

# **Colchester Elementary School Family/Student Handbook**

**“A Community of Enthusiastic Learners”**



**2023-2024**

Welcome to Colchester Elementary School. We distribute this Family/Student Handbook in order to share information that is specific to and unique about Colchester Elementary School and to answer any questions you may have. The Colchester Board of Education policies are made available to you on the district/school website [www.colchesterct.org](http://www.colchesterct.org). This handbook is updated yearly and in case of a conflict between a Board Policy and the provisions of this handbook, the Board Policy most recently adopted by the Board will prevail.

We anticipate an outstanding year of learning for your child. Research identifies that children are most successful academically and behaviorally when parents are involved with their child's education. We encourage and welcome your support and involvement with your learner's schooling and anticipate building upon your success as your child's initial educator as we build our "Community of Enthusiastic Learners." This year, we will have 3 sessions of half day preschool classes, 2 sessions of full day preschool, 9 full day Kindergarten classes, 9 first grade classes, and 10 second grade classes.

Since 2006, Colchester Elementary School has serviced Colchester's youngest children in grades PK-2, in conjunction with the Colchester Early Childhood program. Our caring staff members are committed to providing an effective learning environment to best meet the unique needs of individual students. We focus our efforts on creating strong readers and mathematicians. We recognize the research that identifies that if children cannot read well and do not understand mathematical concepts by age 9, they will struggle academically throughout their schooling and later in life. We implement the Connecticut Core Standards and The Science of Reading to ensure students have the knowledge and 21st Century skills for a successful future.

The Colchester Public Schools Vision Statement is: We create innovative thinkers for a dynamic world. Our goals are as follows:

1. High expectations for academic growth that are shared by students and staff.
2. Student tasks are oriented towards developing innovative thinking and real-world problem-solving.
3. Instruction and curriculum support integrated, real-world learning that maximizes individual potential.
4. The school system provides the resources and capacity to respond to student academic, emotional, and social needs in partnership with caregivers and the community.
5. The budget is clearly communicated to demonstrate alignment with district goals and the needs of our students.

Student development and instruction is guided by ongoing, varied assessments, including universal screenings in reading and math, three times a year. CES is committed to providing a comprehensive system of support to help ensure success for every student. Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) provide support to children who are experiencing academic and/or behavioral challenges to prevent the development of more serious educational issues later on.

Communication is valued at CES. We are excited to be using Parent Square this year! Teachers compose newsletters home to update families on their classroom lessons and activities. We look

to parents/guardians to communicate information critical to their child's well being. We collaborate with and seek the support of our PTO recognizing that school-parent-community partnerships need to be fostered and promoted.

Education receives the highest priority in our school community. We strive to use Best Practices while integrating social and academic learning in every aspect of the school day. By teaching and reinforcing our three school rules, we anticipate our students will gain comfort in routines and the knowledge of expectations so that they can focus on their most important job, that of learning. We are committed to Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS), a system wide set of problem solving strategies and processes that allow us to look at our practices and build upon our school's strengths. Proactive school-wide discipline systems create environments in which learning and teaching are valued, and aggressive, unsafe or bullying behaviors are discouraged; Cooperation, Assertion, Respect/Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-control (C.A.R.E.S.) are taught and encouraged; individual differences are valued rather than criticized; educating students with disabilities is supported effectively and teaching fundamental skills of reading and math together with social studies and science are maximized.

Safety goes hand in hand with education at CES. All staff members wear picture ID badges and we ask all visitors to show a picture ID to our office professionals each and every time they come to the school, even if we know them personally. All access doors are locked during the school day and visitors are buzzed in. Children are released to parents/guardians early in the day or at dismissal if a note has been received by the school and authorized by the parent/guardian. Students and staff participate in lockdown drills at a minimum of three times a year and fire drills seven times each year, helping to ensure students' preparedness.

Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to update changes to student information at any point throughout the school year when changes occur. These changes can be made in PowerSchool, which can be accessed at any time. We are committed to doing all we can to reach parents should an emergency occur. Custodial parents who have legal documentation that restricts the rights of the non-custodial parent should share paperwork with the school.

As the administrators of CES, we are here to serve you, the staff and students in any way we can. We are happy to answer any questions or address concerns that you might have regarding your child's education. We welcome suggestions. We hope through the combined efforts of home and school, your child will thirst for knowledge, skills, and learning. We look forward to a marvelous school year. We welcome the opportunity to partner with you.

Sincerely,



Judy H. O'Meara, Principal



Meghan B. Amado, Assistant Principal

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**Regular Day**

**Grades K-2:**  
8:35 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.  
**School Day PK:**  
8:35 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.  
**A.M. Pre K:**  
8:35 a.m. to 11:05 a.m.  
**P.M. Pre K:**  
12:40 p.m. to 3:10 p.m.

**Scheduled Shortened Day**

**Grades K-2**  
8:35 a.m. to 12:55 p.m.  
**School Day PK:**  
8:35 a.m. to 12:55 p.m.  
**A.M. Pre K:**  
8:35 a.m. to 10:35 a.m.  
**P.M. Pre K:**  
10:55 a.m. to 12:55 p.m.

**Delayed Opening**

**Grades K-2:**  
10:35 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.  
**School Day PK:**  
10:35 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.  
**A.M. Pre K:**  
Canceled  
**P.M. Pre K:**  
12:40 p.m. to 3:10 p.m.

**Early Closing Inclement Weather:**

**Grades K-2:** 8:35 a.m. to 12:55 p.m.

**School Day Preschool Classroom:** 8:35 a.m. to 12:55 p.m.  
**A.M. Pre K:** 8:35 a.m. to 10:35 a.m.      **P.M. Pre K:** Canceled

**Please be aware that emergency closings can occur at any time. We will do all we can to contact parents in the event of an emergency.**

**Telephone Number:** 860-537-0717; **Absentee Line** 860-537-3760; **Fax Number:** 860-537-6573

**CES THEME:** “A Community of Enthusiastic Learners”

**SCHOOL COLORS:** Red and White

**CES LOGO:**



**SCHOOL MASCOT:** Cardinal

**SCHOOL FLAG:** The Colchester Elementary School Flag uses the school colors to depict our logo with the school name above and our theme below.

**SCHOOL WEBSITE:** [www.colchesterct.org](http://www.colchesterct.org) Everyone is encouraged to visit our website to learn more about our school.

**SCHOOL BANNERS:** Colchester Elementary School banners are modeled after our flag and are hung in each classroom.

**SCHOOL MISSION:**

Colchester Elementary School creates a community of enthusiastic learners, fosters growth, celebrates individual differences and establishes a home/school partnership to meet the unique needs of each and every student.

**SCHOOL VISION:**

We at Colchester Elementary School will understand, follow and respect the school rules, teach and learn using rigorous and inspiring curricula enhanced by technology, and strive to be respectful and responsible community members in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **CES: An Elementary School Committed to Making a Difference**

In order to create a community of enthusiastic learners which fosters growth, celebrates individual differences, and encourages cooperation between home and school, we believe that all individuals should be educated so that they may learn to the best of their abilities.

Within this setting, the educational opportunities should ensure that all individuals:

- develop a motivation for life-long learning;
- attain strategies and skills essential for acquiring knowledge and solving problems;
- acquire knowledge leading to the realization of individual potential;
- develop social competence and life skills; and
- attain an understanding of and contribute to society's values.

When experience demonstrates that such a placement disrupts or fails to meet the needs of the individual(s) or others within the setting, to the extent that the attainment of these goals cannot be achieved, then other specialized options and alternatives should be considered and pursued. For special education students, that is determined by the Planning and Placement Team (PPT). It is essential that the school maintains a continuum of services to offer children.

### **To facilitate learning for all students, we will:**

- provide a school environment that promotes a sense of community;
- promote high expectations and standards for all;
- provide access to educational and social services; and
- provide Board approved curriculum to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

There are three school rules, which guide student behavior at CES at all times. These rules are:

- Take Care of Yourself
- Take Care of Each Other
- Take Care of Our School

We support students all year to learn and demonstrate our three school rules. These rules are posted in every classroom and instructional space in our building.

At the heart of the practices in each classroom are:

**Morning Meeting** - gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead

**Rule Creation** - helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals and promote safety

**Interactive Modeling** - teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through a unique modeling technique

**Positive Teacher Language** - using words and tone as a tool to promote children's active learning, sense of community, and self-discipline

**Logical Consequences** - responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity

**Guided Discovery** - introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility

**Academic Choice** - increasing student learning by allowing students teacher-structured choices in their work

**Classroom Organization** - setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students' independence, cooperation, and productivity

**Working with Families** - creating avenues for hearing parents' insights and helping them understand the school's teaching approaches

**Collaborative Problem Solving** - using conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students

The implementation of these practices has positive effects on the lives of children and educators alike. Social curriculum is integrated into academics, creating a sense of personal and community ownership. A consistent approach to discipline is used, involving breaks (opportunities to calm and sit and think about one's behavior), rules and logical consequences, and a silent hand signal. Guided discovery and direct teaching use modeling and instruction, teaching the use of tools, concepts, and skills. We rely on interactive questions and responses. Children become active participants in their learning, involving peer-to-peer and peer-to-teacher learning. Children learn to actively construct information about the world, curriculum, the classroom, materials, approaches to work and social skills. Respectful interactions between students and staff are expected at all times. Morning announcements include reminders about our three rules and we believe that these rules should guide all we do. If a student makes a mistake, she/he should be able to identify which rule he/she broke.

**C.A.R.E.S.** is an important part of who we are and is an acronym for the five character traits that we teach all students. These are:

- C**ooperation
- A**ssertion
- R**esponsibility/Respect
- E**mpathy
- S**elf-Control

An all-school meeting, called a Hopes and Dreams Rally, takes place in September, allowing the school to come together to share our goals for learning and commit to our three school rules. A CES Celebration takes place in June, allowing the school to come together to celebrate our successes as a school in a year of pictures. It is our strong commitment to be the best we can be and to follow our three school rules that help shape CES as a caring "Community of Enthusiastic Learners."

**Statement of Non-Discrimination:** The Colchester Board of Education does not knowingly condone discrimination in any form or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. Inquiries regarding compliance, including receipt and investigation of any complaint alleging discrimination may be directed to the Director of Pupil Services (537-3103), or in her absence, the Superintendent of Schools (537-7267), Colchester Board of Education, 127 Norwich Avenue, Suite 202, Colchester, CT 06415.

## ADMISSION

District schools shall be open to all children five years of age and over who reach age five on or before the first day of January of any school year. (Starting in the 2024-2025 school year, this will be changed to

September.) Each such child shall have, and shall be so advised by the appropriate school authorities, an equal opportunity to participate in the program and activities of the school system without discrimination on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. The Board will not act upon applications of individual students who are seeking admission and do not meet the minimum age requirements as defined by state law.

The parent or person having control of a child five years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is six years of age. The parent or person having control of a child six years of age shall have the option of not sending the child to school until the child is seven years of age. For those opting to wait a year before their child starts school, please fill out the Exemption Form, which is available at the school office.

## **ATTENDANCE**

When a child is absent, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to **call the school by 9:00 a.m., at 860-537-0717, and report the absence. If calling prior to 7:30 a.m., parents may leave a message on the absentee line by calling 860-537-3760.** Students coming in late may also be reported on the absentee line. The phone call should reference the name of the child, classroom teacher, and reason for absence and date(s).

In accordance with the Connecticut State Board of Education and Colchester BOE policy, a student's absence from school will be deemed excused up to and including the ninth absence only if **written documentation** that lists/explains the reason for the absence has been submitted **within ten (10) school days** of the student's return to school. Neither e-mail nor text message shall serve to satisfy the requirement of written documentation. The complete policy can be found on our district website ([www.colchesterct.org](http://www.colchesterct.org)) under Series 5000 Student Attendance, Truancy, and Chronic Absenteeism Regulations.

Upon the tenth absence and any thereafter, a student's absence(s) from school are considered excused for the following reasons only:

1. Student illness (Note: all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional (including our school nurse) to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of absence);
2. Student's observation of a religious holiday;
3. Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;
4. Mandated court appearances (additional documentation is required);
5. Lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation is required for this reason); or
6. Extraordinary educational opportunities that are pre-approved by district administrators and in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education Guidance.

A student's absence from school will be considered unexcused unless one of the following criteria is met:

1. The absence meets the definition of an excused absence (including documentation requirements);  
or
2. The absence is the result of school or district disciplinary actions.
3. Written documentation is not received within 10 days of the student's return to school.

Family vacations during scheduled school days are strongly discouraged. There are 180 school days out of the 365 total days in the year. Please make every effort to schedule vacations over summer break or other school breaks. Appointments are strongly encouraged to be made for before or after school or on days when school is closed. Each minute of schooling risks new learning loss.



A student, age five to eighteen, whose parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the armed forces who has been called for duty, is on leave from or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, shall be granted ten (10) days of excused absences in any school year, and, in the discretion of the administration, additional excused absences to visit such student's parent or legal guardian with respect to the parent's leave or deployment.

Any student five (5) to eighteen (18) years of age, inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year will meet the state definition of truant. The state directs school districts to hold a meeting with parents to review and evaluate the reasons for absences and consider the need for interventions and/or assistance. If there are social, medical, personal or educational concerns that are affecting your child's regular attendance, our school personnel would like to be of assistance to you.

## **BEHAVIOR**

**Positive Behavior Intervention Support** is a process for creating a school environment that is most effective for achieving academic and social goals. The PBIS model is research-based and supported by the State of Connecticut, the Federal Department of Education, and the Colchester Public Schools. The 3-tiered approach reduces problem behavior as a barrier to student achievement.

A key strategy of the PBIS process is prevention. We recognize that the majority of students (Tier I) follow the school's expectations; we therefore work to recognize and promote positive behavior. Through instruction, comprehension and regular practice, all stakeholders use a consistent set of behavior expectations and rules. When some students do not respond to teaching of the behavioral rules, PBIS schools view it as an opportunity to re-teach, not punish.

The CES PBIS School Team developed a system for teaching students the social skills needed to be successful. When problem behavior occurs, students are provided with a full continuum of supports to address behavior needs. These supports can include a conversation with the child, a call home, a letter of apology, and etc. Some students are placed on daily behavior plans that are customized for their needs; others may use a behavior plan that is shared by their classmates or shared by students with similar behavior needs. At CES, we developed a Check-In/Check-Out System that offers students a daily opportunity to review goals and receive reinforcement.

Parents are an important part of PBIS implementation. The school encourages parents to support the same three rules that the school teaches within the home to help foster a common language and create consistent support for expected behaviors.

### **BULLYING Prevention and Intervention (Excerpts from Board of Education Policy 5131 911P)**

*The Colchester Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining safe and positive school climates that are free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. To that end, Colchester school employees are expected to model positive, respectful, and supportive behavior toward students, parents, guardians/caregivers, and staff and help to create a collaborative school atmosphere that promotes appropriate social behavior by students in support of others.*

*Bullying behavior is strictly prohibited, and students who are determined to have engaged in such behavior are subject to disciplinary action, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. The district's commitment to addressing bullying behavior, however, involves a*

multi-faceted approach, which includes education and the promotion of a school atmosphere in which bullying will not be tolerated by students or school staff. The form for reporting suspected mean-spirited behavior is accessible at the back of this handbook.

***In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions or programs, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device.***

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is likewise prohibited.

In accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, and consistent with state and federal law, students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline and/or other appropriate interventions, up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

#### **Definitions of Bullying and Cyberbullying**

***For purposes of this policy, "Bullying" means the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, or a physical act or gesture directed at another student attending school in the same school district that:***

- 1. causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;*
- 2. places such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;*
- 3. creates a hostile environment at school for such student;*
- 4. infringes on the rights of such student at school; or*
- 5. substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.*

*Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, sex, color, religion, ancestry, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.*

*For purposes of this policy, "Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.*

*School employees who witness suspected acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying are required to orally notify the safe school climate specialist, or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives*

*a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report.*

*In addition to prevention and intervention strategies, administrators, teachers and other professional employees should utilize opportunities to educate students about bullying and help eliminate bullying behavior through class discussions, counseling, and reinforcement of socially-appropriate behavior. Administrators, teachers and other professional employees should intervene promptly whenever they observe student conduct that has the purpose or effect of ridiculing, harassing, humiliating or intimidating another student, even if such conduct does not meet the formal definition of “bullying.”*

*The Colchester Board of Education approved the Safe School Climate Plan developed pursuant to this policy and submitted such plan to the Department of Education. The Board has made such plan available on the school district's website and will ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks.*

To report bullying/mean spirited behavior, please call the school or fill out the form on page 37. Reporting can be done anonymously.

### **BUSING and Transportation**

The Colchester Board of Education provides bus transportation to elementary students to designated bus stops. M & J Bus Company (860-537-2622) is under contract to transport Colchester students. Following the rules designed to keep students safe, contributes to a positive busing experience. These rules should be discussed with the children:

1. When waiting at the bus stop for the school bus to arrive, stay out of the road. Do not approach the bus until it has come to a complete stop. If you must cross the street to get on the bus, wait for the driver to signal you that it is safe for you to cross.
2. When you get on the bus, find your assigned seat and remain seated until it is time to get off the bus. Sit facing the front of the bus with your feet on the floor. Do not sit on backpacks or kneel on the seats.
3. Keep your hands and feet to yourself at all times.
4. Talk quietly with students in and around your seat only.
5. Keep your body INSIDE the windows of the bus.
6. Do not throw objects inside or outside the bus.
7. No eating or drinking on the bus as this can lead to choking.
8. Follow any and all instructions that are given to you by the school bus driver.
9. When the bus gets to your stop, stay seated until the bus comes to a complete stop. If you do not see your parent(s) waiting for you, tell the driver that there is nobody at the stop to receive you.

10. Once you get off the bus, move away from the bus immediately. If you have to cross the street, take 10 steps in front of the bus and look up to the driver. The driver will give you a signal when it is safe for you to cross the street.

### **Routes, Stops and Services**

The Board of Education is legally responsible for providing transportation accommodations to resident children. Kindergarten through grade 12 transportation shall be furnished without charge in accordance with state laws. **Hand sanitizer should not be applied on the bus due to allergic reactions.**

Students shall be provided with safe transportation to and from their assigned pick-up/drop-off points and their schools. **Students at CES cannot be dropped off at their stop unless an adult is present and visible to the driver.** If an adult is not present, students are returned to CES until a parent/guardian can be reached.

The Superintendent or his/her designee is responsible for planning and approving bus routes, bus stops, and schedules, including all changes throughout the year, and for arranging special education transportation for students as required. Bus routes shall be published annually.

We discourage idling vehicles, both buses and family automobiles in our parking areas, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.

### **Electronic Use Policy for the School Bus:**

- No electronic devices can be used without headphones or being used on mute
- No electronic devices can be used to take pictures or videos as this violates privacy laws
- Students are not allowed to share headphones or devices
- Drivers will confiscate the device from students that do not comply or if the device is being used inappropriately

**FIRST OFFENSE** – Driver will return the device to the student as they exit the bus (Depending on the severity of the offense.)

**SECOND & SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE** – Parent will be called to pick up the device at the bus terminal or the school

### **Busing/Transportation - Board of Education Policy**

Bus transportation shall be provided to and from the assigned bus stop. All students who are transported shall ride to and from school on buses to which they are assigned. Transportation is not provided for recreational, social, or non-school sponsored after-school activities. Exceptions may be made by school administration only for consistent daycare needs or student employment provided that:

- The child is picked up from the same location every day, Monday through Friday and is dropped off at the same location every day, Monday through Friday. The two locations do not have to be the same.
- A waiver is obtained from the District Transportation Coordinator. This waiver will allow two consistent bus stops solely for daycare due to parent/guardian's employment or continuing education. Students will not be assigned to more than a total of two buses. Verification of employment or course enrollment will be required upon request. Waivers will be valid for one school year providing that all requirements are continuously met. Waivers will be granted by the

District Transportation Coordinator and cannot exceed bus capacity. Parents will receive written notification of waiver decision no later than two weeks after an application has been received.

***FOR EXAMPLE: A student may take the bus from home in the mornings on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and go to his/her daycare provider those afternoons. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings that same student may be picked up from the same daycare provider and take the bus home those afternoons. This schedule shall be adhered to throughout the school year.***

- The parent/guardian submits a “Transportation Form” to the school administration annually.
- The parent/guardian notifies the school administration of permanent changes in the consistent daycare, at least twenty-four hours in advance of the change.

Transportation issues resulting from unanticipated family emergencies shall be handled by the school administration and/or the District’s Transportation Coordinator on a case-by-case basis.

### **LUNCH/BREAKFAST/SNACK at CES**

During this school year, the State of CT is providing a free breakfast for any student. Students pay for their lunch either by the day, week, or month. Lunch is \$3.00. Parents can add money to their child’s account through My Payments Plan Plus.

**Breakfast Program** - There is a breakfast program available to the students from 8:20 to 8:45 a.m. daily, beginning on the first day of school. Menus are available on the website and are part of the Digital Backpack.

**Lunch and Milk Program** - One choice for lunch will be available at the beginning of the year as students learn the routines. Once our little ones can navigate the lunch line, we will provide an additional choice. Menus are available with the prices of lunch items on our website. Students who are lactose intolerant are required to bring a medical note citing the allergy so a different drink may be provided. Lunch is 30 min. in duration.

**Free and Reduced-Price School Meals** - Children need healthy meals to learn. Your child(ren) may qualify for either free or reduced-price meals. All children in households receiving SNAP or TFA benefits are eligible for free meals. To get additional information and an application for free or reduced-price meals, please see our website.

**Food Allergies** - If there is a food allergy in your child’s classroom, you will be alerted of any food restrictions that may be in place to ensure health and safety for all. The “No Sharing” food rule will be enforced and we ask that the students throw away their own trash. Snacks in a peanut free classroom will need to be nut free. Children can eat food with nuts in it when they are in the cafeteria as we designate tables for children who are nut free.

**Snack** - We **strongly** encourage parents to choose healthy snacks (designate the snack from the lunch or package snacks separately from lunches), and send only enough food for a light snack which may be consumed in about 15 minutes. Because of various food allergies, some life-threatening, students should not share their snacks with other students. Students in classes with students with significant peanut allergies receive letters informing them of class food restrictions.

**Celebrations** - Birthday and other celebrations in school are kept to a minimum and food, including sweets, is **not** a part of this due to the rise in allergies. CES has learned to recognize birthdays with items such as songs, pencils, cards, and/or birthday t-shirts. CES does not support the distribution of birthday

invitations on school grounds nor can we distribute student addresses in support of birthday mailings. Do not send in foods to school for any reason other than just your child's snack.

## **COMMUNICATION**

CES views each opportunity to communicate with parents as essential. To keep parents informed, kindergarten teachers write weekly newsletters while teachers in grades one and two write monthly newsletters. Pre-K teachers will write daily group emails. As a school, we share information in various ways. A link to CES' weekly Digital Backpack will be emailed to you with information on upcoming school and district-wide events. Teachers use email, which often is a better way to communicate than a phone call, because phone calls often require more time to return. It is expected that a teacher will return a parent's communication within 24-hours.

As a district we use Parent Square to communicate with parents, including emergency situations (i.e., if school were to be canceled or delayed due to some unforeseen reason such as frozen pipes, no heat or some unexpected non-inclement weather reason).

CES, as well as the three other schools in our district, uses PowerSchool to access and maintain student, staff, and schedule information. (PowerSchool is a database application that uses the Internet to facilitate student information management and communication among school, parents, teachers, and administrators). The PowerSchool Parent Portal is a tool that is integrated into the PowerSchool Student Information System (SIS) and gives parents access via a login to information about their child including attendance.

## **COMPUTERS/iPADs: ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE INTERNET**

All students K-2 are offered computer instruction throughout the school year in which they are exposed to various educational software programs as well as any web-based sites.

Internet access is available in our school. The goal of providing this service is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, collaboration, and communication. This access offers vast, diverse, and unique resources. The use of the Internet, therefore, demands personal responsibility. Students need to learn responsibility for their actions online, as they do in the classroom, home, and community. Therefore, the integrity of computer systems will be maintained. Users may not use the access afforded by the school district to make unauthorized entry to other computing systems, or to damage or alter such systems. The configuration of the school system's computer(s) will not be altered by the user.

## **CONFERENCES**

A minimum of one parent-teacher conference should take place each year for every child who attends our school. The fall conference is mandatory, the spring conference is optional. This year the fall conference day is scheduled to take place on **October 26, 2023**. The spring conference day is scheduled for **March 28, 2024**. The fall conference is scheduled prior to dissemination of the initial report card, of which there are three. All Pre-K-2 parents are asked to schedule a conference during the day scheduled for Parent Conferences in the fall. During the spring conference time, conferences are scheduled on an

as-needed basis. This guideline does not preclude parents from requesting a conference at any time during the school year. Conferences are arranged at mutually convenient times.

## **DIFFERENTIATION: ENRICHING STUDENT LEARNING**

Meeting the social, emotional and educational needs of all students is our goal at CES. This is achieved by differentiating instruction and by using a variety of instructional practices that encourage children to be actively engaged in and facilitating their own learning.

Working collaboratively with specialists and paraprofessionals, teachers are able to maximize opportunities for students to work together both in classrooms and in other learning environments, including the Math and Reading Labs and Media Center.

Students at CES are explicitly taught specific reading strategies that build early foundational skills to enable them to become proficient readers. Instruction is delivered to whole-class and flexible small-groups to meet individual learning needs and allows time for independent reading for students to practice their skills. Students read and listen to high-interest complex texts daily utilizing the Wonders Reading Program and get opportunities to read and talk about texts with partners. Our curriculum meets the requirements for the [“Right to Read” legislation](#). We focus on phonological awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. Eureka Math is used in PK-2. Our learners receive approximately 90 minutes of reading instruction and 60 minutes of math each day.

Classroom teachers effectively immerse enrichment activities into classroom instruction, leading students to use higher order thinking skills and multiple intelligences. Teachers design lessons taking into account individual learning styles, interests, strengths and areas in need of development. Teachers create tiered lessons to build on students’ learning and encourage students to extend their learning beyond the classroom. The arts are used to support academia.

As a staff, CES works to prepare children for higher grade levels. We recognize the need to stimulate the thinking of students, to encourage them to develop their interests, and to further their comprehension skills. It is the school’s belief that parents play an important role in extending students’ interests and activities beyond the school day; after all, parents are our most valuable partners.

## **DISCIPLINE**

At CES, appropriate social behavior is encouraged and expected at all times. A proactive approach to rules and a logical consequences approach to what happens when the rules are broken, provides the school with the means for teaching social skills throughout the school day. Consistency around rules and discipline provides all children and adults with a sense of safety and security when behavior becomes an issue. Inappropriate behavior infringes upon other students and the teacher, thereby disrupting the learning process and environment. Proactive discipline strategies are modeled and expected. However, each teacher has the authority to remove a student from class when the student causes a serious disruption of the education process within the classroom.

### **A child may be removed from the classroom for any of the following reasons:**

1. Intentionally disrupting the safety of others and/or conduct procedures of the school
2. Repeatedly and intentionally defying the authority of teachers, paraprofessionals or administrators
3. Verbally being disrespectful
4. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to school property, stealing or attempting to steal school property

5. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause damage to private property, stealing or attempting to steal private property
6. Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical abuse to another person.
7. Using profane or obscene language
8. Repeatedly refusing to complete school assignments
9. Knowingly using or copying the academic work of another and presents it as his/her own
10. Knowingly possessing or transmitting any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object
11. Knowingly possessing, using, transmitting, or is under the influence of any narcotic drug, hallucinogenic drug, amphetamine, barbiturate, marijuana, tobacco, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind

**BEHAVIOR REFERRALS:** If a student receives a behavior referral, the teacher and/or administrator will take one or more of the following actions after the alleged incident has been investigated:

1. Conference with the student
2. Parent notification/conference
3. Official warning to student giving the student notice of possible action to be taken if behavior continues
4. Lunch detention
5. Parent/student/administrator conference
6. Time out (supervised)
7. Loss of privilege

Factors that will be considered when determining consequences may include but are not limited to:

- \*severity of the behavior
- \*prior referrals/behavior of the student
- \*age/grade level of the student
- \*teacher or parent recommendation

The primary goal of the teachers and administrators is to ensure that students receive the best possible education during their tenure at CES. This goal can only be reached if students are in school every possible moment. Therefore, it is the policy that any student experiencing problems, whether social or academic, will not be denied this right to a maximum education experience. It is believed that to deny a student any phase of the instructional program is to not act in the best interest of that student. According to Commissioner Wentzell's memorandum dated June 15, 2017, the following overview of suspensions was provided:

**Preschool:** Under the applicable statutes, amended by Public Act 15-96, in cases where a school has determined that a suspension is necessary for a child attending certain preschool programs, an out-of-school suspension is prohibited; only an in-school suspension may be imposed. C.G.S. 10-2331, which was enacted specifically to address the use of exclusionary discipline in preschools, categorically prohibits the use of out-of-school suspension for students attending preschool programs operated by local or regional boards of education, charter schools or interdistrict magnet schools.

**Kindergarten to Grade 2:** For students in kindergarten to Grade 2, C.G.S 10-233c provides that an out-of-school suspension may be used only in situations involving conduct on school grounds. An out-of-school suspension is permissible only if it is determined that such a suspension is appropriate based on evidence that the student's conduct was of a violent or sexual nature that endangers persons. In all other situations, the law requires the school to use an in-school suspension.



## **DISMISSAL & PARENT PICK-UP**

Parent pick-up at the end of the school day will be in the gym for all children K-2. Any student with a legal document that restricts who they can be accompanied by, will be in the school office. Parent pick-up for preschool sessions will be through the PK hall doors. School ends at 3:15 and parent pick up will begin at that time. If you need to pick your child up earlier, please pick him/her up in the office.

Students are required to bring notes from home for special dismissal which must be submitted in the morning in order to be accurately processed. When picking up students, park only in identified parking spaces. **Do not park in any space identified as a fire lane. DO NOT PARK IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL OFFICE.** Students are dismissed to parents or designated individuals only. At the end of the day, parents should report at dismissal time directly to the gym doors for child pick-up. Only on rare occasions are children dismissed to parents from the classrooms or bus lines. Parents/guardians are asked to “sign-out” their children. **Identification will be required of all adults who sign out children and enter our building.**

**When a student is to be excused prior to dismissal time, he/she must bring a note from home requesting that he/she be excused. If this is the case, parents or guardians should pick children up in the office.**

Students are strongly encouraged to ride their assigned buses to and from school and are requested not to walk to school. Bike riding is also prohibited as it presents a danger to the students’ safety. No area or equipment is provided for the storage and security of bicycles.

## **DRESS CODE**

In general, attire and grooming of individual students in this school system are the responsibility of the students and their parents. Students’ should be neat and clean. Students’ attire/hygiene must be neat, clean and appropriate for the business of school. They are expected to dress so that they don’t distract other students or teachers, disrupt the educational process, or pose a health or safety threat to anyone. We specifically request that students not wear flip-flops or sneakers with rollers.

**CES students must adhere to the following guidelines:**

- Sandals should have back straps (no flip flops).
- Shoes should have solid soles (no rollers).
- Messages or pictures on clothing should be respectful. Clothing may not contain profanity or make references to drugs, alcohol, tobacco, sexual behavior, or firearms.
- Clothing must cover the midriff and be no shorter than mid-thigh.
- Clothing that is appropriate for the weather. (We will not allow students to go out for recess in cold weather if they do not have appropriate outerwear. Jackets can be obtained by our school nurse when needed.)
- Hats and other headwear may only be worn outside.

If a student’s attire is judged to be a distraction or disruptive, every attempt will be made by staff or administration to provide alternate clothing. A letter informing the parents of the policy infraction will be sent home with the student. Administration will have final determination of what is acceptable attire and/or hygiene and will take appropriate action.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM**

Colchester Public Schools provides the Colchester Early Childhood Program (CECP). The CECP is a preschool learning opportunity provided to eligible 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children residing in Colchester. The goal of Colchester Public School's CECP is to provide an early childhood preschool education to eligible children to promote their growth and development so that they are ready to enter kindergarten. Focused learning areas include: language; social skills; problem-solving; early literacy, math and science; as well as the development of gross and fine motor skills. The CECP is accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which is a hallmark of quality.

The CECP consists of three distinct programs, all of which have their own eligibility. Those programs include:

- ✓ School Readiness which provides an early education to 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children who meet the eligibility requirements;
- ✓ Early Childhood Special Education which provides a classroom program for some 3-, 4-, and 5-year -old children who: (a) are found eligible to need special education because of a disability and (b) have a frequency and intensity of need that requires that an early childhood setting serve as the intervention context; and
- ✓ Colchester's Early Childhood Lottery that provides an additional opportunity for an early childhood preschool education to 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children living in Colchester.

*Once accepted into any of the three programs offered through the CECP, children must be registered for school and follow district policy.*

### **School Readiness**

#### What is the School Readiness?

School Readiness is a state-funded early childhood preschool education opportunity. Colchester Public Schools is able to offer a School Readiness Program through the CECP because the school district, in collaboration with C3, the Collaborative for Colchester's Children, applied for and received a state grant to provide an early childhood preschool education to twenty-two (18) 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children. Transportation to and from this program is not provided by the school district.

#### Who is Eligible for School Readiness?

Children must be 3- or 4-years of age, or age 5 and not yet eligible for a public school education in kindergarten. In addition, priority is given to families whose income is less than 75% of the state median income.

#### How Do I Access the School Readiness Program?

Families need to complete a [School Readiness application](#). That application is available at Colchester Elementary School or through the [Collaborative for Colchester's Children \(C3\)](#). A completed application needs to be submitted to Cindy Praisner in the C3 office at Colchester Elementary School. Applications are assigned "points" based on the School Readiness Admission Rubric that identifies risk factors such as English Language Learners, parent's education level, family composition, other services received, etc. Parents need to resubmit an application each year up to the age of eligibility for kindergarten in order to continue in the School Readiness program.

### **Early Childhood Special Education**

#### What is Early Childhood Special Education?

Early Childhood Special Education is the early public education provided to 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children with identified disabilities that are found to require special education in order to access, participate and benefit from an education with typically developing peers.

### How are Children Found Eligible for Early Childhood Special Education?

Colchester Public Schools brings together the child's parent(s) and a group of qualified individuals to determine children's eligibility for special education. That group is called a planning and placement team (PPT). The PPT meets to discuss concerns about a child, designs an evaluation and then meets to discuss the results of the evaluation. It is the PPT, along with the child's parent(s) who will determine if the child is eligible for special education. If the child is eligible, the PPT goes on to develop an individualized education program (IEP) for the child that will include the specific goals and objectives that will be addressed as well as the individuals who will provide the special education services. That IEP will also represent whether the child requires a particular frequency, intensity and/or duration of services and how those services should be provided.

### Who is Eligible for Early Childhood Special Education?

Children are found eligible for special education if they have one or more of the following disabilities **AND** the PPT determination that the child requires special education:

- ✓ Autism
- ✓ Hearing Impairment, including Deafness or Hard of Hearing
- ✓ Intellectual Disability
- ✓ Specific Learning Disability, including Dyslexia
- ✓ Multiple Disabilities
- ✓ Orthopedic Impairments
- ✓ Emotional Disturbance
- ✓ Speech or Language Impairment
- ✓ Traumatic Brain Injury
- ✓ Visual Impairment, including Blindness
- ✓ Deaf-Blindness
- ✓ Other Health Impairment, Including Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
- ✓ Development Delay (only for children 3-, 4- and 5-years of age)

### How Do I Access Early Childhood Special Education?

If a parent or other person is concerned about a child's growth and development, a referral can be made to the Colchester Public Schools' Department of Special Education and Pupil Services. Developmental screenings are conducted through CECP to identify if a child is or may be eligible for special education. To arrange an appointment, please complete the [Preschool Screenings Registration Form](#). Additional questions regarding special education should be directed to the Director of Pupil Services and Special Education at (860) 537-3103.

## **Colchester's Early Childhood Lottery**

### What is the Colchester Early Childhood Lottery?

Colchester Public Schools provides an additional opportunity for 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children to obtain an early childhood preschool education at the CECP. Transportation to and from the CECP is not provided.

### Who is Eligible for the Early Childhood Lottery?

Children must be 3- 4-years of age, or age 5 and not yet eligible for a public school education in kindergarten. Children and their families must be residents of Colchester.

### How Do I Access the Early Childhood Lottery?

Families need to complete an application. Applications must be submitted by January 31 to be considered for acceptance in the following school year. The application is available at the Colchester Elementary School office or through the [Colchester Elementary School website](#) at Colchesterct.org under the Colchester Early Childhood Program tab. A completed application needs to be submitted. The lottery is

drawn once per year in February. A child accepted through the lottery can continue in the CECP until entry into kindergarten.

**Statement of Non-Discrimination:** The Colchester Board of Education does not knowingly condone discrimination in any form or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. Inquiries regarding compliance, including receipt and investigation of any complaint alleging discrimination may be directed to the Director of Pupil Services (537-3103), or in her absence, the Superintendent of Schools (537-7267), Colchester Board of Education, 127 Norwich Avenue, Suite 202, Colchester, CT 06415.

All children benefit from an inclusive education by:

- Making friends and learning from peers
- Participating in enriched, challenging preschool activities
- Engaging in opportunities for social interaction in a small setting
- Developing more accepting attitudes and respect for individual differences

The objectives of the program are to:

- Encourage social communication skills
- Promote positive social interaction among peers
- Facilitate children's ability to make choices and problem solve
- Provide opportunities for development of a positive self-image
- Enhance social/emotional, cognitive, physical, and language development
- Promote home-school partnerships that are essential to the maximization of learning

It is not necessary for children to be toilet trained. Teaching proper use of the toilet is part of our daily routine. Parents will be required to send in diapers and wipes as needed.

**Staffing:** Each class is staffed with highly educated professionals in regular education and special education. They are supported by two speech and language pathologists, an occupational therapist, and a physical therapist. In addition, each classroom has a minimum of one paraprofessional. Each classroom has 20 students or less and with at least 3 adults per classroom, the staff to student ratio is 1:7. To ensure that the staff to student ratio is maintained in all environments throughout the day, staff keep child supervision records, transition logs, head counts, attendance records, and sign-in and sign-out sheets. Each year, all staff participate in professional development for a minimum of 15 hours that ensures the most current knowledge on quality early childhood programming.

#### **ARRIVAL and DEPARTURE PROCEDURES**

Parents dropping off and picking up may park in the parking lot located directly outside the CECP wing. Preschool drop off and pick up times will be staggered to allow for a more quiet and calm transition into the building.

Students with Individualized Education Programs may receive special transportation as a related service. These students are transported by van in appropriately sized car/booster seats depending on his/her height and weight. An adult in the home or daycare must assist the student in getting in the van and ensure that he/she is buckled into the car/booster seat appropriately. The van driver cannot leave the driver's seat or assist with buckling students at any time. Upon arrival at school, a CECP staff member will help them off. Students will be held by the hand and led into the preschool wing. A CECP staff member will ensure that each preschooler arrives at his/her locker, hangs up his/her coat and backpack, and then enters the classroom. We discourage idling vehicles, including vans, buses and family automobiles) in our parking areas, except if vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures.

Those children departing by van will be escorted from the classroom to the van. The children will then be assisted into their assigned car seat and properly secured. The van will bring the child to his/her designated location where an adult will be required to meet the van and remove the child from the car seat. The van driver cannot leave the driver's seat or physically assist the students.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Our Authorization to Release form requires that you identify one person who will usually pick up your child. In the case of any emergency or unpredictable circumstances, the other individuals designated on this form will be allowed to pick up your child. The staff must receive a note signed by the parent/guardian or a phone call, which includes the name of the person to whom you are allowing us to release your child. The staff will require proof of identification (i.e., valid photo driver's license). The individuals authorized to pick up your child must be at least 18 years or older and will be responsible for your child once they leave the classroom. CECP will follow any court ordered custody arrangements and will not release children to adults appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances.

### **PROGRAM EVALUATION**

Information about our program is gathered through participation in professional development, NAEYC family surveys and self assessment tools, and the Connecticut School Readiness Preschool Program Evaluation System (CSRPPES). Upon completion of the Family Surveys, results are tabulated and an action plan is created to address those areas in need of improvement. A weekly program staff meeting is held to engage in a reflective process, and to plan for programmatic improvement.

### **NEGOTIATING DIFFICULTIES & DIFFERENCES**

Some conflict can be prevented when we build relationships with families based on a willingness to listen to hear about who they are and what they want for their children. We start conversations that will help us understand where families are coming from and how we can effectively and respectfully engage and communicate with them. Of course, conflicts can occur over numerous issues, and when such conflicts arise, the following procedures should be followed. The family will raise the concern or difference to the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher will take time to think about how the family feels about the issue and get clarity on the reasons behind such feelings. The classroom teacher will listen carefully to the family's concern with respect and an attitude of wanting to understand the issue. Next, the classroom teacher will ask questions to get to the real sources of conflict or misunderstanding for the family, the child, or staff member. The classroom teacher will ask questions that seek to clarify and will allow families to ask questions to understand the program's point of view. Once the issues have been defined, the classroom teacher and family will seek out the common ground by stating their areas of greatest importance to each other. The classroom teacher and family will negotiate around the areas of important agreement and boundaries and come to a resolution that addresses the major concerns. If at this point the classroom teacher and family cannot find common ground, school administration will become involved to help resolve the conflict using the conflict resolution techniques listed above.

### **CECP CHILD INFORMATION**

#### **A. ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance ensures steady growth in the development of desirable habits and attitudes. Being in school regularly except in case of illness is as important in preschool as it is in the upper grades. Frequent absences tend to lessen the child's interest in school experiences and make his/her social adjustments more difficult.

Children accepted through the lottery or School Readiness process may jeopardize their placement if unexcused absences become excessive (50% of classes missed in one month).

Punctuality is also an important factor in the school life of a child. Please make every effort to drop off and pick up your child on time.

## **B. DRESS FOR PLAY**

Your child will be involved in many hands-on activities. Messy projects sometimes require a change of clothing. An extra set of labeled clothing should be left in their locker at the preschool. Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes and rubber soled shoes or sneakers. Outdoor play is very important for children and an integral part of our program. Please be sure to dress your child properly for the weather/season (e.g., boots, mittens, hats etc.). Be sure to label all outerwear such as sweaters, coats, and boots.

## **C. PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

The preschool is well stocked with a variety of fun and developmentally appropriate toys. Although we understand that children like to bring special toys to school, we need to restrict this practice to certain days. Children often find it difficult to share personal items. This rule also prevents loss or breakage. If your child needs to bring a special security item to school, please discuss this with your child's teacher. Occasionally, children will bring toys home from school. If this occurs, kindly return them to us.

## **D. SNACKS & BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

The preschool will provide milk and water to accompany a snack you provide your child. Please send the snack to school in a ziplock bag or lunch box (labeled with the child's name). Refrigeration of snacks is not possible, so please include an ice pack if you think it is necessary. Your child will have the option of eating snacks during our classroom time. If your child chooses not to eat a snack, it will be returned to you. CECP teaching staff will not withhold, or threaten to withhold, snacks as a form of discipline.

We are a peanut-free environment in preschool. Because of peanut allergies among some of our preschoolers, we are requesting that you do not send in foods to school for any reason other than just your child's snack. We cannot share food. If your child has other special dietary restrictions, please put his/her needs into writing and submit them to the nurse or administration. We enjoy celebrating birthdays from a literacy perspective rather than with food. The class members will all be involved in creating a special keepsake for your child.

In keeping with our NAEYC requirements for accreditation, we ask that you do not send in nuts, hard pretzels, raw peas, spoonfuls of peanut butter, whole grapes (please cut in half or quarters), hot dogs, chunks of raw carrots, popcorn, or meats larger than can be swallowed whole. NAEYC believes these to be a choking hazard for young children.

## **E. RECESS**

Outdoor play provides many developmental opportunities for our children. The children at the CECP will have outdoor recess every school day except in extreme temperatures or inclement weather. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather, especially with boots during snowy or wet days. Always put your child's name on any clothing so it can be identified easily. Most often we will be outside for 30 minutes or less. When outdoor large-motor activities are not possible because of weather conditions, the program will provide similar activities inside.

## **F. SUNSCREEN**

If you have concerns regarding your child's exposure to sun rays we encourage you to apply sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher to exposed skin before your child comes to school. The parents are responsible for applying their child's sunscreen.

## **G. DISCIPLINE**

At CECP, we recognize that shaping student positive behavior at school is an important part of their school experience. We begin by implementing the standards of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) in our classrooms to teach students about behavioral expectations, recognize positive behavior, and celebrate students who implement our three school rules. Below is a statement from our family handbook:

At the core of all instruction are three school rules infused into the curriculum and throughout the school day: **Take care of yourself; Take care of each other; Take care of our school.** These three simple rules are posted throughout our building and serve as the cornerstone of our mission to help young children develop and learn. As a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support school, a safe and supportive climate for student learning is provided. We recognize that behavior and academics must be integrated in order for children to be successful. We focus on **C.A.R.E.S.** character traits of **Cooperation, Assertion, Respect/Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control.**

To support students who are struggling with social/emotional and/or behavioral challenges, our staff can gain additional ideas and feedback through the use of the Student Teacher Assistance Team (STAT). A team of educators meet weekly to discuss learners who need additional support beyond what the classroom teacher has used thus far. Behavioral data is presented and supports that have already been provided are discussed as well as their impact on the student. Other strategies and goals for the student are then discussed and recommended if necessary. The plans are shared with parents.

The next level of behavioral support includes conducting a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) which is completed in conjunction with our Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), school psychologist, and/or school social worker. Parent permission is obtained before an FBA is completed. Once completed, either the STAT team or PPT review the FBA with the parents and a Behavior Intervention Plan is created that includes positive behavior support strategies. This plan is implemented and data is collected to measure its success.

The entire preschool staff uses positive methods of discipline which encourage self-control, decision making, cooperation and positive self-esteem. A child will never, under any circumstances, be physically punished, humiliated, or threatened. Staff may never use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. These practices are prohibited.

Positive and individualized relationships are built between teachers and children. We provide consistent, predictable care through frequent social interactions, acceptance of and support for a wide range of emotions, and support and acknowledgement that all children are capable and resourceful. All staff are trained to interact appropriately with

young children by communicating at their level, protecting them from harm, providing age appropriate activities, encouraging socialization, and managing in a gentle manner.

Colchester Elementary School and Colchester Early Childhood Program's goal is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures. We approach discipline as a teachable moment and use proactive strategies. We infuse positive behavioral interventions and support into our practices and staff training. Exclusionary measures are not considered until all other possible interventions have been exhausted, and there is agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child. If exclusionary measures must be taken, assistance will be offered to the family in accessing services and finding alternative placement.

It is important that staff understand each child's unique personality, pace of development, and respond to each individual need. Children are shown respect through listening, answering questions, engaging in meaningful conversations, and acknowledging students' accomplishments.

If a child is struggling or showing developmental weaknesses, the family will be invited to work with the teachers to create a plan that encourages positive behavior at both school and home.

## **H. CHILD ASSESSMENT**

The Colchester Early Childhood Program uses the CT ELDS as the teaching standards and CT DOTs Assessment as part of the assessment of each child's growth. The framework is organized into four domains of development to guide learning opportunities: personal and social, physical, cognitive, and creative expression. This assessment is completed on all students three times per year to assist in monitoring student progress and influence curriculum goals and objectives. Families are invited to provide assessment information based on their observations as well.

Our staff is provided with training and professional development in the CT DOTs and other assessments we use. After each assessment is completed, the results are shared in written and/or verbal form in the language that the family is most comfortable.

Assessment data is a key factor when planning a child's educational program, as well as adapting teacher practices and the learning environment. The CT DOTs data collection program allows for assessment information to influence curriculum goals and objectives. Individual student profiles and class profiles provide a visual representation of a child's or class's skills. Teachers address curriculum areas that the profiles indicate as in need of more learning opportunities. Review of the profiles also assists in identifying who may need modifications and what those modifications may entail. Profiles are reviewed periodically to ensure that all students are progressing in the four domains.

The Early Screening Inventory is the developmental screening that is used to evaluate language, cognitive, gross motor, fine motor, and social and emotional development. If students enter through the lottery or School Readiness and haven't been screened before, they are screened within the first month of entering the program. Through the screening process, the team is able to determine if they should refer the child for further evaluations through special education, rescreen, or if the child is considered "ok."

Both the CECP Data Team and Student Teacher Assistance Team (STAT) meet regularly to discuss student and/or classroom progress toward achieving these benchmarks. The



Data Team consists of classroom teachers (regular and special education), speech language pathologists, and paraprofessionals from all of our classrooms. The STAT team is comprised of a teacher and an appropriate colleague (SLP, reading consultant, special education teacher.) Teams assist with identifying and prioritizing the needs of students or classes, planning for meeting these individual or class needs, and reviewing these plans to determine if further intervention is necessary. Teams may use the assessment information to make suggestions about which benchmarks might be an appropriate focus, modifications to current classroom activities, or modifications to ensure success of individual students.

A formal update on progress is sent to families via a progress report three times a year. Families have the opportunity to ask their child's teacher if the assessment methods, Classroom-based assessments, standardized tests, developmental screenings, diagnostic evaluations, etc, will meet their child's needs.

## **I. TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN**

Activities to help children transition to kindergarten begin in the winter of each year. Enrollment information and a [Kindergarten Brochure](#) are shared with families after enrollment. Opportunities include Kindergarten Story Times which are half hour sessions to introduce children and their parents to the curriculum and the registration process. Children in the CECP are introduced to the Kindergarten classrooms in a walk through to the Kindergarten wing, and their parents meet the Kindergarten teachers in a Meet and Greet held just prior to the start of the school year. Parents and children are also invited to attend the Kindergarten Orientation meeting held in the spring. Pertinent records on each child will be transferred to the administration prior to entering Kindergarten.

Parents are encouraged to register their preschooler for Kindergarten as early as possible in the school year prior to the year they are eligible. Parents of children eligible for Kindergarten who elect not to send their children need to complete a state form and submit it to the school acknowledging their decision to hold their child out of school for the year.

## **J. CONFIDENTIALITY**

We shall maintain confidentiality and shall respect the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. As parents/guardians share information about their families and children, we consider this information to plan and implement their child's program. Disclosure of children's records beyond family members, program personnel, and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality shall require parental consent (except in cases of abuse or neglect). We request that all families maintain the same principles of confidentiality among each other or when consulting with teachers in private situations. Our goal is to create a climate of trust among all parties to act in the best interest of the children. The approved policy regarding confidentiality can be located in the Board of Education Policy 5125, (a)-(c). The content of each child's health and safety file is confidential but is immediately available upon request to administrators and educators who have consent from a parent or legal guardian to access the records, The child's parents or legal guardians, and Regulatory authorities.

## **MEDICAL/HEALTH INFORMATION and HEALTH HABITS**

The preschooler should:

1. be working on appropriate toileting skills.
2. cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing and know how to use tissues and wash hands afterwards.
3. keep fingers and objects away from the nose, mouth, eyes, and ears.
4. be well rested in order to take an active part in all learning experiences.

Preschoolers will wash their hands:

- \* upon entering the classroom,
- \* before eating,
- \* before water play,
- \* after using the bathroom, and
- \* after coughing or sneezing.

In addition to preschoolers, all parents and staff are also required to wash their hands upon entry to the classroom. Hand washing procedures are posted in each classroom.

## **PARENT INFORMATION**

### **A. PARENT ORIENTATION**

In the spring of each school year, after the peer lottery has been selected, there is a parent orientation for all incoming and recently enrolled families. Families of currently enrolled students are always welcome as well. The presentation gives an overview of the CEC program and provides an opportunity for families to ask questions and meet the staff.

### **B. PARENT COMMUNICATION & INVOLVEMENT**

A primary goal of the preschool is to maintain close communication between home and school. The classroom teachers and support staff maintain contact with parents through verbal updates, notes, phone conversations, conferences, and group meetings. In addition, a note entitled "My Day" is e-mailed or sent home each day the child attends school. A digital backpack (an e-mail containing a variety of notices about school and community activities) is also emailed to families weekly. Preschool newsletters are also sent home monthly. These notices offer information about preschool events, parenting tips, home activities, behavioral expectations, rules, and routines.

Parents and guardians are welcome to visit and observe the program and are also encouraged to volunteer in the classroom. In addition, families are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities, including Open House, family nights, New Parent Orientation, Annual Reviews, and Parent/Teacher Conferences. Presentation of proper identification will be required.

Individual conferences, for the purpose of updating parents regarding their child's progress, are scheduled at least semi-annually for all students. Parents or staff may request a conference at any time.

A family survey developed by NAEYC is administered each year to provide feedback about the program. Parents are involved in tallying responses as well as developing plans to

ensure appropriate improvements are made. Opportunities for parenting education and other support activities are provided through our Readiness Council.

Information is sent home about securing medical insurance, and about school based dental health services that are provided through the United Community and Family Services. The on-site school nurse maintains health records and ensures that immunizations and physical exams are current.

Students in the CEC Program have access to literacy programs provided by the CES Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). In addition various classroom projects that involve literacy activities are shared and circulated through the families. Information regarding accessing adult education programs and public library programs are available through the family resource center (housed in CES) as well as the family waiting area in the CECP wing. The family waiting area has a small library with booklets related to parenting, behavior, and child development that is available to all parents. In addition, the CES Media Center has a more extensive collection of parenting resources available to any of our families.

### **EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS**

Parents must provide a means to be contacted in case of emergency. It is vital that the school be informed immediately in writing of any changes in address, phone number, or place of employment if any of the information changes, including the emergency numbers or the names of the people who should be contacted in case of an emergency. **Please remember to update this information at any point in a school year that this information changes.** Parents are able to update their information through the online parent portal at <https://colchester.powerschool.com/public/home.html>. It is expected that the parent/guardian will make any necessary changes for each child and return the signed forms to the school as soon as possible, as it may be necessary for us to contact you as soon as the first day of school.

### **EVENING ACTIVITIES**

All children **must** be accompanied by an adult at all school activities taking place after school hours (evening). Students are **not** to be dropped off. They are to stay in the company of and be supervised by the adult. Behavioral expectations for evening events are the same expectations in place during the school day. Students should display their best behavior at all times. **If a student is absent from school, he/she may not participate in an evening school event on the same day.**

If a student is reporting that he/she is separated from his/her family during an after school/evening event, the following procedures will be used by the administrator or staff who have received the report:

**The school staff, administration and all available staff will:**

- Have the child remain with the adult. Ask them who they came with and where they last saw their caregiver. Do not allow them to leave.
- Use the intercom to make an announcement that the caregiver/family should report to the office. Have a staff member stationed at the office to meet them there.
- Check with the child to determine the last time they were seen and if they mentioned anything about their plans.

- Use PowerSchool to locate information about the family. Try calling the parent’s cell phone.
- Remain with the child until the caregiver/family is located and the child is reunited.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

As part of the educational program, field trips are taken to various points of interest and most likely occur in the fall and spring. Such trips are carefully planned by the teachers and are directly related to the curricula and/or are an extension of classroom learning experiences. Trips are supervised by teachers and chaperones. Children taking field trips are required to have permission slips signed by their parents/guardians.

When attending school field trips, parent chaperones are requested to:

1. follow appropriate teacher dress codes;
2. remember that smoking is prohibited at all school functions and in the presence of students;
3. help maintain excellent behavior on the part of CES students;
4. act as role models and conduct themselves accordingly at all times, and
5. not use a cell phone unless in an emergency and **never** to publish or take pictures or videos of any student(s).

All parent volunteers must have completed a Volunteer Application and have it on file with the district. Applications can be found on the district website under the “District” tab and at schools. Please submit applications in advance of volunteering to allow time for reviewing at the schools and Board of Education. Applications will be valid for the school year of submission.

## **FIRE DRILLS**

Fire drills are held at least seven times a year to prepare all students and teachers to leave the building as quickly as possible should any possible emergency arise. Absolute silence is maintained at all times in leaving the building to prevent confusion. Teachers accompany their students out of the building according to a plan. Pupils proceed in orderly lines, and after moving a safe distance from the building, turn and face away from the school. During a fire drill, all students, staff and visitors leave the building.

## **HEALTH**

**School Nurse:** A school nurse is in attendance daily. We have the services of one nurse and one nurse paraprofessional. It is a duty of the nurse to keep an accurate record of the students’ health and development.

**Administration of Medication:** Medication will be given by the school nurse or school personnel, only in compliance with State of Connecticut Regulations. **DO NOT SEND MEDICATION TO SCHOOL WITH CHILDREN.** Parents/guardians are responsible for bringing medications to and from school. Medication is to be brought into school in the original, labeled container. Cross reference Medication Policy (5141.21). Loose medication will not be accepted.

**Absolutely no medications** (prescription or non-prescription) **will be given for any reason without the doctor's authorization stating the name of the drug, dosage, method, and time the medication is to be given. This is a state law which must be strictly enforced.**

**Stay at Home Guidelines:** Colchester Public Schools understands that deciding when a child or family member is too sick to go to school or work can be a difficult decision. When trying to decide, use the guidelines below and seek the advice of your health care provider. Anyone with the following symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test should not attend school or work.

**Symptoms-** can vary, but symptoms may include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever equal to or above 100 degrees
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- New loss of taste or smell

If students or family members experience any of the above symptoms, please stay home and contact your health care provider for further instruction. Students or staff experiencing COVID-19 symptoms will be sent home.

Colchester Public Schools will continue to support students or staff with acute or chronic health issues. Long-term absences may be evaluated if criteria are appropriate for medical leave, other potential medical accommodations (IEP, IHP, 504, Homebound).

Sending sick children to school is not in the best interest of the child or their classmates. Children should not be given any medications such as: Tylenol, Motrin or Advil prior to school to reduce fever. Any child who has vomited or had diarrhea and/or a fever within 24 hours should not be sent to school.

**Special Circumstances:** If a physician has ordered a special medical management procedure for a child in care, an adult trained in the procedure will be on-site at all times. Examples of special medical management procedures include, Asthma action plan (use of a nebulizer), allergy action plan (use of an Epi-Pen), diabetes management plan (insulin monitoring and injections), etc. A certified nurse is on duty whenever children are in the building.

**Peanut-free Classrooms:** Each grade level may have at least one peanut-free classroom. The only way to ensure a safe environment is to make the classroom PEANUT, TREE NUT, AND PEANUT OIL FREE. To do this we need everyone's cooperation. We request that you do not send in any food for a classroom snack which contains peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter or peanut oil. Please take caution in selecting snacks. Certain snack items may have a separate nut warning because peanuts may be contained in the coating on the food (i.e. M&M's or Reese's Pieces). We ask for your assistance in communicating with your child about not sharing food at lunch or snack with other classmates. NO SHARING of snacks will be allowed.

**Pediculosis (head lice):** Any student found to have live pediculosis (head lice) will be dismissed from school. The student will not be allowed to return to school or use school transportation until he/she has been treated with appropriate medicated shampoo and found to be free of live head lice by the school nurse. Students found to have nits (eggs) will be allowed to remain in school. The student's parent/guardian will be notified and advised regarding appropriate treatment. The school nurse will check any student believed to be infested by pediculosis (head lice).

**Other Communicable Diseases:** All students with symptoms suspicious of communicable diseases will be sent home and referred to a physician. Antibiotics for a contagious illness, such as strep throat, shall be given at least 24 hours prior to student's return to school. Children will also need to be picked up from school due to:

- fever above 100°F (taken orally)
- vomiting and/or diarrhea
- nosebleed at dismissal time
- injuries requiring additional medical evaluation and/or treatment, or
- too ill to comfortably remain in the classroom.

If a child is kept home because of illness, parents should notify the office immediately if the illness is diagnosed as communicable.

**Health/Immunization Record:** State statutes mandate a child **cannot** be admitted into a school system without proper health/immunization records. For a list of immunization requirements, contact the school nurse or go to:

[IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS IN CONNECTICUT SCHOOLS](#)

**Physical Examination:** It is necessary for newly enrolled preschool and kindergarten students to have a physical examination **within the year before entry**. School entrance will be denied unless physical examination records and or immunization are complete.

**Vision and Hearing Screening:** Vision screening is done annually on all school children. Hearing tests are given in grades K through 2, and more frequently when indicated. Retests shall be given to those students failing the initial hearing and/or vision test. Referrals in writing shall be sent to parents of all students failing the re-screening examination. The school hearing/vision testing is a basic screening procedure. For specific concerns and in-depth evaluation, please call your child's primary care physician.

#### **Additional Information:**

**Change of Clothes:** Children need to dress appropriately for the weather and ground conditions. The children go outdoors for recess year round. Every child should have a gallon-size ziplock baggie in their backpack or cubby with a change of clothes (including socks and underwear) in case of bathroom, mud puddle or food/drink accidents.

**P.E. Excuse:** An excuse from physical education class for one day may be authorized by the school nurse upon request of the parents. Any student unable to participate in physical education class due to injury and or illness will also be excused from outdoor recess. An excuse for more than one day must be the written request of a physician. In addition, **the following situations are cause for student exclusion from P.E. and recess: casts, crutches and splints, ace wraps, slings, stitches, staples and glue used for wound closure.** Clearance to resume P.E./recess **is authorized per doctor's note only.** Orthopedic permission to resume P.E./recess after cast removal **per doctor's note only.**

## **HOMEWORK**

BOE policy states that average nightly homework for students in grades K-2 shall not exceed 20 minutes per night. ***Parents of children in preschool- grade 2 are encouraged to read to or with their child nightly.***

Listed below are a few helpful hints you can use to foster the love of reading. Please remember that reading at our level will not be perfect, so embrace word proximities, examine illustrations closely, discuss story characters, and enjoy your time with your child learning new things together.

### Helpful Hints for Reading:



Sit next to your child while he/she reads so that you can cuddle and see the pictures & words, enjoying the book together.



Make reading part of your nightly routine - Reading to your child(ren) is something that is easy to do, but it's easy to forget to do too! So please make reading a priority every night.



While reading, look at the pictures closely - reading each picture and say what the characters are doing or might be saying and what is happening, approximating some language from the text.



Read with lots of excitement, expression, phrasing and gestures to make the stories come alive. Invite your child to read along with you during repetitive parts.



While reading the pictures and talking about the text, children can connect one page to the next by using the words like - *and then*, *after that*, and *next*.



When reading non-fiction texts, readers can make it sound like they're teaching us about a topic by pointing to important details in pictures and giving labels.

Any homework that goes beyond reading shall be planned, assigned and evaluated according to the following principles:

The purpose of the homework and relation to what has been learned in the classroom must be clearly understood by the student; 2.) Homework should emanate from classroom activities, projects, and skills; 3.) A student's age, need for play time and out of school responsibilities must be considered when deciding upon an assignment. Students bear the responsibility for managing their time so that homework can be completed and submitted on time; 4.) Assignments should make use of a variety of skills. 5.) Every homework assignment must be corrected and evaluated in keeping with the purpose of the assignment. Corrections/evaluations should be shared with the student in a timely fashion.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER

Inclement weather poses problems for parents and school personnel alike. All announcements regarding school cancellations, late openings, or early dismissals will be broadcast over local radio and TV stations. These stations are:

WTIC (AM-1080/FM-96.5)  
WICH (AM-1310)  
WILI (AM-1400/FM98.3)  
WCTY (FM-97.7)  
WTDY (FM-100.9)

WDRC (AM-1360/FM-102.9)  
WNLC (AM-1510)  
Channel 3 (WFSB)  
Channel 8 (WTNH)  
Channel 30 (WVIT)

Notification is also sent to families via Parent Square. Please **do not call** the radio or TV stations, schools or bus company.

**In case of an emergency closing after the school day has begun, it is the responsibility of all parents, including those working or those who have other commitments, to make appropriate pre-arrangements for their children’s supervision.** If emergency changes in the regular schedule are necessary due to inclement weather, radio stations will make the announcements. The district will attempt to reach families as well via Parent Square.

**If there is a delayed opening, the school day will start 2 hours late. School will begin at 10:35 a.m. Students should be dropped off no earlier than 10:25 a.m. (10 minutes before school begins). Students in kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 2 will report for an abbreviated day. Students in morning preschool will not have school.**

### **INSURANCE - STUDENT**

Each year the school offers parents the opportunity to purchase accident insurance for their children. The plans offered provide excellent coverage at a minimal expense. Purchase is not mandatory. Insurance forms are sent home early in September.

### **LOCKDOWNS**

Practice lockdowns are to take place a minimum of three times a year to prepare students and staff should a significant emergency arise. We practice lockdowns both as if the intruder were inside the building as well as outside the building. For the first drill, we notify parents via written communication about the practice so that you may discuss it with your child(ren). Staff reviews what is expected of the students during a drill in the days preceding the event so that the children can feel as safe and comfortable with the drill as possible.

### **OBLIGATIONS**

Students are expected to take good care of school books, materials and property as they would if borrowing from a friend. Returning these items promptly and in good condition is very important. Students will be expected to pay for any lost or damaged school equipment or books so that we can repair or replace the item for others.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Evidence indicates that meaningful involvement of parents, guardians and other caregivers in the schooling of children improves the quality of education significantly. We believe that close connections with parents result in enhanced academic performance, improved behavior, and reduced absenteeism. **Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in all aspects of school life, thus forming a strong home-school partnership.** Two major means of parental involvement include participation in CES Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and involvement as a volunteer, thus supporting learning and the school’s functioning. To learn more about the CES PTO, visit our website and click on the [PTO link](#).



## **PARKING LOT PROCEDURES**

Please adhere to the following parking lot procedures, which have been specifically developed due to safety concerns:

- Student drop off is located behind CES near the gym. Use the William J. Johnston Middle School driveway to enter. Drop off begins at 8:20 and ends at 8:35. **Please do not leave your child when staff is not there.** Please look for the orange cones, large yellow signs, and staff. This designates the drop off area and will help guide and ensure everyone's safety. Once students have been released into the safe unloading area, cars can exit the parking lot through the William J. Johnston exit on Norwich Avenue. **Please do not allow your child to get out of the vehicle before you reach the designated area as this is very dangerous.**
- Please have your child exit from the **passenger's side** of the vehicle in an expeditious manner. To streamline, we ask that students be prepared to disembark quickly and efficiently which will create a much safer process and eliminate traffic backup.
- If you arrive **after 8:35 or do not see any staff at the drop off, please park in the lot in front of the school and walk your child into the main office.**
- Buses will unload children in the morning and load children in the afternoon in the front of the school.
- Parents are asked not to park in parking spots marked for preschool, school administrators, or office staff.
- Vans will unload and load students in the designated spaces of the lot near the preschool classrooms and in front of the school.
- Parent pick-up at the end of the day will be in the gym. Parents are encouraged to park in the visitor's lot closest to the cafeteria or at WJJMS.
- Parking is not allowed in fire lanes for any reason. Fire lanes are identified with signs and painted lines. Local officials monitor this closely, enforcing state regulations.
- The small parking lot in front of the preschool wing identified as Pre K Parking is reserved for preschool parents and should not be used by parents of kindergarten, first, or second graders unless in emergency situations.

## **PHOTO/VIDEO RELEASE**

From time to time photographs or videos are taken of students in classrooms, at school activities or at special events. These photos or videos are sometimes used in presentations to the Board of Education, teacher, parent or community groups, or in the newspapers. Included on the Student Information Form, that is updated by parents/guardians in the spring/summer, is a space where parents/guardians grant or deny permission for their child to be photographed or videotaped. We ask that this form be completed and returned to the school.

## **PLAYSCAPE POLICY**

We are fortunate to have three playscapes, one at each wing of the school. Students are encouraged to use the equipment as designed and in a manner aligned with our three school rules. Students may play on the playscape assigned to their grade level in a safe manner, participate in organized games, and remain in sight of staff members. Balls and jump ropes are made available for student usage. Students should not bring toys from home out to the playscape.

**On the playscape children are encouraged to:**

- use the equipment
- play organized games

- play with and build with snow if wearing boots and snow pants
- play nicely alone or with other students
- sit at the picnic table for quiet activities
- play in view of teachers and paraprofessionals
- use zipline (when able to reach it independently)

Coats, jackets and/or sweaters must be kept on, around the waist, or be carried. Children with snow pants, jackets, and boots may play in the snow. Children without boots will be required to play on the blacktop or sidewalk.

If a student needs help in resolving a problem, he/she can turn to the teachers, paraprofessionals or administrators on duty for assistance. Recess is a critical time for students to learn social/emotional skills and we take every opportunity to find teachable moments.

Due to safety concerns, usage of the playscapes during school hours by persons other than staff and students is prohibited.

**INDOOR/OUTDOOR GUIDELINES:** Indoor recess will be called when the temperature/wind chill factor is 20° F or less, and when rain, snow or ground conditions warrant it. NAEYC requires that preschool students stay inside if temperatures drop below 32 degrees F.

## **PROGRAMS AND PERFORMANCES**

Parents are encouraged to attend student performances and programs as advertised by special bulletins sent home with children or in the Digital Backpack. In the event the program occurs at the end of the school day and parents want to take their children home, sign-out forms will be available from the classroom, cafeteria, or office.

## **PROMOTION/RETENTION/ACCELERATION**

**Promotion and/or retention** in grades K-5 will be based on the individual child's ability to successfully complete the required work of the succeeding grade. Each individual student's promotion/retention will be judged on its own merits. In kindergarten, more emphasis will be placed on the maturational and developmental readiness necessary for success in grade 1. In grades 1-5, criteria for promotion will include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Teacher/specialist recommendation
2. Educational progress
3. Other assessment data
4. Attendance

Promotion/retention of special education students will be decided on an individual basis but may be affected by Pupil Placement Team decisions.

**Acceleration** of students may be provided. Decisions to accelerate a child's program will be based on, but not be limited to the following:

1. Specialist input
2. Teacher input
3. Student progress/needs
4. Parent input
5. Test scores or data

Each case will be judged on its own merits and programs designed individually to meet student needs.

Promotion/retention, acceleration and grade placements, although every effort is made to secure the understanding and cooperation of parent(s)/guardian(s), is the decision of the Principal following consultation with the Superintendent if necessary.

### **RELATIONS WITH NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

The Board of Education assumes that there are no restrictions regarding the non-custodial parent's right to be kept informed of the student's school progress and activities. **Unless there are specific court-imposed restrictions, the non-custodial parent upon written request may view the student's records, receive progress reports and notices, and have an opportunity to conference with the student's teacher.** The parent with whom the student resides is known as the custodial parent unless a legal document or signed parental agreement indicates otherwise. Verification may be required from the custodial parent.

Only the custodial parent has the right to remove the student from school property. Only a verified note from the custodial parent will be cause for exception.

The custodial parent has the responsibility to keep the school office informed as to the address of the residence and how he/she may be contacted at all times. Any legal documents, which restrict the rights of the non-custodial parent, must be provided by the custodial parent.

If the non-custodial parent requires copies of school communications and the child's report card, the request must be made in writing to ensure the request can be honored. A current address is required. Any request by the non-custodial parent/guardian to receive school notices shall be effective for as long as the child remains in the school the student is attending at the time of the request.

### **REPORT CARDS**

It is our policy to send progress reports home three (3) times a year, in December, March, and June for all students in grades PK-2. Only CES and JJIS give grades on the trimester basis. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are strongly encouraged to meet with their child's teacher at given conference times. Each teacher is responsible for scheduling his/her conferences. If parents cannot meet during identified conference times, adjustments are made for conferences to be held at mutually agreeable times.

## SAFETY

**School Safety Procedures:** The following rules have been designed for the security of children and for the effectiveness of the school's learning environment. We ask that all adults comply.

1. **All exterior doors, with the exception of the main entrance** at the front of the school, will be **locked after 8:35 a.m.** when the school day officially begins. Anyone coming to CES after 8:35 a.m. will need to use the main entrance.
2. Parents are to bring a picture ID to sign in with the front door security personnel and obtain a Visitor's Pass if there is a need to visit a classroom. Faculty, administration, and students need to be able to identify an adult as a visitor by the badge they wear. If you are not wearing a badge, you will be asked if you need assistance and escorted to the office. This is done to ensure that we have a secure school.
3. As soon as the buses are unloaded, teachers begin the instructional day by processing notices, greeting children, and etc. At the end of the school day teachers are organizing students for dismissal. Because of this, parents **do not go to classrooms between 8:15 a.m. and 3:20 p.m.** unless expected by the teacher as a volunteer or visitor, to escort one's child to the classroom, or to pick up one's child as directed by the school office. Following this procedure is essential to help ensure student safety, especially in light of the number of children we have in our school and the attention we need to give children.

## TARDINESS

Tardiness at CES is defined as arriving at school after 8:35 a.m. When a child is late, he/she must be escorted to the school office by the parent to receive a late pass prior to proceeding to class.

## TRUANCY

The state definition of a "truant" shall mean a student aged five to eighteen, inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences in any one month, or ten (10) unexcused absences in one school year. **Students must be in school for at least one half of the school day for the student to not be considered absent.** Every attempt will be made to partner with families and encourage regular attendance in school.

## VISITORS/VOLUNTEERS

Parents, community members, and others wishing to visit the school and observe classrooms and educational/curricula programs are welcome to do this at a **mutually** agreed upon time with the staff members involved. It is essential that visitations be scheduled in advance.

It is expected that all visitors and volunteers will sign in at the school office and obtain a visitor's pass. **No visitor passes will be given until a picture ID is shown.** No exceptions can be made. The staff, including administration, needs to be able to identify an adult who is not employed by the school system and already wearing a badge, as a visitor. If a visitor is not wearing a badge, he/she will be asked if assistance is needed. This is done to ensure that we have a secure school.

Everyone who volunteers at CES, regardless of the frequency, from weekly classroom visitor to once a year field trip chaperone, will need to fill out a district-wide [Volunteer Application form](#) and pass a security check.

### **WEAPONS & DANGEROUS INSTRUMENTS**

The Board of Education prohibits the possession or use of weapons on school property. Police officers on official business are exempted from this prohibition, the only exception would be for others with prior written authorization of the Superintendent. Students in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action. “Weapons” for purposes of this policy shall include a firearm, deadly weapon, martial arts weapon, or dangerous instruments, such as knives or guns, as defined in Connecticut General Statutes Section 53a-3. The underlying belief is that all children have the right to be educated in a safe and nurturing environment.

### **WELFARE**

Student welfare and safety shall receive the highest priority in all aspects of the school program. Each student activity shall be developed consistent with the appropriate abilities and limitations of students in the age group and with careful attention given to the student safety.

## **APPENDIX**

[ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN NOTIFICATION](#)

[GREEN CLEANING PROGRAM NOTIFICATION](#)

[INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM NOTIFICATION](#)

[ED050 STATE OF CT SCHOOL FACILITIES SURVEY](#)

[BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES - SERIES 5000 STUDENTS](#)

[BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICIES - SERIES 6000 INSTRUCTION](#)

[SPECIAL EDUCATION](#)

[PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING AN INITIAL EVALUATION OF A CHILD](#)

[WELLNESS POLICY](#)

[STUDENT DATA PRIVACY](#)

[ADA COMPLIANCE](#)

[REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND SEXUAL ASSAULT](#) BOE Policy 5141.4P

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR CHILD BE SUCCESSFUL IN SCHOOL**

- Start each day right. A calm beginning at home makes the school day much better.
- Encourage your child to have a good breakfast before school or at school and eat a good lunch. Make certain that your child sleeps at least eight hours each night.
- Make sure your child gets to school on time. Missing even a few minutes of school means that your child misses out on critical information and instruction.
- Praise your child each day for something he/she has done.
- Talk with your child about school experiences and listen attentively to what is said about his/her day.
- Stress attendance. If your child is ill, home is the best place. Otherwise, your child needs to take advantage of every school day.
- Encourage your child to read every day. Read to and with your child.
- Make sure that your child has the necessary supplies on a daily basis in his/her backpack. Return library books when due. Stress organization of school materials.
- Work at home on the skills taught at school.
- Keep the lines of communication open between yourself and your child's teacher. Inform the teacher of any family situation that could influence the child's behavior. Also, if he/she is reluctant to go to school, let the teacher know so that together you can find the reason. All teachers can be reached at (860) 537-0717.
- If you have concerns about your child's academic or social/emotional performance at school, it is always best to contact your child's teacher right away. If this is not possible you can also contact the school administrators, Mrs. O'Meara, Principal or Mrs. Amado, Assistant Principal.

**Colchester Elementary School**  
Incident Report: Mean-Spirited Behavior

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Reporter (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Targeted Student (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

Grade/Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student Displaying Mean-Spirited Behavior: \_\_\_\_\_

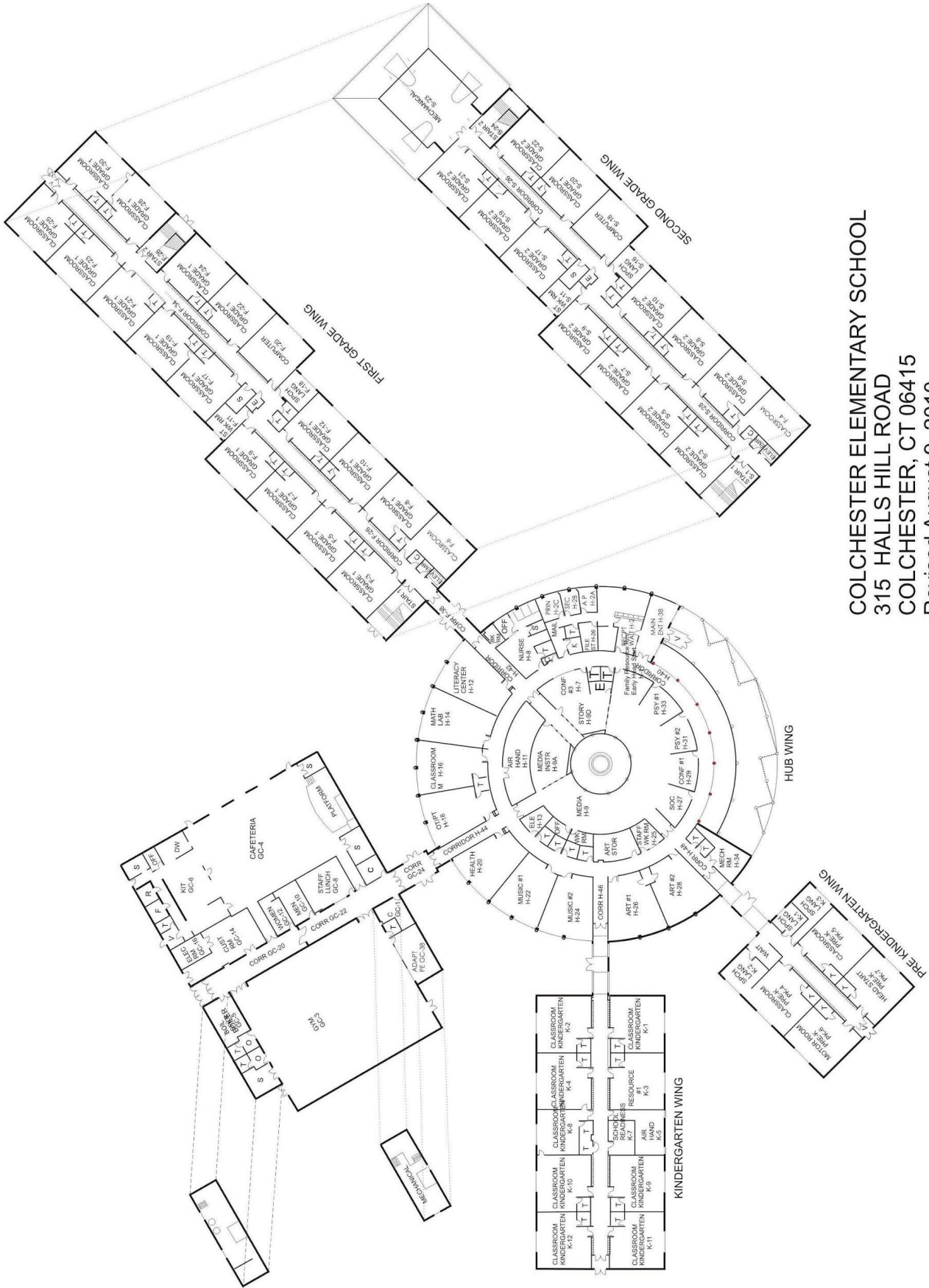
Grade/Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you become aware of this incident?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> It happened to me.<br><input type="checkbox"/> I was told by a student not directly involved.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> I saw it happen.<br><input type="checkbox"/> I was told by the student(s) it happened to. |
|---|--|

Date, time, and location of incident – when and where did this occur?	
Were there any adults present?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, their name(s): _____
Were there other students present?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, their names are: _____ _____ _____
What happened?	<div style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">(please use the back of this form if you need more space)</div>
<input type="checkbox"/> I have seen the student <b>being mean-spirited</b> to others before. <input type="checkbox"/> I have seen the <b>targeted student</b> being targeted by others before.	





COLCHESTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
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 108,000 SQ FT

**A FAMILY GUIDE**  
**Connecticut's Framework for SRBI**

**Using Scientific Research-Based Interventions:**  
Improving Education for All Students

Teachers, administrators, and families want all children to succeed. There are many ways to get children who are struggling to learn the additional help they need to be successful. One way is with the use of “Scientific Research-based Interventions” (SRBI).

This information sheet reviews what SRBI are and includes questions you might want to ask your child’s school or program to learn more about how they are using SRBI as a framework to improve teaching and learning. Also included here are ways families can be part of the decision making process and what to do when you have concerns about your child’s progress.

For more information about RTI, visit: The National Center for Response to Intervention at [www.rti4success.org](http://www.rti4success.org) or the RTI Action Network at [www.rtinetwork.org](http://www.rtinetwork.org).

**What questions can families ask to learn more about how SRBI works in their child’s school or program?**

- What is my child being taught in his/her classroom?
- How are lessons designed to meet my child’s varying needs?
- What are the teaching strategies that my child’s school is using if he/she is struggling in the classroom?
- How can I help my child with learning at home?
- How will I be told about my child’s progress that tells me more than what grades he/she is receiving?
- What happens if my child continues to struggle and the teaching strategy is not working?

Families play a critical role in supporting what their children are learning in school. Research shows that the more parents are actively involved in student learning, the greater the student achievement. There are many ways families can support their child’s learning at home. Here are a few:

- *Make reading an everyday habit;*
- *Talk with your child’s teachers regularly;*
- *Check homework assignments and assist when necessary;*
- *Ask for regular progress reports;*
- *Celebrate your child’s strengths, talents, interests, and successes;*
- *Learn more about what is being taught and how it is being taught at your child’s school; and*
- *Participate in parent-teacher conferences and other school functions for your child.*

**What if I think my child needs special education?**

SRBI does not replace the special education process. If at any time parents believe their child has a disability that is affecting his or her learning, they have a right to request an evaluation for special education. SRBI cannot be used to delay or deny this evaluation if the child is not making progress in learning and the lack of progress is not due to the lack of instruction. In addition to the information gathered through SRBI, other forms of evaluation must occur to determine if a child is eligible for special education and parent’s written consent is required for the evaluation.

For more information about special education, your rights in this process, and how SRBI may be used to inform eligibility, please contact:

- Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC): 1-800-445-2722
- Connecticut Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC): 1-800-842-8678
- Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education (CSDE): 1-860-713-6910

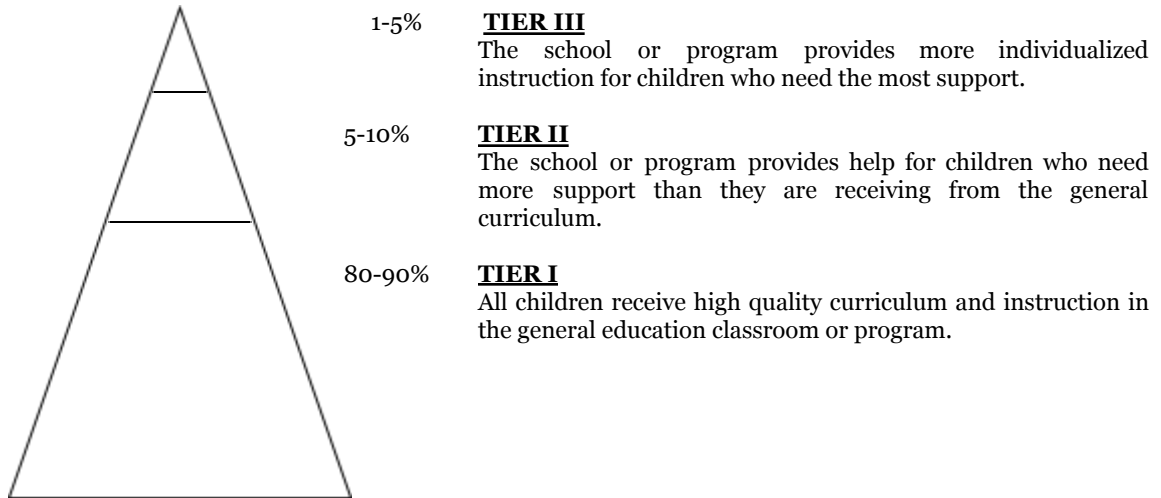
## What are SRBI?

SRBI are a way to provide support and instruction to children who are struggling to learn. A child's progress is studied and findings are used to make decisions about teaching and other learning supports.

SRBI are most commonly used in addressing needs in the areas of reading, math, and behavior. A "continuum of support" is developed by school districts and programs to meet the needs of the children they service.

## What does the SRBI continuum of support look like?

The SRBI framework has three "tiers." Each tier provides differing kinds and degrees of support.



## What are the key components of an SRBI framework?

**The key components to SRBI is that all children receive high quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom or program (TIER I).**

Another component of SRBI is that the school or program conducts "universal common assessments." **Universal common assessments review the progress of all children through the use of grade/age level assessments.** These assessments help schools identify children who may need more support or other types of instruction.

As a result, students may be identified as needing help in addition to the high quality instruction they are receiving in TIER I. **Additional teaching strategies or methods that have been proven to be effective in helping children learn are used (TIER II).** These teaching methods can happen in large or small groups, in or outside the classroom.

Another key component to SRBI is "progress monitoring." **Progress monitoring is a way for teachers to better understand a child's needs and demonstrate the growth children are making in a specific area.** It shows how well the teaching strategy is working. It includes observations and other types of assessment. Progress monitoring helps determine whether a strategy is successful or needs to be changed.

When progress monitoring shows that a child is not responding to the additional help, another approach or strategy may be tried. **However, when a higher level of support is needed, children are given the individualized instruction they need to be successful learners (TIER III).**

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Adapted from The CT PIRC, a non-profit organization partially funded by a grant through the U.S. Department of Education. The CT PIRC and its primary partners, the CSDE and SERC, support school-family-community alliances by building on the strengths of each.