children when possible)
- **Plan developmentally appropriate activities** that match attention spans
- **Watch ahead and redirect** before problems grow
- **Teach problem-solving and conflict steps** (see *Helping in the Classroom*)
- **Name feelings and model calm language**
- **Reinforce positive behavior and effort**
- **Use natural/logical consequences** (not punishment)
- **Partner with families** for consistency at home and school

What We Do Not Use

- Punitive discipline or "consequences as punishment"
- Emotional or physical abuse; humiliation

- Seclusion or isolation from activities
- Using food as punishment or reward
- **Withholding outdoor time**
- Denying basic needs (food, water, restroom, comfort)

If behavior creates a safety concern, staff will ensure safety and seek additional support following program procedures.

Criminal History

State law requires a background check for anyone who has contact with children. **This includes teachers, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria employees, family advocates, and volunteers.** This helps keep everyone safe.

What Families Need to Do

- Complete the **Criminal History Background Checklist** (one time per required cycle).
- Submit the form before **volunteering in the classroom**, joining **group activities**, or going on **field trips**.

If a Background Check Is Denied

- You may still **visit the classroom**, but you may have **direct contact only with your own child**.
- Talk with your **Family Advocate** if you have questions about next steps.

No Weapons at School

Policy: Salem–Keizer Public Schools does not allow **weapons or weapon look-alikes** on school property, buses/bus stops, or at school activities. This includes **toy items that look like weapons** (e.g., toy guns, knives, swords).

What Families Need to Know

- Do **not send** any real or toy weapon-like items to school.
- Sometimes children slip toys into backpacks—**we still must follow policy** if these items come to school.
- Check backpacks and keep any items at home that should not be in them.

If a Weapon or Look-Alike Is Brought to School

- Staff will **take the item** and give it to the **principal**.
- We will **call the parent/guardian**.
- An **adult must come to school** to pick up the item.
- Repeated incidents may lead to **additional steps** under district policy.

Tobacco-Free Policy

Policy: Salem–Keizer Head Start is a **tobacco-free program**. No tobacco use, possession, display, or promotion is allowed **on program property, in program vehicles, or during program activities**.

Who This Applies To

Staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, visitors, and contracted employees.

What's Prohibited

- **Using tobacco (including vapes, e-cigarettes, or nicotine pouches)** on any Head Start site, in Head Start vehicles, or at Head Start activities.
- **Wearing or bringing items** (clothing, bags, hats, etc.) that display, promote, or advertise tobacco products.
- **Tobacco advertising** in program publications, at events, or on program property.
- **Accepting gifts or funds** from the tobacco industry.
- **Prevention education:** Age-appropriate tobacco prevention messages are included in classroom teaching.

Enforcement

- Individuals who use or display prohibited items will be asked to **stop or leave the premises/ activity**.
- **Volunteers or visitors** who do not follow the policy may lose volunteer privileges.
- **Staff** are subject to disciplinary action per program/district policy.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Here is how we respond to medical emergencies at school.

What Staff Do

- **Act quickly and calmly** to keep children safe.
- **Decide whether to call 911** based on the situation.
- **Use emergency contacts** on file (kept in the classroom and school office) to reach you right away.
- A **trained staff member gives first aid** as needed (first-aid supplies are in the classroom).
- **Call the Nurse Helpline** for guidance on follow-up health concerns.
- If **911 is called**:
  - Paramedics decide if hospital transport is needed.
  - We **call you immediately** to meet your child at the hospital.
  - A **staff member will accompany your child** if transported. If we cannot reach you, we will call your **emergency contact**.
- **Document the incident and follow-up** in your child's health record.

Staff **cannot transport children** in personal vehicles.

What Families Can Do

- Keep your **phone numbers and emergency contacts up to date**.
- If your child needs to go home, **please pick up promptly** when we call.

Emergency Contact Information

We use your emergency information to reach you quickly for illness, injury, late pickup, or unexpected closures. Please keep it **current**.

What Families Must Provide

- **Parent/guardian names and phone numbers**
- **Authorized contacts** who may pick up your child if we can't reach you (names and phone

numbers)

- **Health details** we should know: allergies, medical conditions, disabilities
- **Signed consent for emergency care** (Emergency Treatment & Authorization Form)

Emergency School Closure

If school closes suddenly, staff **cannot call every family**. Please complete the **Emergency School Closure Form** so we know your plan for who will pick up your child and how to reach you.

Keep Your Info Up to Date

- Tell your **teacher or Family Advocate** right away if phone numbers, addresses, or authorized contacts change.
- Make sure your emergency contacts know they are listed and are **available to pick up** if needed.

Emergency Preparedness

Policy: We follow **Salem–Keizer Public Schools** procedures for **fire, earthquake, and lockdown**. We practice regularly so children know what to do.

At School

- **Evacuation routes** posted in every classroom.
- **Drills:** Fire **monthly; earthquake or lockdown** alternates monthly.
- We **prepare children** with simple, calm explanations.
- Drills are **logged** and submitted to the office.

During an Incident

- **Do not come to school.** Wait for **official updates** from the principal or district (phone/text/email/website/news).
- After evacuation, we will contact families with **location/health status** and **reunification or transportation** instructions.

What Families Can Do Now

- Keep **contacts** up to date and complete the **Emergency School Closure Form**.
- Remind your child to **follow teacher directions** during drills.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES & FIELD TRIPS

As part of the Head Start curriculum, you and your child will have the opportunity to attend field trips **at no cost**.

Permission

- We'll **notify you in advance**.
- Your child needs **permission** to go—**written or verbal** (per site procedure).
- Without permission, your child will **stay at school** with staff.

What to Wear/Bring

- **Comfortable walking shoes** and **weather-appropriate clothing** (coat/hat/sunscreen as needed).
- **Label** items with your child's name.

Family Participation

- Families are **welcome to join**.
- **Families and siblings provide their own transportation**; carpooling is encouraged.
- To chaperone, please complete any **volunteer requirements** (see *Criminal History* and *Volunteering in the Classroom*).

Animals in the Classroom

Policy: We follow Salem–Keizer Public Schools rules. Animals are allowed for program specific purposes, such as a lesson on butterflies or house pets, only when approved and safe for students. Families can only bring animals with approval from the program administrator.

Before We Bring an Animal into the Classroom

- **Principal must approve** first.
- **Staff will check for health concerns in the classroom** (allergies, asthma).
- **Parents will be informed** via parent newsletters or other communication.
- **Students will be taught safe handling** and gentle care before a resident animal arrives.
- **We never bring wild or exotic animals** in classrooms.

While an Animal is in Class

- Animals must be **humanely housed in secure cages**—no free roaming or unsupervised contact.
- A **designated staff member** is responsible for care, feeding, water, cleaning, and waste disposal.
- **Handwashing** is required after contact.
- **No animals** are kept in classrooms during **school vacations**.

For students with allergies or medical plans, see *Food Allergies & Dietary Restrictions* and *Health Requirements & Services*.

Holidays & Cultural Learning

Policy: We **educate about** holidays rather than celebrate them to build understanding. Over the year, no single holiday is treated as more important than others.

What We Do

- **Avoid stereotypes** and be culturally relevant.
- Keep activities **developmentally appropriate, open-ended,** and **child-directed**.
- Teach within the **normal daily routine**.
- Use short, simple experiences (e.g., read a book, talk about a tradition, explore artifacts).
- Offer activities that support **all areas of development** across the week.
- **Limit commercialism/materialism** in lessons and materials.

What We Don't Do

- **Parties** or "special performances."
- Activities that pressure children to **perform for an audience**.
- **Sugary snacks** tied to holidays.

Family Partnership

- Families are welcome to **share traditions** in age-appropriate ways (story, song, objects).

- No food is required.
- If you prefer your child **not** take part in a holiday topic, **talk with the teacher**—we will provide a comfortable alternative.

Media & Screen Time

Policy: Screen media (TV, video, apps, games, computers, tablets, phones) is **rare and short**, used only to **support learning**, and **requires prior approval**. It supplements the curriculum—not part of the daily routine.

Limits & Expectations

- **Max 10 minutes per day** of screen time for children.
- Content is **developmentally appropriate, nonviolent, culturally sensitive,** and **ad-free**.
- **Parents are informed** if electronic media will be used.
- Screens are **off when not in use**.
- **Adults do not use personal devices** during class time.

When We Use Film/Video/Other Media

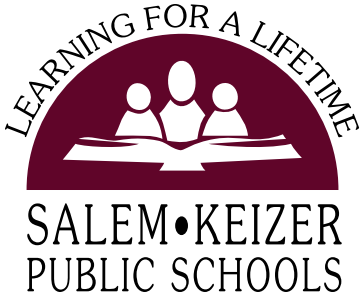
- Staff **preview all content** before use.
- An **alternative, non-screen activity** is always available.
- Use is **interactive** (discussed with children, connected to current interests and lessons).

Computers in the Classroom

- Computer use is tied to **curriculum objectives**.
- We plan for **equitable access**.
- Computers are set up for **independent child access** during selected times.
- Software and devices are **stored securely**.

Accessibility

- This policy **does not include** augmentative/assistive communication or other devices used by children with disabilities as part of an educational plan.



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