

**2024-2025**  
**Unicoi County Community Learning Center**  
**Tuition PreK Handbook**



**599 South Mohawk Dr.**  
**Erwin, TN 37650**  
**(423) 735-1210**

# Welcome to Pre-K

On behalf of the teachers and staff, I welcome you to Pre-K! My name is Dr. Jennifer Green, and I will serve as the Director of the Unicoi County Pre-K programs. The Community Learning Center has a long-standing history of excellence in early education. Furthermore, we pride ourselves in meaningful family engagement events. Our teachers are knowledgeable, caring, patient, and excited to walk alongside your family to provide quality educational opportunities and support for your child. We look forward to working with you and your child this school year!

This handbook serves as a guide to give you information about our facility, our procedures and practices, and what you can expect each day at the Pre-K. However, do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or need more information. We aim to provide your child with a supportive and nurturing environment, ensuring their social and academic

This will be my second year as director of the Preschool Programs in Unicoi County. I live in Erwin with my husband Matt, my son McKinley (8th grade), and my son Bronson (6th grade). I received my bachelor's degree from North Carolina State University, and I graduated from East Tennessee State University with my Master's and Doctorate Degrees. I began my career in Unicoi County in 2009, teaching at UCHS for 10 years. Then, I served as Assistant Principal of UCMS for 4 years. It is my goal to ensure your child has a strong educational foundation that prepares them for Kindergarten, in a fun and safe environment.

We look forward to working with you and your child!

*Dr. Jennifer Green*

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# MISSION STATEMENT

*Unicoi County Schools Pre-K programs strive to provide the highest quality early childhood education for children, professional training for faculty and staff and a strong partnership with families nurturing each individuals continued growth and development.*

## Tuition Pre-K Policies and Procedures

The Tuition-based Preschool program at the Sharon Slagle Community Learning Center is a voluntary learning program designed for Unicoi County parents and guardians who do not meet the income requirements of the VPK program. This program is open to 3-year-old and 4-year-old residents of Unicoi County and/or the children of Unicoi County School employees.

Priority for enrollment will be given in the following order:

1. Unicoi County School Employees
2. Residents requesting 5-day/week enrollment.
3. Date of Registration for Unicoi County Residents

The Tuition-based Preschool program follows all rules of the Tennessee Department of Human Services Division of Child Care and Community Services, Chapter 1240-04-01, Licensure Rules for Childcare Agencies.

Tuition payments are due on the **5th and 20th of each month** or can be paid in full by the 5th of each month. Unicoi County School Employees are eligible for a payroll deduction for the cost of their child's tuition.

5-days/week	\$600/month (\$300, \$300)
3-days/week	\$400/month (\$200, \$200)
2-days/week	\$300/month (\$150, \$150)

To help the transition into the Preschool classroom environment, students in the tuition program will stagger-start the first two weeks of school. You will be given your child's 2-week schedule before the beginning of the school.

There will be accommodations made for children of current Unicoi County School Employees.



## BRINGING AND LEAVING YOUR CHILD

Please notify center staff if your child will be absent from the child care center.

Please be aware of the following procedures as required by State Board of Education Licensing Regulations:

- Children MUST BE signed in and out each day by their custodial parent or designated (adult) pick-up person. **Due to the Tuition Program teachers escorting children to and from the classroom, the teacher will be the designated adult signing the child in and out each day.**
- Each custodial parent must fill out emergency forms with the names of those who may pick up the child.
- Children WILL ONLY be released to a responsible designated person listed on the emergency forms.
- Children will not be released to anyone whose behavior, as deemed by a reasonable person, will place the child(ren) in imminent risk. The local law enforcement agency, local judge, and/or the Department of Children's Services will be called in this event. Families are responsible for providing court documents if there are any legal restrictions on family members from picking up or visiting a child at school.
- Any person the staff member is unfamiliar with when picking up a child will be asked to verify their identification with a photo ID (ex. driver's license) in order to verify they are the person whom the parent/legal guardian has given permission to pick up their child. We strongly suggest that parents/legal guardians introduce caretakers to all persons who may pick up their child.

## WHERE TO PARK WHEN DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP

For Drop Off & Pick up: Teachers will escort students in the Tuition PreK program from parent/guardian vehicles to classrooms **from the parking loop.**

Due to traffic in the morning to other classrooms, please do not park and walk your child to the building doors.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for buckling children in car seats at the end of the school day.

Please have identification available at pick up

Identification will be required if teachers do not recognize the adult picking up the child.

Identification will be required for ALL if a substitute is present in that classroom.

## Our regular school day is 7:45-2:45

If you are a **Unicoi County Schools Employee**- you may drop your child off beginning at 7:15am at Ms. Lisa's classroom door.

## **SAYING GOODBYE AND HELLO**

Learning to separate from and reunite with people we love is a lifelong process. This is not a goal that we attempt to accomplish in a week or so, but one that is developed as trust builds between the child, family and caretakers. Each morning every child and family is greeted warmly and told any special news for the day. In order to help with this time of the day we suggest in the beginning you allow your child to bring a special blanket or stuffed animal from home if he/she has a security object. We include pictures of families in the environment on a regular basis. Work out a familiar daily routine of how you will separate and reunite each day and talk about it together beforehand. Familiarize yourself with the classroom daily schedule and talk to your child about when you will be back to pick her/him up. Letting him/her know who to expect and at what point in their day will help your child develop trust and have a sense of security. Tears can be expected from time to time but our teachers are very good helping ease separation anxiety and having things available children are ready to participate in. Please support the teacher's ability to move into the daily routine by creating brief routines but remember always to say goodbye and hello!

Each classroom provides a "greeting area" which contains a bulletin board for parent notices, sign in/out forms as well as cubbies for individual belongings with photos and names of the children to label their "storage space". The area is also highlighted with children's artwork, pictures of families in the program, weekly menus and plans and information on parent involvement activities.

## **WHAT SHOULD YOUR CHILD WEAR?**

Since your child will be moving freely, painting and playing on the floor, we suggest that children wear washable clothes. All clothing should be marked with your child's name (a magic marker works well). Mark all boots, coat, hat, sweater, and mittens. This helps the staff keep track of each child's clothing. Children should wear comfortable clothes that are appropriate for active play. This allows children to have more freedom, develop physical skills, and reduces the possibility of injury.

State Board of Education Licensing Regulations require daily "---periods of outside play." These regulations are shared in detail later in the handbook.

Please be sure that your child has adequate clothing (example: warm jacket, mittens and hat in the winter) for outdoor play in every season. Each child should have an emergency change of clothing at the center, marked with his/her name. Each child should have a change of:

- Shirt

- Pants

- Underwear

- Socks

- Shoes for playing. Sandals with a blackstrap are suggested.

It is important to wash and return these emergency clothes promptly when they are sent home.

## **MEALS AND SNACKS**

Unicoi County Schools serves free breakfast for each child attending school. Along with breakfast, lunch is served daily. Each family is asked to fill out a lunch form if they are interested in receiving free

or reduced lunch. This form must be filled out yearly. Families may deposit lunch money into the child's account in advance. Lunch is \$2.50.

**Meal orders are placed just after 8:00.** Families are responsible for providing breakfast and lunch for children not at school by 8:00.

**Please be aware that due to health and wellness policies families may not bring/send fast food items such as McDonalds, Pals for lunch or breakfast.**

Please remember do not pack peanut or nut products in lunches.

## **FOOD ALLERGIES**

Food allergies can be life-threatening. We have several children with food allergies in preschool. Classroom teachers will discuss and post special precautions to help keep our rooms safe for children with food allergies. Please note that our classrooms are peanut and nut free. Please check the labels of any food that is sent in and allow the classroom teacher to check labels as well. If you have questions about a food product, please talk to the classroom teacher. Thank you for your cooperation.

## **MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES**

Families will not need to send in any materials or supplies. Classroom materials are provided by the grant funds. **All children will need a change of clothes including underwear and socks.** Soiled clothes will be bagged and placed in the staff bathroom to be taken home. Health regulations prohibit staff from washing or rinsing out soiled clothes. Families will be called to bring extra clothes if needed. Please remember to return a new set of clothes if used!

## **MEDIA**

**Each teacher will provide you with a list of class movies and computer games that may be accessed in the classroom.** When these are offered, additional activities are available to children. Teachers are required to view movies and computer games prior to showing/using them. These movies and games *may not* be offered in their entirety or at all, but may be used by the classroom teacher to support units of study or as a classroom fun activity. **Teachers may also choose to offer games or movies not on this list but if they do so will be required to send home a separate notice to families asking for permission prior to offering the activity to students.**

## **ILLNESS**

We make every effort to make sure our centers are a safe and healthy environment for all the children and the staff. When you bring your child to the center, your child should be well enough to participate fully in all the activities of the center. **Our centers are not equipped or licensed to care for sick children.** If your child becomes ill during the day, we will make the child as comfortable as possible and using all the phone numbers provided to us, we will notify you to pick up your child. It is very important that families make arrangements to pick their child up as soon as possible to limit the spread of the illness.

In order to notify you, we need your **current work phone number, cell phone numbers along with at least one alternate contact person** if we are unable to reach you in an emergency. **It is**

**extremely important that you notify the center if any of these numbers change and that you update your child's emergency card.**

We have policies in place concerning information such as when children will need to be excluded from care due to illness, when children can return to care, and very specific policies concerning giving children medications (prescription or over-the-counter) while at the center that is detailed in Appendix.

## **INJURY**

Some bumps and bruises are a part of childhood, but as with illness, we take great care to keep our centers safe. **All of our staff are First Aid and child CPR trained.** If your child sustains an injury at the center the staff will calm and care for your child, notify the family and fill out the necessary accident report. The staff will ask you to read and sign the accident report when you pick up your child.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

Our center will follow the Unicoi County School's closing, delays and early dismissals procedures. Listen to the local news for information. **For two-hour delays, the school will open at 9:45 am. For 3 hour delays, the school will open at 10:45.**

## **EMERGENCY PLANS**

We take safety seriously and practice severe weather drills and other safety drills such as fire drills on a regular basis. If a true emergency situation requires us to leave the building we will evacuate to an alternative site. In the event of an emergency evacuation, families should call the Central Office at: **423-743-1600** for information on a Family Reunification Site. In the event of an emergency, please call **423-743-1600** and avoid the feeling to rush to the center. A traffic jam could delay emergency response members from providing services to those who may need it.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Our goal is for open, constructive communication. Suggestions and complaints are a healthy vehicle for improving our program. Teachers are able to exchange information more freely at drop off time. Families can also request to schedule a meeting at any time with the teacher or calling 735-1210 and setting one up through Dr. Green. Communication regarding care should occur verbally face to face, through a written note given directly to the teacher or direct phone calls. **Never use a social media site such as facebook or email to send important information or discuss care.**

Bloomz is the new communication system that Unicoi Schools will be using this year. You will receive an invitation to join from your child's teacher. This will be discussed in detail at the home visit.

We will provide you with the class phone number, **but also ask that you limit phone calls to concerns of immediate attention.** We ask that you speak directly with the teachers at drop off or at pick time about matters in general.

## **CURRICULUM**

**Connect 4 Learning** - Using research-based and classroom-tested foundations in literacy, science, social-emotional, and mathematics learning, Connect4Learning (C4L) weaves together all four domains to ensure that each subject is addressed meaningfully and comprehensively with each child. High-interest learning centers that support and extend children's growing understandings in social-emotional skills, science, literacy, and mathematics are a fundamental part of daily lessons. **Daily exchanges with families also offer valuable insight.** Teachers also use everyday experiences to help children build connections in math, science, literacy, social studies, the arts and technology. All children are respected and valued as learners. Feelings of trust, confidence and initiative are supported, as children grow at their own pace. Teacher's post their lesson plans and also send home information each week about projects, activities and themes.

### **REPORTING PROGRESS**

We provide information about what your child is currently doing and expected next steps each nine weeks via a portfolio model. We will host a Fall and Spring Parent-Teacher Conference and you can request a meeting to discuss progress at any time.

### **DOCUMENTATION PANELS AND HALLWAY DISPLAYS**

We use our hallways to share classroom happenings and ways families can support learning. You will find photos, projects and shared writing experiences posted in the hallways and in the classroom. From time to time we will also have pictures of activities scrolling on the hallway TV or in the classroom. Please take time to view these when you are on site.

These panels document classroom happenings and are a valuable source of information for teachers, families and for children to revisit.

### **FAMILY OUTINGS**

Each year we try to offer several family outings in which we combine experiences at school with experiences outside of school and allow classroom families to meet one another. Teachers will plan a theme and have conversations to develop background knowledge at school and then invite families to join us! These are lots of fun and offer families a chance to get to know each other and support rich learning opportunities!

### **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

We value families. Families help support the program and enrich the experiences the children take part in. Here are several ways you can take an active role in preschool:

**Family Surveys:** Along the survey in this handbook, families will have several opportunities to provide information through surveys about program quality and goal setting.

**Family Advisory Board:** Families from each program meet regularly with staff providing families the opportunity for input and valuable two- way communication between families and the center.

1. Families are informed about the program and the curriculum, about policy or regulatory changes and other critical issues that could potentially affect the program and/or the early childhood profession

2. Communication includes discussions about upcoming events as well as the needs and interests of the families in the center. Parents are offered the opportunity to suggest themes of study as well as parent group topics of interest.
3. Connections are made with community resources and educational programs such as museums, libraries, and neighborhood centers that are available to support families in our area.

**Parent and Child Together Time (PACT):** Parents play alongside children in their classroom and choose freely from available classroom materials activities that are of interest to their family.

**Parent Education Groups:** Families have the opportunity to fill out surveys so that we can plan family nights that meet individual family needs and interests. Parent can suggest topics of interest at any time.

**Home Visits:** The center schedules regular home visits to share in informal conversation as well as giving children an opportunity to see their parents and teachers working together both in their home and at school. Parents may also request a home visit.

**Open Door Policy:** Families are welcome to volunteer in our program at anytime. We ask parents who wish to become regular participants in our classroom life to participate in a **one-time orientation to explain classroom policies as well as health and safety procedures**. We also ask that families inform the teacher when they wish to volunteer beforehand. This year we will be working in **volunteer teams** as well. If you are interested see your teacher!

## **VOLUNTEERS AND SERVICE LEARNERS**

Our programs collaborate with ETSU, Milligan College and Unicoi County High School's Child Development classes for volunteer and service learning opportunities. All classroom staff and volunteers are required to attend an orientation prior to working in the classroom. These individuals are held to high standards in order to participate in the program. If you would like more information please contact Dr. Green at 735-1210.

## **VISITORS**

Families are encouraged to visit the center, however besides pick up and drop off times visitors must sign in and wear a visitor tag which you can get from your child's teacher/office. Visitors must also abide by the centers dress code. **Visitors are asked to check in through the offices. Visitors to the Learning Center should park in the Learning Center parking lot and check in through the center office/classroom.**

**Visitors to the middle school must park and check in through the middle school main entrance and not enter the preschool wing.**

# **APPENDIX**

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Prior to admission, parents must submit a completed and signed application, copy of birth certificate, immunization record, evidence of current medical examination (physical) and health history. The name used on the records of a student entering school must be the same as that shown on the birth certificate unless evidence is presented that such name has been legally changed through court as prescribed by law. **Every child must have a complete enrollment packet in order to begin attending our programs.** Included in this paperwork are the *Immunization Certificate and Health History Inventory*. All immunizations must be kept current and center records must be updated. Parents are encouraged to take their child for annual checkups, and to bring their health records up to date at that time. **Please share all pertinent health and developmental information, particularly concerning allergies with staff.**

### **HOME VISIT**

Before your child begins our program, teachers will schedule a home visit. This is an informal visit in which a teacher will introduce herself/himself in the familiar home environments. Teachers will take a picture of your child in order to label his/her cubby. We also request to take a family photo so we can have both displayed in the classroom.

### **SITE VISITS**

An initial visit to the center with your child must take place before your child begins our program. This is a good opportunity to ask questions and visiting the center also gives you and your child an opportunity to meet the staff and see the physical set up of the classrooms.

## **ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES AND POLICIES (PREK)**

Young children's growth and development is maximized through consistent participation in a high-quality environment. Establishing consistent attendance routines in pre-K will increase students' chances of success in all future school experiences, K-12. With this in mind, the department has adopted a pre-K attendance policy to go into effect (*August 01, 2017*).

### **Excused Absences:**

***The following are acceptable reasons for excused absences:***

1. The child is hospitalized;
2. The child is incapacitated due to a serious injury;
3. The child contracts a communicable disease (virus or flu);
4. The child has other ongoing health related ailments which temporarily prevent attendance (such as asthma);
5. There is a death in the family;
6. Limited medical/dental/therapy appointments (these should be made outside school hours unless absolutely necessary); and
7. Other reasons as approved by site-level administrator.

### **Required Procedures:**

1. Each site or district should have a contact person. This is the person with whom parents can address attendance concerns. Contact information should be distributed with the policy.

2. If a child has four (4) or more consecutive absences,—or four (4) or more absences within one (1) month—the site-level administrator must contact the family and determine the child's participation status. The site-level administrator must document attempts to contact the family and the outcome of those attempts and/or communications.

3. If a child misses five (5) or more days in a three (3)-month period, the site-level administrator will contact the family to develop an attendance plan.

a. The attendance plan will be designed to help the family establish regular attendance or, if necessary, to plan for alternative services. The attendance plan will be developed by the family and appropriate school personnel, including, but not limited to: the child's primary pre-k teacher; the site-level administrator; the IEP team (if applicable); and additional staff serving the school and family, which may include a counselor, social worker, family support personnel, teacher assistant, or other school staff supporting the child and family. The attendance plan must:

1. Identify the reasons for the absences;
  2. Include a specific plan and date for establishing regular attendance or alternative services that meet the child's educational goals; and
  3. Include documentation of services and student outcomes to determine effectiveness of the attendance plan.
  4. Every effort will be made to ensure the child has access to a quality school program.
- However, these spots are made available through a state grant and are limited by funding.

**Students who have more than five (5) days unexcused per month, or ten (10) days unexcused in a year, may be terminated from the program for failure to follow the attendance policy.** District-level personnel must submit required dismissal documentation to the Department of Education's VPK director for approval. **A district shall not dismiss a student without first implementing an attendance plan,** unless there are special circumstances to be considered, such as the family moving and being unreachable after multiple attempts by the district. In these cases, the state VPK director may grant approval due to special circumstances.

Once dismissal is approved, a waiting list applicant who meets eligibility determinations for the VPK program may fill the vacant position. Future eligibility for the terminated child to re-enter the program will depend upon vacancies after a 30-day waiting period and a parent conference to establish a faithful, binding Home/School Compact.

## **DISENROLLMENT**

If a child is disenrolled, we ask that the enrolling parent/ guardian contact the school and provide a written explanation of why the child was disenrolled. A child's records will be kept for one year. The Health Record may be returned to the parent upon the child leaving the program.

## **Behavior Management Policy**

Unicoi County School Pre-K classes use Pyramid Model tools and strategies to support social emotional growth of students, prevent problem behavior and respond positively to the social and emotional needs of young children in our programs. The behavior of pre-K children is unlike that of K-12 children due to their developmental status. Although temper tantrums and other behavioral outbursts must be addressed to ensure the safety of the child and others, they are a common



response of many four year olds to new situations and should be treated accordingly. The program works through a tiered support to meet individual needs.

### **Nurturing and Responsive Relationships and High Quality Supportive Environments**

Positive relationships and quality supportive environments form the base of the pyramid. The **Inventory of Practices** is utilized in a manner that encourages reflection and discussion among teachers. Each of the four general areas includes several skills and indicators reflective of practices that promote social emotional competence in young children. The Indicators are detailed phrases that enable the user to “dig a little deeper” in identifying and pinpointing skills that may or may not be present. A column entitled observations/evidence allows the user to write thoughts, suggestions, strengths, and needs concerning either the specific skills or indicators.

### **Targeted Social Emotional Supports**

Emotional literacy, friendship skills and self regulation strategies are visible in instruction for all students.

Teachers provide planned instruction on specific social and emotional skills for children at risk for developing more challenging behavior.

### **Intensive Intervention**

Even when teachers establish positive relationships, implement classroom preventive practices, and use explicit teaching strategies, a few children are likely to continue to display challenging behavior.

- **Identifying Form & Function of Behaviors**

The parent observation tool to begin to understand the function of challenging behavior at home and the interview/observation form help the Functional Assessment team to begin to identify the form and function of challenging behavior.

- **Strategies for Reducing Challenging Behaviors**

**The Routine Based Support Guide** was developed to assist teachers in problem-solving a plan to support young children who are having challenging behavior. As teachers know, children engage in challenging behavior for a variety of reasons, but all children use challenging behavior to communicate messages. Challenging behavior typically communicates a need to escape or avoid a person(s)/activity or a desire to obtain someone/something. Once teachers understand the purpose or meaning of the behavior, they can begin to select strategies to make the behavior irrelevant, inefficient, and ineffective. They can do this by selecting prevention strategies, teaching new skills, and changing responses in an effort to eliminate or minimize the challenging behavior. On the bottom portion of the Teacher’s Support Planning Sheet is an area to write ideas for sharing the child’s support plan for each individual routine with the child’s family. Sharing ideas will allow for the family to contribute to the plan by helping the child learn school expectations and new skills that will replace the challenging behavior.

- **Developing a Behavior Support Plan (Functional Assessment, Team)**

**Positive Behavior Support (PBS)** is an approach for changing a child's behavior that is based on humanistic values and research. It offers an approach for developing an understanding of why the child has challenging behavior and teaching the child new skills to replace challenging behavior. Positive Behavior Support offers a holistic approach that considers all of the factors that impact a child and the child's behavior. It can be used to address challenging behaviors that may range from aggression, tantrums, and property destruction to withdrawing or repetitive behaviors.

- **Family Resource Sheet can be used to** identify key resources to share with families.
- **Family Routine Guide** was developed to assist parents and caregivers in developing a plan to support young children who are using challenging behavior. Children engage in challenging behavior for a variety of reasons, but all children use challenging behavior to communicate messages. Challenging behavior, typically, communicates a need to escape or avoid a person/activity or communicates a desire to obtain someone/something. Once parents understand the purpose or meaning of the behavior, they can begin to select strategies to change the behavior. They can do this by selecting prevention strategies, teaching new skills, and changing the way they respond in an effort to eliminate or minimize the challenging behavior.

#### **When to Seek Outside Help for Children's Problem Behavior**

The Teaching Pyramid provides a comprehensive model for promotion, prevention, and intervention on children's problem behavior. Even with careful and consistent implementation of all levels of the Pyramid there may be rare occasions in which programs may need to seek outside expertise. The Director of Early Childhood Programs will be contacted should cause for concern arise regarding a student's behavior or attendance record. The consultant will make suggestions for approaches for dealing with the situation. If intervention proves to be ineffective, the LEA shall provide to the TDOE a written request and justification for permanent dismissal of any child from the pre-K program at the request of the school system. No child is to be permanently dismissed without consultation between, and agreement of, the Grantee and the Tennessee Department of Education. Corporal punishment (spanking) is prohibited. (School Administered Child Care Rule 0520-12-1-09)

#### **Discrimination/Harassment (Sexual, Racial, Ethnic, Religious)**

Students shall be provided a learning environment free from sexual, racial, ethnic and religious discrimination/harassment.<sup>1</sup> It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee or any student to discriminate against or harass a student through disparaging conduct or communication that is sexual, racial, ethnic or religious in nature. The following guidelines are set forth to protect students from discrimination/harassment.

Student discrimination/harassment will not be tolerated.<sup>2</sup> Discrimination/harassment is defined as conduct,

advances, gestures or words either written or spoken of a sexual, racial, ethnic or religious nature which:

1. May be perceived as unwelcome and inappropriate sexually motivated touching or verbal contact; or
2. Unreasonably interfere with the student's work or educational opportunities; or
3. Create an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment; or
4. Imply that submission to such conduct is made an explicit or implicit term of receiving grades or credit; or

5. Imply that submission to or rejection of such conduct will be used as a basis for determining the student's grades and/or participation in a student activity.

### **Bullying/Intimidation**

Students shall be provided a safe learning environment. It shall be a violation of this policy for any student to bully, intimidate or create a hostile educational environment for another student. Harassment, bullying and intimidation occurs, if the act takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided equipment or transportation or at any official school bus stop, if the act either physically harms a student or damages his/her property, or knowingly places the student in reasonable fear of such, causes emotional distress to a student or students, or creates a hostile educational environment. If the act takes place off school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity, an act of harassment, bullying or intimidation occurs if the act is directed specifically at a student or students and has the effect of creating a hostile educational environment or otherwise creating a substantial disruption to the education environment or learning process. These acts may also take place through electronic means.<sup>3</sup>

Alleged victims of the above-referenced offenses shall report these incidents immediately to a teacher, counselor or building administrator.<sup>4</sup> Any allegations shall be fully investigated by a complaint manager (as set forth in Student Concerns, Complaints and Grievances 6.305).

The privacy and anonymity of all parties and witnesses to complaints will be respected. However, because an individual's need for confidentiality must be balanced with obligations to cooperate with police investigations or legal proceedings, to provide due process to the accused, to conduct a thorough investigation or to take necessary action to resolve a complaint, the identity of parties and witnesses may be disclosed in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know. A substantiated charge against an employee shall result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. A substantiated charge against a student may result in corrective or disciplinary action up to and including suspension. There will be no retaliation against any person who reports harassment or participates in an investigation. However, any employee who refuses to cooperate or gives false information during the course of any investigation may be subject to disciplinary action. The willful filing of a false report will itself be considered harassment and will be treated as such. An employee disciplined for violation of this policy may appeal the decision by contacting the Federal Rights Coordinator or the Director of Schools. Any student disciplined for violation of this policy may appeal the decision in accordance with disciplinary policies and procedures. Coaches and other employees of the school district shall not encourage, permit, condone or tolerate hazing activities.<sup>5</sup>

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

#### **REPORTING**

All personnel shall be alert for any evidence of child abuse or neglect. Child abuse is defined as any wound, injury, disability, or physical or mental condition which is of such nature as to reasonably indicate that it has been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect or which on the basis of available information reasonably appears to have been caused by such. Staff members having knowledge or suspicion of any child who is suffering from abuse or neglect shall report such harm immediately. The report shall be made to the judge having juvenile jurisdiction, the office of the chief law-enforcement official where the child resides, or to the Department of Children's Services in a manner specified by the department, either by contacting a local representative of the department or by utilizing the department's centralized intake procedure where applicable.

The report shall include:

1. The name, address and age of the child;
2. The name and address of the parents or persons having custody of the child;
3. The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect; and
4. Any evidence to the cause or any other information that may relate to the cause or extent of the abuse or neglect.

The person reporting shall be immune from liability and his identity shall remain confidential except when the juvenile court determines otherwise.

## **INVESTIGATIONS**

School administrators and employees have a duty to cooperate, provide assistance and information in child abuse investigations including permitting child abuse review teams to conduct interviews while the child is at school; the principal may control the time, place and circumstances of the interview, but may not insist that a school employee be present even if the suspected abuser is a school employee or another student. The principal is not in violation of any laws by failing to inform parents that the child is to be interviewed even if the suspected abuser is not a member of the child's household.

## **EXCLUSIONARY POLICY**

**Children who exhibit any of the following should not attend school and will be excluded from care until symptom free for a 24-48 hour period: Please note if your child is sent home for fever, he/she may not return the following day.**

- Fever (above 100 degrees using thermometer)
- Symptoms of severe illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs
- Diarrhea, defined as more watery, less formed, more frequent stools NOT associated with diet change or medication- a stool not contained by the child's ability to use the toilet.
- Blood in the stools not explained by diet change, medication or hard stools.
- Vomiting two or more times in a 24 hours period
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Rash with fever or behavior change
- Conjunctivitis /Pink eye (must be on antibiotics and fever free for 24 hours)

- Lice
- Scabies
- Impetigo
- Strep Throat (must be on antibiotics and fever free for 24 hours)
- Chickenpox or shingles (must be dried and scabbed over)
- Whooping Cough (Pertussis)
- Hepatitis A, Infection Hepatitis (Yellow Jaundice)
- Herpes simplex
- Measles (Rubella or Red Measles), Rubella (German or 3-Day Measles), Mumps
- Influenza
- Tuberculosis
- Mononucleosis
- Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)
- Other illnesses designated by the local Health Department may also require exclusion

Please note that children who have an ear infection, sinus infection or have received shots will be allowed to attend school prior to 24 hours of fever free **ONLY WITH A DOCTOR'S EXCUSE EXPLAINING WHY THE FEVER MAY BE PRESENT.**

### **FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal Law that protects the privacy of student education records and applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records and these rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students." Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies. Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible students has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR 99.31):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, with a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA, which is the intent of this notice

### **Head Lice (Pediculosis)**

Pediculosis, or head lice is a common condition that has become a major school and community problem. It results in millions of cases, hundreds of millions of dollars of consumer costs and lost parental wages. The impact on school systems dealing with Pediculosis is also very significant. School system employees spend a great deal of time managing Pediculosis in addition to the revenue lost because of children being excluded from school attendance. Persistent, or chronic, Pediculosis also impacts student's academic performance when they are frequently absent for school, missing valuable instruction time. Finally, the negative social impact of persistent head lice is also important to consider for these children.

Development of a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the management of pediculosis provides an effective method for reducing the risk of transmission in the school setting with early detection and treatment. Since the greatest incidence of head lice is seen in children between the ages of 5-12, the Board has developed a Pediculosis Management Program for each elementary school and the middle school.

The Pediculosis Management Program includes routine school-wide screening for head lice and their egg sacs (nits), scheduled lice case tracking and follow-up. The program also promotes education among school children, school officials', educators, and parents.

The Pediculosis Management Program will be implemented in compliance with all current policies regarding confidentiality and in observance of all laws protecting students from discrimination. A copy of the Pediculosis Management Program Procedure Manual is maintained in the office of the Supervisor of Health and Safety.

### **Unicoi County Schools Head Lice (Pediculosis) Procedure**

Pediculosis (head lice) is common among children. Head lice can be readily transmitted in schools, homes, camps, backyards and playgrounds. Head lice can be transmitted by direct contact, head touching head, and by indirect contact through sharing combs, hats and other hair accessories. Lice do not live on household pets or in the general environment. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), head lice are not a health hazard or sign of uncleanliness and are not responsible for the spread of any disease.

Unicoi County Schools Health Services recommend a procedure that focuses on the exclusion of active infestations only. Active infestations can be defined as the presence of live lice or nits found within ¼ inch of the scalp.

- Any student with live lice or nits within ¼ inch of the scalp will be excluded from school to obtain treatment with a pediculocide in order to prevent the spreading of lice to other students.
- Immediate treatment at home is advised.
- Resources for parents regarding the treatment of head lice will be sent home.
- A letter and checklist will be given to parent/guardian of student when head lice is found.
- The student will be readmitted to school after proof of treatment is presented to the school. Proof of treatment may include bottle/box top and dated receipt from an anti-lice shampoo/rinse or olive oil bottle label with the precept of purchase.
- All students must be accompanied by a parent/guardian and checked by the school nurse or trained school personnel before re-admittance to school will be allowed.
- Students should be rechecked once a week until all nits have been removed by parent/guardian to ensure re-infestation has not occurred.

Every effort should be made to minimize time away from school and to expedite treatment for students who are excluded due to head live infestation. Head lice screening programs are not recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics because the screening has not proven to have a significant effect on the incidences of head lice in a school community.

### **Unicoi County Schools Pediculosis Procedure**

Once a child has been excluded from school for head lice/nits, only the day sent home will be excused. Any absences accrued thereafter will be **unexcused**. Once a student is cleared and returned to school, there will be **NO excused** days if there is a reoccurrence within two weeks of initial exclusion.

### **Follow up**

After three exclusion days for head lice, a phone call is made to the parent/guardian explaining the significance of the problem and the consequences of increasing exclusion days. Problem solving assistance is offered. The school Guidance Counselor and Supervisor of Health and Safety are consulted.

After accruing five exclusion days for head lice, a letter is sent to the parent/guardian. Again, the significance of the problem and the consequences of increasing exclusion days are explained and problem solving assistance is offered.

Also, after five days of exclusion, an unannounced home visit may be made. The condition of the home environment is documented and specific recommendations can be made related to ridding the home of lice and nits in an effort to eliminate continued infestation.

After accruing seven days of exclusion, a referral to the truancy board will be made.

After accruing ten days of exclusion, a court petition is filed by the school system on behalf of the student(s) against the parent/guardian for the dependent educational neglect.

## MEDICATIONS

**School personnel will not administer oral medications to children.** If, under exceptional circumstances, a child is required to take non-prescribed, prescribed oral medications or inhalers during school hours and the parent cannot be at school to administer the medication, the following procedure must be followed.

- Written parent/guardian permission must be given on the appropriate form that is located in the child's files.
- For prescribed medicine: physician's instructions and signature with reason for giving the medication and the beginning and ending dates must be provided along with the appropriate form completed by physician.
- For non-prescribed medicine: parents instructions and signature with reason for giving the medication. **\* Please note children must be able to self-administer the medicine, otherwise a parent must be present.** Trained staff will only assist in measuring the proper dose.
- A list of possible side-effects-this can be provided by pharmacist.
- Medication in the original bottle.

The following items are considered medication and when used the parent must complete the non-prescription medication form in the child's files. (Sunscreens, chap-sticks, lotions etc.)

## OUTDOOR PLAY

Parents please be aware of our policies regarding outdoor play as set forth by our licensing and State Department agencies. We ask that if your child is not able to participate in outdoor activities that you provide written instructions from a licensed health care provider for our teaching staff.

Children shall be allowed to experience a variety of weather conditions. Children shall be provided an opportunity for outdoor play when the temperature range, after adjustment for wind chill and



heat index, is between thirty-two (32) degrees and ninety-five (95) degrees Fahrenheit and not raining; children shall be properly dressed and the length of time outside adjusted according to the conditions and the age of the children. Caregivers shall be alert for signs of dehydration, heat stroke, frostbite, etc., dependent upon the season. Each agency shall develop a set of age appropriate playground rules that uses positive language. Rules shall be posted in each play area.  
Rule 0520-12-01-.09

Adult/ child ratios for preschoolers age 3-5 must remain at 1:10 other than at naptime when the ratio may be 1:20. For our classes of 20 two teachers must be present with the children at all times other than naptime (*Guidance from the State Department Office of Early Learning Scope of Services*)

Teachers are required to provide a substantial portion (2 ½ hours) of the day for free play activities, which includes center time, and outdoors play. (*Guidance from the State Department Office of Early Learning Scope of Services referencing the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale Revised*)

The center shall provide isolated care of a contagious child only if written instructions of a licensed physician or certified health care provider are obtained first. (p. 39: *Rules of the State Board Office of Commission Chapter 0520-12-1: Standards for Child Care Centers and School Age Child Care Programs*)

### **Parent's Right To Know : Teacher and Paraprofessional Provisions, NCLB Act of 2001**

The federal legislation Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. No. 114-95, requires Unicoi County Schools to support parent's right-to-know about the qualifications of the teachers and instructional assistants serving their child. The two main requirements are explained below:

#### **ANNUAL NOTICE TO PARENTS**

Title I of the ESSA requires Unicoi County schools to notify parents of children in Title I schools at the beginning of each school year of their right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's classroom teachers and any paraprofessionals providing support to the child.

#### **SPECIAL NOTICE TO PARENTS WHEN A TEACHER DOES NOT MEET QUALIFICATIONS**

Title I schools are responsible for providing "timely notice that a parent's child has been assigned, or has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by a teacher is not "highly qualified" (Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015).

To request information regarding the professional qualifications of their classroom teachers and any paraprofessionals providing support to the child, send a written request including phone number to: John English, Director of Schools, Unicoi County Schools, 100 Nolichucky Av., Erwin, TN 37650, (423) 743-1600. Parents will be contacted within ten working days after the written request is received to set up an appointment to review the information. Parents may also visit the Tennessee Department of Education, Teacher Licensing Web Site:  
<http://www.state.tn.us/educaiton/lichome/htm>.

#### **Notification of Rights under FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

(1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(3) The right to privacy of personally identifiable information in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the school has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

(4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

## **Directory Information**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that Unicoi County Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain a parent's written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a child's education records. However, Unicoi County Schools may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless the parent has advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the Unicoi County Schools to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook;
- Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent.

If you do not want Unicoi County Schools to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing. Unicoi County Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems that cannot be used to access education records without a PIN, password, etc. (A student's SSN, in whole or in part, cannot be used for this purpose.)

### **Footnotes:**

1. These laws are: Section 9528 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 7908) and 10 U.S.C. § 503(c).

## **Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)**

Your child will use school system device(s) and will have access to the Internet. The school system will share your child's information with 3rd parties including but not limited to textbook manufacturers, eBackpack, Google (Google Apps), and Food Service Applications. Federal Law requires 3rd parties to provide protection and restricts how the information may be used. 3rd parties may store your student's information as long as they remain enrolled in our district and/or the service is used by the school system. If you would like copies of how the companies use the data, please contact your school district central office.

**COMPLAINT HOTLINE: (LONG DISTANCE) 1-800-462-8261  
(NASHVILLE AREA) 615-313-4820**

### **Tobacco Free Schools Policy**

All uses of tobacco and tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes and associated paraphernalia are prohibited in all of the school district's buildings and in all vehicles that are owned, leased or operated by the district.<sup>1,2 3</sup> Smoking shall be prohibited in any public seating areas including, but not limited to, bleachers used for sporting events or public restrooms. District employees and students enrolled in the district's schools will not be permitted to use tobacco or tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, electronic cigarettes and associated paraphernalia while they are participants in any class or activity in which they represent the school district. Any student who possesses tobacco products shall be issued a citation by the school principal/resource officer. The director of schools, in cooperation with the juvenile court and the local (police/sheriff's department), is responsible for developing procedures for issuance of the citations which shall include the form and content of citations and methods of handling completed citations. Parents and students shall be notified of this citation requirement at the beginning of each school year. Signs will be posted throughout the district's facilities to notify students, employees and all other persons visiting the school that the use of tobacco and tobacco products is forbidden. The following notice shall be prominently posted (including at each ticket booth) for elementary or secondary school sporting events: Smoking is prohibited by law in seating areas and in restrooms.

**Tennessee Department of Education Standards for School-administered Child Care can be found [here](#).**

### **Movies and Computer Games Permission Slip**

I have reviewed the list of movies and computer games provided in the handbook. I understand when these are offered, additional activities are available to children and that the teachers are required to view movies and computer games prior to showing them to children. These movies and games may not be offered in their entirety or at all, but may be used by the classroom teacher to support units of study or as a classroom fun activity. Teachers may also choose to offer games or movies not on this list but if they do so will be required to send home a separate notice to families asking for permission prior to offering the activity to students.

( ) I DO give my permission for my child to participate in class movies provided to me.

( ) I DO give my permission for my child to access the list of computer games provided to me.

( ) I DO NOT give my child permission to participate in class movies.

( ) I DO NOT give my permission for my child to access the list of computer games provided to me on this form.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Movies	Websites	Computer Software
Teachers will have a permission slip for parents to sign before showing a movie.  Some educational shows (Super Why, Wild Kratts, etc.) may be shown.	Each teacher will list	Each teacher will list

### ***Family Engagement Survey***

Please mark the times you will most be able to participate in family events

- ☐ Morning 8-11
- ☐ Afternoon 12-2
- ☐ Evening 5:30-7:30

Are you interested in serving in any of the following ways...

- ☐ Family Advisory Board: meets 2-3 times
- ☐ Pre-K Community Council: meets 2-3 times
- ☐ Parent Volunteer or a Volunteer Team (see below)

Outdoor Learning: Would you be interested in potting plants with students or helping with outdoor activities or providing materials or care to our playground?

Family Outings: Along with staff, this time will survey and plan family nights to meet the needs and interests of the families we serve. This a great way to meet other families.

The Arts: Do you play an instrument or know of someone who would like to donate time in this area? Would you be interested in gathering information to share with families about community events they may be interested in?

A love for books: Would you enjoy reading with students or providing good books? This group will promote a love of reading. There are several book events we would like to promote!

Events: There are several events each year (Week of the Young Child, Reading Nights etc.)

Other:

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Please provide any information or topics that you or your family may be interested in through parent groups or information sent home.

Please mark the type of family event you would most likely participate:

- ☐ Active Event (Swimming, Basketball etc.)
- ☐ Family Meals (Picnics, Grill Outs, etc.)
- ☐ Health and Safety (Car Seat Safety, Nutrition etc.)
- ☐ Child Development (Guidance/Discipline, Supporting Learning in the Home etc.)
- ☐ Receiving Progress Reports (Conferences, Art Displays of Child's Work etc.)
- ☐ Family Field Trips (Bristol Speedway in Lights, YMCA Swim Night etc.)
- ☐ Connections with Community Resources (Library, YMCA, etc.)
- ☐ Home Learning Ideas (Cooking Projects, Goop, Crafts etc.)
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide any special places **nearby** you would like us to consider for field trips or special outings for your child. We will only travel 45 minutes to and from a location.

Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Proof of Receipt of License and Handbook

- I have been given a copy of key procedure and policies. I understand a full copy of the state licensing requirements and policies/ handbook are available at [www.unicoischools.com](http://www.unicoischools.com). I do not request a full copy at this time.
  - I requested and received a full copy of the state licensing requirements and policies/handbook.
- 

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Any comments or questions?

