



Handbook

Cape Elizabeth Community Services
343 Ocean House Road
Cape Elizabeth, Maine 04107
207-799-2868



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The contents of this handbook include everything you need to know about our agreement. Please read through it as it contains policies and procedures relevant to the care of your child. If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact the [Cape Care Coordinator](#). The content of this handbook and all forms required for enrollment are non-negotiable.

WELCOME

Cape Care is a child care program that has been part of the Community Services and the Town of Cape Elizabeth since 1986. It is licensed by the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services to provide care for children aged 3 to 12 years old.

Cape Care is located in the Community Center along with the offices of Community Services.

The main goal of Cape Care is to create a loving, safe, and stimulating environment for your child. We will work with you to identify and discuss your child's needs. We look forward to building a long and rewarding relationship with your child and family.

MISSION

To provide an environment that lays the critical foundation for young children's success in school, work, citizenship, and personal fulfillment. Our programs focus on developing self-esteem and problem-solving skills while fostering respect for themselves and others. We tailor our approach to support each child's unique physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development.

VISION

To offer preschool, public pre-K, and before and after-school care. We aim to help children become contributing members of our community in our diverse world.

Designed to meet the developmental needs of all children ages 3 - 12, Cape Care aims to provide children with a structured part of their day that gives them time to socialize with friends, as well as participate in fun, active, and educational extracurricular activities.

STAFF/CONTACT INFO

Kelly Phinney	Cape Care Coordinator, enrollment, billing, scheduling changes
Verna Gordon	Preschool Teacher, Jenny Allen Preschool Ed Tech III
Martha Pulsifer	Pre-K Teacher, Casey Williams Pre-K Ed Tech II
Ellen Weaver	Pre-K Teacher, Jennifer Murphy Pre-K Ed Tech III
Karen Holmes	Teacher Assistant Ed Tech III

Cape Elizabeth Community Services

343 Ocean House Road
 Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107
 207-799-2868 PH / 207-799-1841 FAX
 Hours: Monday- Friday 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

PRESCHOOL (8:30 AM - 2:30 PM)

This program targets three-year-olds. We strive to provide a high-quality, stimulating early childhood experience and create a safe, nurturing, and developmentally age-appropriate environment where children can learn and grow.

Children participate in daily activities that help them develop social, physical, emotional, and cognitive skills. These activities are organized around monthly academic themes, a weekly letter focus (e.g., the letter A), social skills topics (such as friendship), and themed book days.

They are exposed to a variety of multidisciplinary experiences, which include literature, dramatic play, puppet shows, a listening center, arts and crafts, science discovery and nature exploration, cooking, sensory activities, and music and singing.

Children are encouraged to explore problem-solving with manipulatives, develop early math concepts, and strengthen their fine and gross motor skills. The curriculum also includes swim lessons in the fall and spring, and music and movement activities in the winter.

To attend preschool, your child must be three years old by October 15th and potty-trained. Please make every attempt to ensure that your child can recognize the need to use the bathroom. Reminders will be given throughout the day.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM (8:30 AM - 2:30 PM)

The full-day Pre-K program nurtures students' academic, social, and emotional development. The Pre-K for ME curriculum actively engages students in learning and offers regular hands-on activities and outdoor experiences. The curriculum also includes swim lessons in the fall and spring, and music and movement activities in the winter.

To enroll in Pre-K, your child must be four years old and not turn five on or before October 15th. Both the child and family must live in Cape Elizabeth.

Our Pre-K program can accommodate up to 30 students, with a maximum of 15 per classroom. Students who qualify for special education services or are economically disadvantaged may comprise up to 1% of the student population, and current Cape Care preschoolers are given priority.

If the number of applications exceeds the number of spaces, a lottery will be held. Those we are unable to accommodate will remain on a waiting list for the upcoming school year in the order in which the date the application was received.

Please indicate on your registration form if your child needs bus transportation to and from Pre-K. Breakfast and lunch are also provided by the School Nutrition Program if desired.

Pre-K students have the opportunity to ride the Pre-K-only bus to and/or from school.

Due to the fact that there is only one bus for Pre-K, making adjustments to the route after school has started can be challenging. Clear communication is essential if you plan for your Pre-K child to ride the bus to and from school. Additional information will be provided before the school year begins.

BEFORE SCHOOL CARE (PreK - 4th Grade) (7:15 AM - 8:30 AM)

This program is for parents who need care before school starts. Students will be supervised by Cape Care staff and will be allowed free play and activities. A bus brings students attending Pond Cove to school at 8:30 am.

Students enrolled in Before School Care use the side entrance of the Community Center (closest to Rt. 77).

AFTER SCHOOL CARE (K - 4th Grade) (2:30 PM - 5:30 PM)

This program is for parents who need care for their child(ren) after school. Preschoolers and Pre-K students will have a snack after school and (weather permitting) go outside for recess.

Students are met by Cape Care staff, attendance is taken, and then they walk to the Cape Care playground for recess (weather permitting). Depending on the time of year, children will return to the After Care Room at the Community Center for indoor play and activities until they are picked up.

Students enrolled in after-school care use the side entrance of the Community Center (closest to Rt. 77). All children must be signed out by a parent or person authorized on your pick-up list.

SPECIAL CARE DAYS (K - 4th Grade) (HALF & FULL DAY)

Cape Care offers care on Teacher Professional Development days and Parent-Teacher Conferences. These days, called Special Care Days, require additional registration. Cape Care staff will provide safe and fun activities, including outdoor play, swimming, and field trips on full days. Reminders to sign up for these days will be sent out monthly.

SCHOOL VACATION CAMPS (K - 4th Grade) (8:00 AM - 4:00 PM)

School vacation camp is designed for kids who want to get out and play with friends during school vacations while providing care for children of working parents. Each day, a field trip is scheduled with afternoon swimming, outdoor play, and activities.

2025-2026 CALENDARS

Care Care Calendar

Cape Elizabeth School Calendar

GENERAL INFORMATION

ADMISSION/AGREEMENTS

Cape Care will provide an agreement for services to each family wishing to enroll their child(ren) in the program. We expect all families to adhere to the terms of this agreement. If unforeseen circumstances arise that prevent a family from fulfilling their commitment, we kindly ask for a two-week notice to make any changes or to cancel the agreement. Upon enrollment, you will receive a receipt.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

The following forms are needed before Cape Care will assume responsibility for your child. The information must be updated annually or sooner if needed. Please inform us immediately of any changes. The accuracy of this information helps us provide your child with the very best care possible and satisfies the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services licensing requirements.

Here is the list of requirements needed before your child's first day.

- Complete and submit the online [2025-26 Cape Care Registration](#) Form
- Complete additional forms(if needed)
 - [Authorization to Dispense Medication](#), ie, Epi-Pen, inhaler, and allergy medication.
- Public Pre-K parents will need to create a [PowerSchool](#) account and link documents.
- Immunization Records must be provided within 30 days of enrollment. Email to [Cape Care Coordinator](#) or fax to 207-799-1841.

TUITION

A \$100.00 nonrefundable deposit will be charged to enrolled preschool and before and after-school care students.

Tuition payments can be made monthly or weekly, and automatic payment plans are set up upon registration.

FEES

Program	Hours	Fees
Before School Care	7:15 am to 8:30 am	\$ 12 per day
Preschool (3-day Minimum)	8:30 am - 2:30 pm	\$ 66 per day
Public PreK	8:30 am - 2:30 pm	No cost
After School Care	2:30 pm - 5:30 pm	\$25 per day
Special Care Days	Half or Full Day	TBD
Vacation Camps	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	TBD

- Insufficient Funds - You are responsible for all charges the Town of Cape Elizabeth may incur from the bank resulting from insufficient funds. You are responsible for the due amount plus a \$25.00 administration fee. Cape Care may suspend services until paid. If you are on an automatic payment plan, please ensure sufficient funds are available.
- Change Fees - Any changes to your child(ren) 's schedule after the first week of school must be approved and assessed a \$10.00 change fee.
- Late Pick-Up Fees - We depend on you to drop off and pick up your child(ren) at the scheduled times. Please call to let us know if you are running late, as we understand some circumstances may prevent you from getting here on time. If late pick-ups become frequent, you will be charged a \$25.00 fee.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Daily schedules will vary from class to class and day to day.

PRESCHOOL/PRE-K	AFTER SCHOOL CARE
Arrival 8:30 am	Preschool & Pre-K
Morning Gathering / Calendar	Arrival & Snack 2:30 pm
Free Play	Cape Care Playground 2:50 pm
Bathroom / Handwashing	Community Center/After Care Room 4:30 pm Fall & Spring / 4:00 pm Winter
Snack	Parents pick up by 5:30 pm
Recess	
Story Time	Grades K - 4
Lunch	Pond Cove Pick up 3:05 pm
Quiet / Rest Time	Walk to Cape Care Playground/Snack & Free Play
Learning Centers	Community Center/After Care Room 4:30 pm Fall & Spring / 4:00 pm Winter
Dismissal 2:30 pm	Parents pick up by 5:30 pm

DROP OFF AND PICK UP INFORMATION

All students will be recorded upon their arrival at Cape Care for all programs. According to state licensing regulations, students must sign in and out each day. Daily sign-out sheets are provided for parents and guardians to document the time they pick up their child(ren).

Students will only be released to parents, guardians, or individuals listed on the Authorized Pick-up List.

Please inform us in advance if someone other than the parent or guardian will be picking up the child. You can provide verbal notice on the day of pick-up if the person is on the authorized pick-up list. If they are not on the list, a written notice is required.

If we do not recognize the individual, we will ask for identification as a safety precaution.

DROP OFF	PICK UP
7:15 am Before School Care	2:30 pm Preschool & Pre-K
8:30 am Preschool & Pre-K	by 5:30 pm After School Care
Location: Community Center Side Door	Location: Community Center Side Door

BEFORE SCHOOL CARE

Please use the entrance closest to Route 77 for drop-off. Students will have morning free play before the Transportation Department buses them to Pond Cove.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Staff members will meet the students enrolled in an on-campus Community Services after-school activity or enrolled in after-school care. After taking attendance, a staff member will escort them to their after-school activity or after-school care (Community Center/Cape Care playground).

A staff member will meet students after their after-school activity and escort them to Cape Care. Any students participating in an after-school activity: beginning at 4:00 pm or ending after 4:30 pm must be picked up by their parent/guardian from the activity.

Students may be picked up from Cape Care at any time, and parents/guardians are required to sign their children out.

REST TIME PRESCHOOL AND PRE-K ONLY

As required by Maine State Law, children enjoy story time/rest time/quiet project time each afternoon. They are not required to nap, but many do. Understand that no child is allowed to be excluded from rest time. Children awaken early and have a very active day. Quiet activities are provided for those who wake early from rest time. Blankets or sleep companions may be brought for rest time. We ask that the items be in a bag and go home weekly for washing.

ABSENCES/LATE ARRIVAL

Please email the [Cape Care Coordinator](#) if your child is going to be late or absent. The enrollment agreement reserves your child a seat whether they attend or not. Tuition is due regardless of absence due to illness, personal vacations, appointments, or any other reason.

Please let BOTH your child's public school teacher AND Cape Care know of any schedule changes.

CLOSURES AND DELAYS

If Cape Elizabeth Schools cancel due to weather, Cape Care is closed.

If there is a two-hour delay, Before School Care will open at 9:15 a.m. School-aged children will be bused to school, which begins at 10:35 a.m. Preschool and Pre-K will begin at 10:30 a.m.

Please look for cancellations or delays on area television channels (WCSH 6) and listen to local radio stations. Closures and delays will be posted on our [website](#) and social media. If time allows, we will send an email or text notification.

If needed, Cape Care will add one snow day at the end of the school year. If we have more than one day, Cape Care will not be extended.

PERSONAL ITEMS

We prefer that children not bring toys from home unless it is something that can be shared with the entire group (i.e., books, videos, etc.). Little ones have a difficult time sharing with others, and it is even harder with their special toys. If toys are brought, please note that they may be put away if they are the cause of disagreements among the children. Exceptions to this policy will be that a child may bring a favorite sleepy toy for nap time only, and toys may be brought for show-and-tell activities. We are not responsible for any loss or breakage of personal items. All personal items must be marked with the child's name.

CLOTHING

We will be playing outdoors every day when the weather permits and temperatures are above 10 degrees. Please ensure your child has appropriate clothing for outdoor play, and it's a good idea to check the weather before leaving for school.

Preschool and Pre-K students are required to bring a pair of slippers or indoor shoes, along with a clean change of clothes (labeled with the child's name) to keep in their cubby at school. Children should arrive dressed in comfortable clothing suitable for play, as we enjoy having fun! This often includes engaging in messy activities both indoors and outdoors, so please ensure the clothing is seasonally appropriate.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is essential. When families begin their preschool journey with us, we strive to create an environment where we can openly discuss any concerns or questions that may arise. It is important for the childcare philosophy of the center to align with that of the parent or guardian. We encourage questions, feedback, and discussions that aim for a positive outcome for the child(ren). Sensitive topics will be addressed privately and at a time that works for both parties. The best way to communicate classroom-related issues to teachers is to email them directly.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Creating a supportive learning environment requires time, reflection, and careful planning. A supportive classroom provides children with a crucial sense of consistency. Such an environment is well-organized, reliable, and adaptable. Supportive environments convey a range of positive messages to children about their learning, including:

1. This is a good place to be.
2. You belong here.
3. You can trust this place.
4. There are places where you can be by yourself when you want to be.
5. You can do many things on your own here.
6. This is a safe place to explore and try out your ideas.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring to review students' achievements and developmental progress. The classroom teacher sends a weekly or monthly newsletter with information, events, activities, and classroom academics. Throughout the year, individual classrooms schedule events for families to attend. Volunteers are welcome to help with classroom projects at special events and must complete the [Volunteer Training Protocols](#).

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Maine State Law requires all students to present a certificate of immunization or evidence of immunization or immunity against poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chickenpox).

Non-immunized students shall not be permitted to enroll in school or to attend school or school activities unless the parent/guardian provides a medical reason.

1. All Children in care must meet the following requirements:
 - a. The Child Care Facility must have a current record of immunization on file for each Child, which documents each Child's present immunization status based on the Department's Day Care Immunization Standards (available at [Childcare Immunization Standards](#)), within 30 days of the Child's first admission and updated as needed thereafter, or,
 - b. A blood test documenting immunity to measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella (chickenpox) is placed in the Child's record and updated promptly.
 - c. Children must be immunized as set forth herein, and exemptions from immunization requirements are **limited to medical reasons**. The Child's physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant must provide documentation that immunization is medically inadvisable.
2. Unimmunized Children and Child Care Staff Members. The Child Care Facility must maintain a list of all unimmunized persons, regardless of age. In the event of a disease outbreak as defined by CDC reporting standards, a Child not immunized must be excluded from the Child Care Facility by CDC guidance or until the Child receives the necessary immunization or proof of immunity is on record.

3. Immunization records. The Child Care Facility must make immunization records available to the Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, upon request.

ADMINISTERING MEDICATION

Cape Care acknowledges that it may be necessary for a student to have medication administered to them while in attendance. If there are no other options, it is recommended that the first dose of a newly-prescribed medication be given at home.

The following procedure must be followed for any prescription medication to be administered for more than 14 days to a student under a healthcare provider's order. Such an order must be obtained from a medical/health practitioner who has a current Maine license with a scope that includes administering medication.

The parent/guardian shall obtain, complete, and return a copy of the Authorization to Dispense along with the medication:

1. In the original container (and in the case of prescription medications, appropriately labeled by the health care provider or pharmacy);
2. Include no more than the amount of medication necessary to comply with the health provider's order.
3. Medication no longer required (or remaining at the end of the school year) must be removed by the parent/guardian or the student with parent/guardian permission.
4. Students may not be permitted to transport medication to/from school.
5. A new Authorization to Dispense Medication Form must be completed if there is a later change in the medical order (such as a change in dose, frequency, or type of medication).
6. Medication orders should be renewed annually.
7. Cape Care disclaims all responsibility for the diagnosis, prescription of treatment, and administration of medication for any student.

HEALTH & HYGIENE

Children's hands are washed:

- Before eating.
- After using the toilet.
- When coming in from outside play.

- After coming in contact with a sick child and/or a runny nose.
- After completing messy crafts or projects.

Provider's hands are washed:

- Before preparing food.
- Before and after giving medications.
- After assisting a child using the toilet.
- After touching body secretions.
- And about 100 other times during the day.

Hands are always dried with single-use paper towels.

Additionally:

- Smoking is prohibited on all town property
- Health policy is strictly adhered to
- Current immunizations are required
- Good hygiene is stressed at all times
- Favorite blankets or sleeping toys may be brought but kept for rest time. They are not shared with the other children and will be kept out of the daycare room.
- Children do not bring personal toys from home.
- Every attempt is made to keep toys and play areas sanitized.
- Napping is done on individual mats and cleaned daily.
- Food preparation is done safely and hygienically.
- Snacks follow the 5-2-1-0 nutrition program guidelines.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Cape Care recognizes that food allergies can pose a significant threat to the health of some students. We work with students, parents/guardians, staff, and medical personnel to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for food-allergic students.

As an educational institution, it is our responsibility to increase awareness of all students, including:

1. their needs;
2. the dangers they face;
3. preventive measures to be taken;
4. signs of allergic reactions; and
5. medical response should a student have an allergic reaction.
6. Emergency Care Plan Form

We will also solicit voluntary cooperation from parents/guardians, students, and staff toward avoiding food-allergic students coming in contact with or in proximity to foods that cause their particular allergic reactions in school or at school activities. Bans on particular foods, in the classroom or the whole school, will not be enacted. District guidelines will provide details for the implementation of this policy. These guidelines will be reviewed on an annual basis.

ILLNESS AND INCIDENTS

First Aid in-service training is provided annually for all staff. New staff members will be oriented in first aid policies and procedures. Latex gloves and bandages will be available in each classroom, with complete first aid supplies.

In the event a child becomes ill or is injured while in our care, at least one qualified staff member will administer first aid.

If a student is being sent home due to illness, the parent/guardian will be contacted as soon as possible. The child will be kept in a safe area with a familiar staff member until the student is picked up. A staff member shall first determine if a responsible adult is available to pick up the child. The parent/guardian or other responsible adult called for the sick child shall provide proper supervision in seeing that the child is escorted safely home.

Parent/guardian and state licensing staff know children are active, and no amount of child-proofing and supervision can prevent all injuries. Reporting injuries can help prevent them in the future by identifying injury patterns specific to the childcare environment and/or with a child who may need help with difficulties associated with balance, vision, or foot positioning.

In the event of an injury requiring the attention of a physician, the following procedure shall be followed. The determination shall be made by the designee as to the severity of the emergency.

All serious injuries, death of a child, or illnesses, as well as licensing violations, will be reported to DHHS. A copy of the Incident Report will be placed in the child's file and must be signed by the parent/guardian.

1. If life-threatening or dangerous and needs medical attention, rescue will be called, and then the parent/guardian notified as soon as possible.
2. If medical attention is required, the parent/guardian will be called.
3. Students will be transported via Cape Elizabeth Rescue under the following circumstances:
 - Head trauma with loss of consciousness
 - Neck/back injury
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Multiple broken bones
 - Shock
 - Severe external bleeding
 - Blunt trauma to the abdomen, back, or chest
 - Any other extreme circumstance deemed necessary by Cape Care administration. Report to be filed: Reportable Incident DHHS

The parent/guardian shall be responsible for any fees associated with rescue transport. When an injury requires further medical treatment or there is a possibility of CECS liability, an accident injury report will be completed, and copies sent to the appropriate persons.

Children with minor illnesses may attend Cape Care at the provider's discretion. It is important to realize that if a child is unable to participate in the normal routine or needs more care than we can provide without neglecting the others in our care, that child must stay home. We all agree there are times when a child needs to be with the parent/guardian for both physical and emotional comfort. There are also some illnesses that, by law, exclude the child from attending childcare.

Some of these illnesses include, but are not limited to:

- Infectious Conjunctivitis
- Scarlet Fever
- Ringworm
- Chicken Pox
- Hepatitis A
- Impetigo
- Infectious Diarrhea
- Lice
- Strep throat
- Scabies

If a vaccine-preventable disease occurs in the program, all parents/guardians will be notified, and the non-immunized child will be excluded from the classroom immediately and kept comfortable until pick up.

When a child has certain symptoms, the student MUST be kept home. Some of these are:

- Having a temperature of 100°F or higher taken under the arm, 101°F taken orally, or 102°F taken rectally. (A child needs to be fever-free for a minimum of 24 hours, before returning to school without fever reducing medicine)
- 24 hours before returning to Cape Care, which means the child is fever-free without the aid of Tylenol®, or any other fever-reducing substance.)
- Fever AND sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion
- Diarrhea: runny, watery, bloody stools or two or more loose stools within the last four hours
- Vomiting: Two or more times in 24 hours. Note: Please do not bring your child if they have vomited in the night
- Breathing trouble, sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, hacking
- Continuous coughing
- Runny nose (other than clear), draining eyes or ears
- Frequent scratching of the body or scalp, lice, rash, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm
- The child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without hurting the health, safety, or well-being of the other children in our care

NUTRITION

- Preschoolers will need to bring snacks and lunch from home. After-school care students are provided with a snack.
- Pre-K students will need to bring snacks and lunch from home. After-school care students are provided with a snack.
- After-school care students will be offered a snack. Snacks may include: pretzels, popcorn, pirate booty, veggie straws, goldfish, Cheez-its, granola bars, and Nutra-Grain bars.
- Students enrolled in Cape Care on Special Care days will need to bring their lunch and snacks.
- Let's Go! 5-2-1-0 is a nationally recognized childhood obesity prevention program.
- As a program participant, Cape Care:
 - Limits unhealthy choices for snacks and celebrations
 - Provides only water as a beverage
 - Do not use food as a reward
 - Provides opportunities to get physical activity every day
 - Limits recreational screen time

BEHAVIORAL GUIDANCE

Based on the individual needs of the child, Cape Care staff use positive and constructive methods of guidance that encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem, communication of wants and needs, and cooperation with others. Rules, expectations, and limits are clearly and consistently applied and carried out in a manner that reflects a child's developmental ability.

This may include, but is not limited to, interventions such as:

1. Conflict resolution
2. Encouraging the use of language skills
3. Redirecting
4. Providing choices
5. Using praise or positive reinforcement
6. Recognizing a child's strengths
7. Allowing children to take supervised breaks away from the group when needed
8. Reminding children of expectations using positive, clear language
9. Teaching self-regulation
10. Modeling appropriate behavior
11. Allowing for individual differences

Children who are experiencing difficulties are encouraged by the teacher to calm themselves. If this does not help, they may be guided to engage in a different activity. If a child's behavior poses a risk of harm to themselves, others, or property, or if it significantly disrupts the group, the child may be briefly separated from the group.

If separation is necessary, the child will be taken to the office to sit with an administrator until they regain enough self-control to rejoin the group. The child will always be placed in an area where they are visible and can be supervised and supported by a staff member. Interaction between the child and a staff member will occur immediately after the separation to help guide the child toward appropriate group behavior. Any method of discipline that frightens, demeans, or humiliates a child is strictly prohibited.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT MANDATE

Cape Care staff is mandated to report any suspected abuse, neglect, or maltreatment on the part of an employee, parent/guardian, or volunteer. Any abuse or maltreatment of a child, either as an incident of discipline or otherwise, is prohibited. Any means of corporal punishment will not be tolerated. Additionally, withholding or using food, rest, or sleep as a punishment is prohibited. If any type of abuse or neglect is suspected, it will be reported to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services at 1-800-452-1999.

- Physically harming a child (beyond spanking reasonably)
- Sexually abusing a child
- Exposing a child to substance use, domestic violence, or other unsafe conditions
- Failing to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing, or medical care
- Exposing a child to unsafe or unsanitary living conditions
- Threatening to harm a child
- Chronic name-calling or putting them down

INCLUSION

Inclusion ensures that children of all abilities have equal access to participate meaningfully in childcare programs. Children will not face discrimination based on race, culture, ethnicity, sex, gender, religion, national origin, special health care needs, developmental, behavioral, or mental health concerns, or identified disabilities. Children may require support to reduce or eliminate barriers so they can learn and fully engage in experiences with their peers. The services for special needs children comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

We reserve the right to deny services based on Cape Care's inability to ensure the safety and good health of a child due to special physical, mental, behavioral, or emotional conditions, and because of the limited resources available within our program. The staff is adequately trained and/or has sufficient experience to meet the needs of all children for whom they are responsible.

At Cape Care, we have staff from various ethnic backgrounds. Our primary language of communication is English. If you would prefer to communicate in another language, please inform us, and we will make every effort to ensure that our materials and communications are accessible to you in your preferred language if available.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

At Cape Care, you can always be assured that the door is open to you. Please feel free to drop in and check on your child; however, keep in mind that a child adjusting to a new environment will want to leave with you when you pop in for a visit. These early drop-ins should be made when it is appropriate for you to take the child with you, or when you can visit unnoticed to not interrupt your child's day. A child going through separation anxiety will most definitely react to a parent/guardian coming into the facility and not taking them with them when they depart.

You are also invited to call and check on your child during the day. You may also communicate any information to the [Cape Care Coordinator](#), who will relay the information as soon as she receives it to your child's classroom teacher.

RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

Developmental Screening Assessment (DAIL4) will be administered before attending Pre-K. It is designed to identify children ages 2:6 through 5:11 who may need intervention or diagnostic assessment in the following areas: motor, concepts, language, self-help, and social-emotional skills. This is not a diagnostic test or readiness test. Young children who may be at the lower end of the continuum of developmental skills or suspected of having a disability will be referred for an evaluation to determine if they are eligible for early intervention/special education services. Cape Care partners with Child Development Services (CDS), the Cape Elizabeth School Department, and parents/guardians to provide case management and direct instruction for families. Teachers will discuss individual students' progress and make recommendations for families. CDS information can be found on this [website](#)

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Children receiving care at Cape Care have the following rights.

1. Children must be free from emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
2. Each child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the child.
3. Each child has a right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards in this rule.
4. Each child must be provided child care services without discrimination based on race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex, or family composition.
5. Children must be treated with dignity, consideration, and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes the use of developmentally appropriate practices by the childcare facility.
6. Each child has the right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for that child in conjunction with community or state agencies by the childcare facility.
7. Each child has the right to developmentally appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.
8. Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to childcare facility policies and practices.

SAFETY

We foster a warm, loving, and safe environment for students. To help students as they explore, learn, and experience many different things. Some features that help ensure your child's safety include:

Indoor Play

- A variety of age-appropriate toys so children do not become bored.
- Electrical outlets are covered.
- Knives and sharp scissors are kept out of reach.
- Cleaners and chemicals are out of reach.
- Medications are out of reach.
- A well-stocked first-aid kit is kept nearby.
- Providers are CPR and First Aid certified.
- Fire drills are practiced with the entire school as well as classroom mock drills monthly.
- Staff members trained by the CEPD to follow district-wide Crisis Procedures.

Outdoor Play

- Safe grassy areas to play.
- The playground is free of splinters and harmful objects.
- Safety-approved play equipment and toys.
- Children do not play outside unsupervised.

Weather

- When the temperature is above 90 degrees, children will only be allowed to play in shady areas and must wear sunscreen.
- Here is the [Child Care Weather Chart](#). Please be sure your child has warm clothes for cold weather.
- We do not go outside when the temperature is below 10 degrees.
- Insect repellent will not be applied to children.
- We will coordinate indoor activities if the conditions permit the group to go outside.

TERMINATION

We reserve the right to terminate or suspend a child for the following reasons (but not limited to):

- Failure to pay
- Routinely late picking up your child
- Failure to complete the required forms
- Lack of parent/guardian cooperation
- Failure of a child to adjust to the center after a reasonable amount of time
- Physical or verbal abuse of any person or property
- Our inability to meet the child's needs
- Lack of compliance with handbook regulations
- Serious illness of a child

We appreciate as much advance notice as possible when terminating care, and will give the same courtesy in return. Parents/guardians are required to give two weeks written (email) notice when they decide to terminate care. The two weeks will be paid in full, regardless of whether or not the child is in attendance. Anyone who terminates care and has an outstanding balance will need to have the account settled within 30 days.

We will give a two-week notice of termination for which full tuition is due, whether or not the child is in attendance. The provider reserves the right to give written notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well-being of the provider or other children in attendance.

As providers, we reserve the right to make changes in the childcare environment without advance notice to parent/guardian, as long as any change remains within state licensing requirements and regulations. There may be updates to this handbook occasionally. We will give you a separate addendum as the need arises.

Communication is the key; please feel free to discuss your concerns with any of the staff members. Thank you for your interest in finding the best possible care for your child.

TOILET TRAINING

Children entering preschool are required to be toilet-trained. Before starting Cape Care, students must be able to function (mostly) independently while using the bathroom.

To be considered completely toilet trained, students must be able to:

- Recognize the need to use the toilet without frequent reminders.
- Be able to remove the necessary clothing to use the toilet.
- Clean private areas with toilet paper after using the toilet.
- Dressing themselves before exiting the bathroom.
- Wash your hands after using the toilet.

The use of a “pull-up” or similar underwear is not a substitute for being toilet-trained. Please let us know if there is any reason your child needs to wear a “pull-up” during the school day.

In the event of an accident, the following procedures will occur:

- Staff will assist children into the bathroom to change their clothes and put their wet clothing in a plastic bag.
- If a change of clothes has not been provided, the child will wait in the office for someone to bring them a change of clothes.
- In an accident involving feces, Staff will do their best, but if the situation is too extreme, you will be called and may need to come to clean/change your child, as we do not have the proper facilities/staff to clean them thoroughly.
- If accidents are frequent, we would ask that you re-evaluate your child's readiness to be enrolled in preschool. Your child's teacher can help you in that decision-making process.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

As soon as any staff member becomes aware of any situation with the potential for significant violence or danger, the staff member shall immediately notify the Coordinator/Director as soon as possible.

Coordinator

- Call 911 with your location, your name, and the situation.
- Notify the Director and the office: 207-799-2868.
- Once given instructions from the Director or the office, notify members of your staff. Give them clear directions on what the procedure will be.
- Staff: Once given this information, stay calm and keep the students calm.

On-Site assessment

The Director will proceed to the crisis scene or to the best location to provide an on-site assessment of the crisis. This person will establish ongoing communication with the police. The Director will help with this task and keep the rest of the staff informed of the situation.

The Community Services Director will make a decision based on the severity of the crisis to a) keep the program at the current status, b) evacuate all or part of the building, or c) lock down the building. Once the police have arrived, they become responsible for this decision.

Site Evacuation Plan

If the decision has been made to move the students to a safer part of the building or area, please follow this procedure. When possible, keep students in a single line and assign them in groups.

- The Director and the Coordinators will notify the groups where the students will be evacuated (Gym, Turf Field, Parking Lot, Community Center, etc.)
- Bring your attendance list
- Shut doors and check bathrooms on the way out
- One-on-one Counselors are to stay with the child's regularly assigned group
- The Director, Coordinators, along with any other Community Services Department staff on-site, will make a final sweep of the area to make sure all students and staff have evacuated the building/area.

- Once at the designated area, staff will take attendance of students under their supervision and report any injuries or concerns to their Coordinator.
- The Director will notify any emergency personnel on hand of the results of the attendance and injury report (all children/staff accounted for, no injuries, etc.)

Off-Camp Evacuation Site

If the situation warrants moving the students to another building, the following guidelines are applicable:

In most situations, when an off-campus evacuation needs to occur, children will be bused to St. Bartholomew's Church, and a plan of action (cancel the program, resume the program at CECS) will be made at that time.

- Students are to remain with their teachers/staff and in assigned groups until further notice from the Director or designee.
- Once at the new site, counselors are to take attendance and report this to the Coordinator
- Phone use is limited to emergencies only
- Bathroom access will be limited, with students being escorted and accounted for at all times
- Announcements to remind students and staff that school rules and policies are still in effect (respect people and property, etc.)

Lock Down

If the decision is made for full or partial lockdown, directions will be given through the Director and/or designee. All students are to remain in their current classroom/activity with their teacher/staff who is assigned to them at that given time. All students are to stay out of visible sight, sitting on the floor with lights OFF. Close window shades and listen to the teacher/staff for further instructions.

- Teachers/staff keep attendance information, and write down the names of all children in their care
- Lock the door
 - The custodian and Director will make sure all exterior doors are locked

Communication

The Director, CECS Department Staff, and/or Local Police will, upon assessment of the situation, direct staff to do the following:

- Contact the parent/guardian of students directly involved
- Parent/guardian of other students – the Director will be responsible for notifying the parent/guardian concerning student pick up (if early or at another site)
- Media–The CECS Department Director is the designated media spokesperson

Crisis Follow-up

The Director will meet with CECS Department Staff, along with local Police Department personnel if necessary.

- Debrief
- Plan next steps

Procedure for Emergencies in the Community Center

In the event of an emergency -- fire, bomb threat, or other -- the fire alarm will sound. We all must get out and away from the building in a calm and orderly fashion. Staff will remain calm and tell the children to quietly line up and go to the nearest exit. Once outside the building, the group will go far enough away from the building to the designated meeting spot at the IGA parking lot or the back parking lot of the Community Center, where children will sit with their group until further instruction. Classes will not re-enter the building until the Director has given permission.