# Brighter Futures Child Development Center



# Employee Handbook

Revised 10/01/2024

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This handbook is intended to familiarize staff members with current Brighter Futures Learning Center policy, practices and standards. An electronic version (PDF) of the handbook is available on our website at www.Brighter Futureslearningcenter.com. A print copy of the handbook is available upon request. Brighter Futures reserves the right to revise its policies, practices and standards as deemed appropriate by the Director. Staff members will be notified of updates to the staff handbook as they occur.

# **HISTORY**

Brighter Future's Center is a newly established childcare Center that sets a high standard for providing exceptional care to children. With highly skilled and experienced owners and teachers, the Center is dedicated to offering a nurturing and stimulating environment for children to learn and grow.

# MISSION STATEMENT

At Brighter Futures CENTER, we believe in the value and uniqueness of each child we serve. Our childcare experience is designed to promote each child's own individual social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

As caregivers and educators, our mission is to provide a safe and developmentally appropriate learning environment, which fosters a child's natural desire to explore, discover, create, and become a lifelong learner.

#### **PHILOSPHY**

Our program is built around the concept that children are born ready to learn. As caregivers, we strive to create a learning environment that is safe, stimulating and encouraging. The following principles are excerpted from the South Carolina Early Learning Standards and serve as the foundation for our curriculum.

- Children develop knowledge of their world through active interactions with caregivers, peers, materials, and events.
- Learning is sequential, building on prior understandings and experiences.
- Learning proceeds at different rates in each area and each child; children will show a range of skills and understandings in any one area of development.
- Learning in each area is interconnected. Young children learn best through experiences, which incorporate several areas of development.
- Learning is embedded in a culture. Children learn best when their learning activities are rooted in a familiar cultural context.
- Learning begins in the family, continues in early care and education settings, and depends on parent involvement and caregiver guidance.
- All children have the potential to achieve the South Carolina Learning Standards with appropriate support and instruction.

#### **WELCOME**

Welcome to Brighter Futures Child Development Center!

We believe the strongest partnership in a child's life is between the child's parents and the Center in which their child attends. The goal that we strive to achieve is for you to team up with our parents to make this experience an excellent one for your entire Center. Our team must be committed to providing the highest quality of care for our children and families.

We have an Open-Door Policy and want our parents' involvement. We encourage you partner with the parents to get them involved in the community, visit or volunteer in the classroom, chaperone field trips, and always be an advocate for their child.

We serve children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old. Our daily program promotes a child's intellectual, social, physical, and emotional development. We individualize our program to meet the needs of each child.

We continually train our staff using the most current research in child development and early education. The beginning of becoming a part of our team is an important time and please know that we are available to answer any questions that may come up.

It is our hope that you will develop a lifetime of wonderful memories while employed in our program.

# **GENERAL CENTER INFORMATION**

# **ADMINSTRATION:**

Chief Executive Officer/Owner: Dr. Harold T. Marshall <a href="mailto:slmarshall@bfcdc.com">slmarshall@bfcdc.com</a>
Executive Director: Dorothy Marshall <a href="mailto:dorothymar84@gmail.com">dorothymar84@gmail.com</a>

# **LICENSING**

Brighter Futures is a public program voluntarily licensed to serve 68 children by the South Carolina Department of Human Services. A copy of the licensing rules is available for review in the office, the staff break room, and on the web Licensing Requirements - SC Child Care Services.

Brighter Futures CENTER is a participant in the South Carolina ABC Quality Rating Scale.

#### HOURS OF OPERATION

Brighter Futures is open Monday through Friday from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm The Centers are closed for the following holidays:

New Year's Day Independence Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Day Labor Day

President's Day Memorial Day

Juneteenth Veteran's Day Thanksgiving Christmas

Additionally, Brighter Futures will be closed 5 days per year for staff development days. These dates will be announced in advance and will typically coincide with a holiday.

#### PROGRAMS PER CLASSROOM

There are 4 childcare programs offered at Brighter Futures. They are:

- Exploratory Eagles 3 years to 4 years 12 to 14 children
   Dynamic Discovers 3 years to 4 years 12 to 14 children
- Marvelous Minds 4 years to 5 years 12 to 20 children
- Global Go-Getters 5 years to 6 years 12 to 20 children

#### LICENSING RATIOS

At Brighter Futures CENTER, we follow the state regulations staff-to-child ratios for our classrooms:

Age of Children	Minimum Ratio of Staff to Children
3 to 4 years	1 staff for every 12 children
4 to 5 years	1 staff for every 17 children
5 to 6 years	1 staff for every 20 children

South Carolina Department of Social Services regulation pertaining to mix age groups: "When there are mixed age groups in the same room, the staff/child ratio shall be consistent with the age of the majority of the children when no infants or toddlers are in the mixed age group." However, Brighter Futures strive to have teachers and teacher assistants to ensure our children receive the best possible care.

#### WEATHER-RELATED CLOSINGS

Brighter Futures will remain open during the most severe weather. The Director will monitor the weather and local news stations to determine when it is appropriate to close the Center early or cancel care for the following day.

If Brighter Futures closes early or cancels care for the following day, parents will be contacted and informed of the situation. Children should be picked up in a reasonable amount of time to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home. Families will still be charged during weather closings.

# **GENERAL STAFF EXPECATIONS**

# **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is a top priority for Brighter Futures Personal information of families and staff will not be shared for any reason without prior written consent of the individual. When discussing a child's activities and friends in the classroom, only first names will be used. In situations regarding behavior problems and/or Incident/Accident Reports, names of children involved will never be given to families.

It is important that all staff members be discreet in sharing information regarding the children and their parents in public areas. Names and identifying characteristics of children and families should not be shared with anyone other than staff members working in the classroom and the Director and/or Assistant Director. Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances

arise; staff members who discuss issues with individuals not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

Staff should also be careful in discussing details of the center operation, particularly problem areas, with others in public. Staff members may not distribute or post children's last names, address, phone numbers, etc. with the exception of distribution to the ProCare portal. Personal information should never be used for personal purposes. Brighter Futures specifically prohibits the sharing of information about children or staff members within a childcare setting without written consent from the parent, guardian, or individual. This applies to outside professionals as well. You must seek written parental consent before consulting with an outside agency about a child.

#### VIOLATIONS OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

The Center takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the CENTER. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families, and employees associated with the Center.

Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential pressures employees or other parents for information, which is not necessary for them to know, will be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy and could be dismissed from the Center.

Any parent who violates the Confidentiality Policy and is dismissed will not be permitted on CENTER property thereafter. Refer to the policy regarding Parents Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of a child when a parent is prohibited from accessing Center property.

#### **PROFESSIONAL**

Each staff member is a childcare professional and is expected to act as such. The following general guidelines for professionalism should always be maintained:

- Arrive on time and stay the entire shift, if needed.
- Is not absent from work on a regular basis and finds a substitute when necessary.
- Dress appropriately for interaction with children.
- Take directions, suggestions and criticisms, and follow through to improve performance.
- Respect confidential information regarding children, families, and co-workers.
- Display a positive attitude toward the entire center (the program, children, families and coworkers).
- Attend staff meetings and other Center events.
- Complete SC DSS required training courses in a timely fashion.

#### DRESS CODE

Staff members are expected to observe the 3 Cs for appropriate attire at work as follows:

- COMFORTABLE Staff is expected to play with the children and be down to their level whenever it is appropriate. To do this, staff must be dressed in comfortable clothes that allow free movement and activity. Staff members should wear clothing they feel comfortable getting dirty or stained, as staff members are expected to participate alongside the children in all daily activities. Flip-flops, crocs and open toed shoes are never appropriate footwear.
- CLEAN All clothing should be clean with no stains, rips or tears, and must smell appropriate. This also applies to personal hygiene.
- COURTEOUS Staff members interact with children and parents daily and should dress professionally. The dress code is professional scrubs Monday through Thursday. Fridays is dress causal day. Clothing may not contain alcohol, drug, or cigarette references. Vulgar sayings or suggestions are forbidden. Certain articles of clothing are never appropriate for the work environment, including halter tops, strapless "tube" tops, short skirts/shorts (must hit at fingertip length or below), sweatpants, excessively torn jeans/shorts, and low-rise jeans/shorts which expose undergarments.

It is expected that all staff members will present themselves and Brighter Futures CDC in a professional, respectable manner. Any staff member not adhering to the dress code may be asked to leave and return dressed appropriately.

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

This social media policy applies to parents, employees, students, and The Board of Directors of The Center. This policy includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Snap Chat, Instagram)
- Blogs
- Discussion forums
- Collaborative online spaces
- Media Sharing services (i.e. You Tube)
- Micro-blogging (i.e. Twitter)

As part of our duty to safeguard children it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all our families and employees. We therefore require that:

- No photographs taken within the CENTER setting or at special events and outings with the children, are to be posted for public viewing, except those of your own child.
- Staff are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children. (This excludes those photographs taken for the children's online learning journal, which are sometimes used for display in the setting, for use on the Center website and in other advertising material if parental permission is given).
- No public discussions are to be held, or comments made on social media sites regarding
  the Center, children, staff or Administrators (except appropriate use for marketing
  fundraising events) or that could be construed to have any impact on the Center's
  reputation or that would offend any member of the staff or parent using the Center.

- If a staff member names the Center on any social media platform, they must do so in a way that is not detrimental or derogatory to the Center.
- Staff are not permitted to set up private or public social media (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) accounts/groups related to Brighter Futures Child Development Center.

#### VIOLATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Any staff found to be in violation of the above or by posting remarks or comments that breach confidentiality, bring the Center into disrepute or that are deemed to be of a detrimental nature to the Center, its employees, or other children could result in immediate termination of employment.

# CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All staff members are mandatory child abuse reporters. Suspected cases of child abuse or neglect must be reported to the Department of Social Services (DSS) to:

CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE, Dept. of Social Services 1-888-227-3487

Staff members may directly report suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to the Soth Carolin Department of Social Services and will complete all necessary paperwork. The staff member should inform the Director and/or Assistant Director of the report and together they will decide whether or not to inform the parents of the report.

If a staff member is accused of abuse and/or neglect by a parent or co-worker, such an accusation will be reported to the Director and a determination will be made to report that a child may or may not have been subjected to abuse and/or neglect. If there is reasonable cause, the Department of Social Services will open an investigation. Brighter Futures will cooperate with any DSS investigation. In addition, the accused staff member will be informed of the allegations and be given an opportunity to respond to those allegations. Termination of employment during the investigation of a child abuse allegation is at the discretion of the Director. Termination is automatic if the abuse is confirmed.

# **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

As childcare professionals, all staff members are expected to make reasonable attempts to resolve conflicts directly with the individual(s) concerned. If a solution cannot be reached, staff members should then seek assistance from the Director and/or Assistant Director in resolving the conflict.

Confidentiality is expected and required when grievances arise. Staff members who discuss issues with other staff members not directly related to the situation may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure. This policy applies both during paid hours as well as to a staff member's personal time.

#### **CO-WORKER COMMUNICATION**

Open communication between staff members, parents, and children is crucial to a successful program. Before leaving a classroom for any reason (bathroom, making a copy, calling a parent) an employee should inform his/her cooperating teachers of the reason he/she is leaving. For all involved, it is important that all issues be addressed and resolved as they arise. All employees are expected to always function as a team member.

# **SUPPLIES**

Each classroom has a yearly budget for purchases. Lead Teachers are responsible for complying with the budget and submitting supply/material requests to the Director and/or Assistant Director. Any additional purchases above the allotted budget must be approved by the Director and/or Assistant Director.

#### **PARKING**

Staff members should park in the parking spaces on the east side of the street, opposite the front doors by the wooden center sign. Parking spaces in the front are reserved for parents picking up and dropping off.

# **SUGGESTIONS**

Brighter Futures is always seeking suggestions that will: improve methods, procedures, and working conditions; reduce costs or errors; and benefit the children, staff, and center. Staff members who have suggestions or innovative ideas are encouraged to discuss them with the Lead Teacher or Director and/or Assistant Director.

#### PERSONNEL FILES

Brighter Futures maintains a permanent personnel file for each staff member. These files are confidential, and staff must arrange a time with the Director and/or Assistant Director to review their file. Staff members are prohibited from accessing the personnel file of another staff member for any reason. Staff members should report to the Director and/or Assistant Director if there is a change in address, phone number, emergency contact, e-mail address, marital status, or number of dependents.

# SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Any staff members reporting for work under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances will be asked to leave immediately. If the Director and/or Assistant Director or other staff member has probable cause to believe a staff member's faculties are impaired while on the job, the staff member may be suspended or terminated immediately.

#### TOBACCO AND VAPE USE

Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products are prohibited on Brighter Futures premises, including parking lots and outdoor play areas. Smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco products is also prohibited in Brighter Futures vehicles or in personal vehicles being used for the transportation of Brighter Futures children, and while on field trips. Staff who smoke in their

cars must dispose of cigarettes prior to entering the parking lot. Please **DO NOT** throw cigarettes butts in the parking lot.

Staff members who smoke must not do so immediately before or during their shift, as smoke can stay on clothing and hair for an extended time. Staff members must wash their hands immediately after smoking, before returning to work. If a staff member smell of smoke, they will be asked to leave, shower, change clothes and return to work. Violation of this policy will result in termination.

# REIMBURSEMENT

The Director must first approve all purchases made by a staff member using personal funds. Any unapproved purchases may not be eligible for reimbursement. Original sales receipts should be submitted to the Director and/or Assistant Director within one week of purchase to receive reimbursement.

# NON-DISCRIMATION STATEMENT

Brighter Futures does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. Brighter Futures is an equal opportunity employer.

Brighter Futures prohibits harassment of and by its staff members on the basis of gender, race, age, color, national origin, religion, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, citizenship, disability, and other characteristics. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, making derogatory remarks about any of these characteristics, making jokes or stereotypical comments about ethnic or other groups, and engaging in verbal, physical, and visually offensive behavior. A staff member who feels harassed has the right to file a complaint with the South Carolina Civil Rights Commission and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

# ATTENDANCE POLICIES

# **ATTENDANCE**

Consistency is crucial to creating a successful program. We make every attempt to put as few staff members as possible in each classroom. Therefore, all staff members are expected to be in regular attendance, to provide a consistent environment and routine. Regular absences will be subject to disciplinary procedure.

If a staff member needs a day off due to illness, a child's illness, etc. (ex. non-emergency surgery) without the 2 weeks required notice, attendance points will be given. Each member of staff will be allotted 6 points per year. Staff may avoid attendance points by covering their shift by switching days off with another staff member.

- One Day= 1 Point (.5 points for  $\frac{1}{2}$  days)
- For absences consisting of 2-3 consecutive days, .5 points will be given for day 2 and day 3 & a doctor's note is required

- After 4 Points = Verbal warning
- After 5 Points= Written warning
- After 6 Points= Recommendation for termination subject to management review.
- Points received on business days immediately before and/or after a holiday will result in no holiday pay.

\*If a staff member wants to apply for forgiveness of the points, they need to fill out the Exemption Form. Management will be responsible for approving/denying the request.

#### ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS

If a staff member is ill and unable to work, the Director and/or Assistant Director should be notified immediately, by phone three hours prior to the start of the shift. Text messages are unacceptable. If absent more than two consecutive days, the Director and/or Assistant Director will require a note from the staff member's physician indicating the type of illness and when said staff member may return to work.

#### **SCHEDULES**

Brighter Futures is open Monday through Friday, 6:30am to 6:00pm. All scheduling requests should be submitted in writing to the Director and/or Assistant Director two weeks in advance. Schedules will be created based upon the needs of the children, and staff member availability. Occasionally, staff members may need to dedicate time outside their regular work schedule to satisfactorily complete or carry out responsibilities (parent-teacher conferences, staff meetings, training, lesson planning, etc.)

# **VOLUNTARILY RESIGNATION**

Lead Teachers and Full-Time Assistant Teachers should submit a letter of resignation to the Director and/or Assistant Director when resigning from a position. Brighter Futures appreciates at least four weeks' notice if you choose to resign. This will ensure an appropriate replacement can be hired and adequately trained.

# **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

# UNACCPTABLE JOB PERFORMANCE

Brighter Futures uses progressive discipline as a positive way to correct unacceptable job performance. This is not a contractual obligation because all Brighter Futures employees are "at will" which means an employee can be terminated at the will of Brighter Futures for any reason or no reason at any time. The following are the steps, which are taken using progressive discipline.

# STEP 1 Verbal Warning

If a staff member's job performance is not meeting Brighter Futures standards, or if a staff member is in violation of any policy stated in this handbook, he/she will be informed of the problem and the possible penalties if performance does not improve. Suggestions on ways to

improve job performance are discussed. Verbal warnings may be given for violation of Brighter Futures policies, failure to follow procedures, unsatisfactory performance, absenteeism or tardiness.

Verbal warnings will be recorded, discussed, and signed by both the staff members and Director and/or Assistant Director. After one (1) verbal warning has been issued for any reason within a period of six (6) months, a written warning will be issued.

# STEP 2 Written Warning

A written warning is given if a problem is identified by multiple verbal warnings and has not been corrected. Written warnings will be recorded, discussed, and signed by both the staff members and the Director and/or Assistant Director.

A staff member may receive only one (1) written warning during a six (6) month period. After one (1) written warning has been issued, any further issues or actions are subject to the Disciplinary Procedures and may result in suspension or termination.

Written warnings will be issued immediately for refusal to follow lawful instructions or any other serious policy violation, which endangers the safety or integrity of a child or staff member.

# **STEP 3 Termination**

Termination may result when using progressive discipline if steps have not produced satisfactory and acceptable performance. Termination may be immediate without using progressive discipline. Reasons for immediate termination may include, but are not limited to:

- Commitment of child abuse under South Carolina law
- Abuse of a parent/guardian of a child or another staff member
- Harassment
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while at work
- Theft
- Possession of a weapon
- Violation of any policy which states that violation of such policy may result in termination.

The above violations are only examples and are not meant to be all-inclusive. Disciplinary action up to and including termination may be taken immediately at the discretion of the Director.

# **HEALTH & SAFTEY POLICIES**

# STAFF PHYSICALS AND TUBERCULOSIS SCREENING

Each staff member must receive a pre-employment physical and tuberculosis (TB) screening, performed within 6 months before beginning employment. Physicals must be updated every 2 years. Staff members will have a "grace period" of 30 days to turn in updated physicals. After 30 days, staff members will be suspended until completion and fined no more than \$10 per week if the physical is expired or not completed, at the discretion of the Director and/or Assistant Director.

# **HEPATITIS B VIRUS (HBV) VACCINATIONS**

OSHA guidance for Hepatitis B vaccinations indicate that all staff members determined to have potential workplace exposure to human blood and other potentially infectious materials must be offered the Hepatitis B vaccination series at no cost to the staff member and within 10 days of hire. This series of immunizations is available at no cost to Brighter Futures staff members, if arranged by Brighter Future. If a staff member has previously received the HBV vaccinations or wishes to waive his/her right to receive the vaccinations, a Hepatitis B Vaccination Consent/Waiver form must be completed.

#### **ILLNESS**

Our priority at Brighter Futures is providing a healthy, safe learning environment for all children. A child will be sent home as soon as possible if any of the following is experienced: an illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities (as determined by the staff); an illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can reasonably provide without compromising the health or safety of other children in the classroom; or a child is experiencing any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 100 or greater, until 24 hours symptom free without fever reducing medication
- Signs/symptoms of severe illness, including lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or persistent crying, difficulty breathing, and/or wheezing.
- Diarrhea (not associated with diet changes or medications; multiple loose or watery
  instances within an hour; or accompanied with fever and or vomiting) until diarrhea stops
  for 24 hours or the continued diarrhea is deemed not to be infectious by a licensed health
  care professional.
- Blood in stools not explainable by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
- Vomiting (One instance) the child can return after vomiting has been resolved for 24 hours or until a health care provider determines the cause for vomiting is not contagious and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
- Persistent abdominal pain (continues more than 2 hours) or intermittent pain associated with fever or other signs/symptoms of illness.
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines the sores are not contagious or the Director believes the child is safe to be in the Center.
- Rash until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease, or the Director believes the child is safe to be in the Center.
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis) until after treatment has been initiated for 24 hours and no eye pulse is present.
- Scabies, until after treatment has been completed and no signs or tracts or scabs in the skin.
- Tuberculosis, until a health care provider states that the child is on appropriate therapy and can attend childcare or the Director believes the child is safe to be in the Center.
- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated and no open sores.
- Strep throat, until 36 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- Chicken pox, until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- Hand Foot and Mouth sores have dried and crusted and no fever.

- Pertussis, until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed.
- Mumps, until 9 days after onset of symptoms or the Director believes the child is safe to be in the Center.
- Hepatitis A virus, until 1 week after onset of illness or the Director believes the child is safe to be in the Center.
- Measles, until 7 days after onset of rash, no present rash or the Director believes the child is safe to be in the Center.
- Rubella, until 6 days after onset of rash, no present rash or the Director believes the child is safe to be in the Center.
- Unspecified respiratory tract illness accompanied by another illness which requires exclusion.
- Herpes simplex, with uncontrollable drooling or open sores
- Pneumonia, until 1 week after onset of illness or the Director believes the child is safe to be in the Center.
- Covid 19, one week after medical diagnosis, no fever or persistent cough.

A child who becomes ill while at Brighter Futures must be removed from the classroom in order to limit the exposure of other children to communicable diseases. An ill child will be sent to the office to wait for his/her parents to arrive. For this reason, we ask families to make every effort to pick up a sick child as soon as possible.

Brighter Futures reserves the right to make the final determination of exclusion due to illness.

#### **SURGERY**

Children may not attend the Center the same day or day after that they have surgery. Young children recover quickly, but there is always a risk of reactions to anesthetics. The Center does not have the materials or staff to react to such emergencies. A doctor's release is required for the child to return to the Center.

# NOTICE OF EXPOSURE & REPORTING DISEASE

If your child is exposed to a communicable disease, a notice will be posted at the front door or on the door to your child's classroom. If your child or anyone in your household becomes ill with a communicable disease, please notify the Director immediately.

In the event a child is reported to have a communicable disease, the Director will notify the health department.

# **MEDICATIONS**

Prescription medications must be given to a staff member in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's full name and birth date. NO OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS WILL BE GIVEN WITHOUT A DOCTOR'S PRESCRIPTION. Brighter Futures staff will not administer any medication without a signed Medication Authorization Form. Forms can be obtained from your child's teacher or from the Director.

All medications will be stored in the office and only administered by Directors or lead teachers. Prescription medications will only be given if a doctor's note is provided with a beginning and end date. A medical authorization form must also be filled out and signed by a parent or guardian. Prescription medication will only be given at the Center if they are not able to be given at home. (ex. Twice daily can be administered at home. Three times per day requires a middle of the day dose and can be given at the Center.)

Parents are responsible for ensuring that all prescription medication is properly labeled by a pharmacist and replaced prior to the expiration date. Parents and teachers are not allowed to administer any kind of vitamins or medications by adding them to the child's food, cup, or thermos.

#### DOCUMENTATIONOF ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Staff members shall document accidents and incidents that occur at Brighter Futures using an Accident/Incident Report. Please document all biting incidents as accidents. If a biter breaks the skin of another child, an accident/incident report needs to be completed for the biter as well as the child who was bitten. Use great detail when explaining events, but never include other children's names. If the injury is serious, a parent needs to be contacted before pick-up. The parents shall sign the report the same day as the incident. A copy may be given to the parents.

All Accident/Incident Reports must be given to the Director to be placed in the child's permanent file.

# **DOCUMENTATION OF HEALTH INCIDENTS**

Each time a parent is contacted regarding an ill child or symptoms of illness, a Health Incident Form will be completed. A copy of the form will be given to the parent and the original to the Director to be placed in the child's permanent file. All parents will be notified of any communicable illnesses present in the Center via a sign posted on the main entrance to the Center explaining the illness. In addition, parents with children in the classroom of the infected child will receive an email regarding the illness.

# **DOCUMENTATION OF ALLERGIES**

A child with allergies must have an Allergy Action Plan posted in a visible location in the classroom. If the allergy is food related, an Allergy Action Plan must also be posted in the kitchen area. All staff working in the classroom of children with allergies must review the Allergy Action Plan to ensure understanding of emergency procedures should the child have an allergic reaction. All allergic reactions must be documented with a Health Incident Form.

# CHILDREN WITH SEVERE ALLERGIES

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide a signed copy of the "Severe Allergies" form which is in the registration link/paperwork, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This form must be completely filled out by the child's physician and parent(s) or

legal guardian(s), and must be updated every twelve months, or more frequently, as needed. In addition to this form, parents must provide a copy of any additional physician's orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child's allergy.

Parents must also execute a "Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies" form. This form releases the Center from liability for administering treatment to children with severe allergies and taking other necessary actions set forth in the "Severe Allergies" form, provided the Center exercises reasonable care in taking such actions. Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy detailed herein. It is the parent's responsibility to monitor the expiration date of their child's medication and replace it with the updated medication. The Center reserves the right to exclude any child with severe allergies who do not have up to date. rescue medications in their classroom. Attendance can resume once the proper medications are provided and accompanying paperwork for the medication is completed.

# DOCUMENTATION OF SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS

An Emergency Care Plan will be on file for any child with special health care needs (seizures, etc.). A copy of the Emergency Care Plan must be kept in the classroom emergency binder. All staff working in the classroom must familiarize themselves with this plan, should an emergency arise. If necessary, staff will receive training regarding a child's specific health care needs.

# ACCESS POLICY

Any person in the Center who is not an owner, staff member, substitute, or subcontracted staff or volunteer who has had a record check and approval to be involved with childcare shall not have unrestricted access to children for whom that person is not the parent, guardian or custodian, nor be counted in the staff to child ratio. Unrestricted access means that a person has contact with a child alone or is personally responsible for childcare.

A person who does not have unrestricted access will be under the direct supervision and monitoring of a paid staff member at all times and will not be allowed to assume any childcare responsibilities. The primary responsibility of the supervision and monitoring will be assumed by the Lead Teacher unless he/she delegates it to the Full Time Assistant Teacher due to a conflict of interest with the person.

Center staff will approach anyone who is on the property of the Center without their knowledge to ask what their purpose is. If a staff member is unsure about the reason, they must contact the Director gets approval for the person to be on site. If it becomes a dangerous situation, staff will follow the "Dangerous Adult" procedure. Non-agency persons who are on the property for other reasons such as maintenance, repairs, etc., will be monitored by a paid staff member and will not be allowed to interact with children on the premises.

A sex offender who has been convicted of a sex offense against a minor (even if the sex offender is the parent, guardian or custodian) who is required to register with the South Carolina sex offender registry:

- Shall not operate, manage, be employed by, or function as a contractor or volunteer at the childcare Center.
- Shall not be on the property of the childcare Center, whether a parent or on the authorized pickup list; nor come in with a parent or person authorized to pick up a child. The Director is not obligated to provide permission or consult with their DHS licensing agent first.

# STATE CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS

Each staff member must complete a SLED and Central Registry Check every two years. A search will be completed and includes checks of South Carolina Criminal History, Child Abuse and Sex Offender Registries.

# NATIONAL CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS

Each staff member must complete a Form 1706 and be fingerprinted by a certified technician. Fingerprint appointments may be obtained from the Director and/or Assistant Director. Fingerprints are submitted to the FBI and a check of national criminal history records is conducted.

#### **VISITORS**

All individuals who are visiting the center (i.e., someone who is not a parent or authorized pick-up person; or staff member) is required to check in at the office before entering the center. The visitor is then required to check out before leaving the building. Staff members should notify the Director and/or Assistant Director if expecting a visitor.

# **CURRICULUM**

The curriculum at Brighter Futures includes the child-initiated and teacher-directed activities and experiences offered to young children that support and enrich their development physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. Brighter Futures uses the Learning Beyond Early Learning Curriculum as a guide for planning the curriculum in each of its program rooms.

Each classroom has weekly lesson plans, posted in the classroom. These plans contain several activities, designed to foster each child's development, and the development of the group. Lesson plans may be changed to accommodate the children's changing interests.

Each classroom is set up in Centers, which include blocks, dramatic play, books, gross motor, fine motor, and art. Outdoor play is important to a child's physical development and must be included in both the morning and afternoon schedule. Self-selection or "free play" is a daily part of the curriculum and means a child has the opportunity to choose which Center or activity

he/she participates in. This promotes creative expression and the development of important social skills.

# DAILY SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITIES

The Lead Teacher and Full-Time Assistant Teacher work cooperatively to create a daily schedule and plan activities that meet each child's developmental abilities and needs. Every staff member is responsible for carrying out the schedule and activities. The daily schedule and activities create a balance between active and quiet times; large and small group, and individual activities; small and large muscle activities; indoor and outdoor play times; as well as times for self-selection and teacher-directed activities.

Consistency from day-to-day is particularly important to the overall well-being of the children and classroom environment. Children thrive on consistency! Routines should be maintained whenever possible for arrivals and departures; meals and snacks; resting or nap times; personal care routines like toileting and hand washing; and transitions.

Lesson plans and the daily schedule must be posted in the classroom and visible at all times.

#### PROJECT STUDIES

The use of project studies is a practical and logical way to begin curriculum planning. The studies should be based upon what the children know and see every day, as well as the children's interests. The studies must be age-appropriate and may span the length of one week, or one month depending on the interest level.

Teachers are encouraged to discuss with each other their studies and coordinate the sharing of materials and activities.

# PHYSCIAL ENVIROMENT

The actual room arrangement of each program room is the responsibility of the program Lead Teacher and Full-Time Assistant Teacher. Space should be organized according to the Environment Rating Scales (ERS). Centers should include blocks, dramatic play, art, large and small motor, and books. These areas should be clearly defined, with obvious boundaries. Quiet areas should be set up as far away from noisy activities (blocks, cars, etc.) as possible. The room décor should consist mostly of child artwork and photographs of animals, people, food, and the children themselves at the child's eye level. Room arrangement should take into consideration that staff must be able to see every child at all times.

For a more detailed description of room arrangement and the physical environment, staff members may refer to a copy of the appropriate ERS manual, available in the office. The Director and/or Assistant Director must approve changes to the physical environment, including the room arrangement.

#### FREE PLAY

"Free-play" (also called child-initiated activities, free choice, self-selection) must be incorporated into the morning and afternoon schedule. Teachers are expected to actively

participate with the children during free play activities by asking questions about what the children are doing, participating in their pretend play, reading books when prompted, encouraging children to try new activities or play with a new toy, etc.

#### **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Outdoor play must be incorporated into the daily schedule for both the morning and afternoon, in almost all-weather conditions. In the event of rain, severe wind/cold, or extreme heat, children are permitted to remain indoors. Teachers should refer to the Child Care Weather Watch poster to determine if it is too hot or cold to play outdoors.

There is less structure in an outdoor learning environment; however, it is expected that staff members actively engage in activities when prompted by the children. Outdoor play is an opportunity for children to run, jump, climb and use their bodies in ways that would otherwise be unsafe in an indoor classroom. In addition, a large amount of social interaction takes place when children play outdoors. Because they are engaged in fewer teacher-directed activities and more child directed play, children are able to choose their friends and who to interact with.

The outdoor learning environment is an extension of the indoor classroom. Concepts taught indoors can be expanded upon while outdoors. For example, building blocks on an uneven surface outside, or playing with toy cars in the grass teaches children about different textures, sounds, and smells because the environment is naturally different from the indoors. Lesson plans must include an outdoor learning component.

# **NAP/REST TIME**

The South Carolina Department of Social Services recommends that all children must be provided with a regularly scheduled nap or resting time. Children will not be forced to sleep but may be encouraged to lie quietly for a period. The length of time a child should have to remain resting varies by child. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the maximum amount of time a child should have to remain resting. Children should be provided with alternative quiet activities if unable to rest.

Children are encouraged to bring a familiar item from home to use during nap/rest time, such as a small blanket or stuffed animal. These items will be stored in your child's cubby or on his/her cot or mat; there is limited space for storage of such items. Please take this into consideration when deciding which items to bring. All items should be clearly labeled with your child's name, as all class laundry is sent home to be washed weekly.

#### **MULTIMEDIA**

The use of multimedia in our program is an extension of the teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms. Teachers may select movie, television, and computer game titles based upon weekly themes. Children are not required to view part or all of a video or television show, or to play computer games. Instead, the activity is offered as one of several Centers. All multimedia must have a rating of "PG" or "E" and must possess an educational theme. Children are limited to a specified amount of time, 3 (three) hours per week.

# **ASSESSMENTS**

The Learning Beyond Assessment<sup>TM</sup> is the assessment tool used by the programs to evaluate and track each child's individual development during their time at Brighter Futures It is an on-going assessment system, meaning that teachers are continually watching, observing, and documenting each child's development. The same tool is used from birth through kindergarten, to allow a more complete picture of your child's development. By tracking a child's development, our teachers can plan activities that are appropriate for each child's developmental abilities.

# PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Lead teachers will conduct conferences. Parent-teacher conferences will typically be offered at least twice per year or each time a child transitions classroom. The goal of the parent-teacher conference is to gain insight into your child's development both in the Center setting as well as the home setting. During conferences, the child's development and any goals for the child will be discussed. Parents are encouraged to request conferences whenever they feel it necessary.

#### ASSESSMENT PROFILIOS

A permanent assessment portfolio will be kept for each child, and passed to the next teacher when a child transitions. Assessment portfolios will contain a variety of items, including photographs, examples of artwork, assessment profiles, and parent-teacher conference forms. It is the responsibility of the Lead Teacher and Full Time Assistant Teacher to ensure portfolios are periodically and continuously updated.

Portfolios may be periodically taken home by families but should be returned promptly. When a child leaves Brighter Futures the assessment portfolio will be given to the family.

# FIELD TRIPS

Brighter Futures offers a variety of experiences both at and away from the center. Field trips are a creative way to enrich one's study and expand the learning environment. The Director and/or Assistant Director must approve all field trips. Field trips outside the Summerville city limits and/or longer than two hours require a parent to complete a "Field Trip Permission Form." These forms can be obtained from the Director and/or Assistant Director. Parents must be notified at least one week before the planned field trip.

Teachers may decide and are encouraged to conduct short, unannounced field trips including but not limited to walks as a class around the perimeter of the building and/or nearby neighborhoods; trips to local playgrounds; trips to local businesses. Teacher-child ratios must be maintained at all times. Parents complete a "Parent/Guardian Permissions" form at enrollment for this type of field trip and do not need to complete a separate form for the above-named instances.

#### RULES RELATED TO FIELD TRIPS

Before a field trip is approved, enough parent volunteers must be available to attend to meet the following adult-to-child ratios with staff members included:

Three-year-olds: 1:12 ratioFour-year-olds: 1:12 ratioFive-year-olds: 1:12

# **Car Seats**

- Parents must provide a car seat for their child, as well as install the car seat into the vehicle if we use a passenger van. This will ensure each car seat is installed properly.
- Winter coats must be removed prior to buckling the child in their seat.
- If the child is in a five-point harness, the chest clip must slide up to the child's armpit level. The straps should be tight enough that you can fit no more than one finger underneath.
- If the child is in a booster, the seatbelt must stay in front of the child.

# **Head Counts**

Head counts will take place every 5-10 minutes during a field trip, as well as at the following times:

- 1. Before leaving the classroom
- 2. Before starting the vehicle (after buckling children)
- 3. After students exit the vehicle at the field trip location
- 4. After entering the field trip location
- 5. When exiting the field trip location
- 6. Before starting the vehicle (after buckling children)
- 7. After exiting the vehicle at the Center
- 8. When returning into the classroom

# **Walking Lines**

When traveling from one destination to the next in a line, one teacher will remain at the beginning of the line and one teacher will remain at the end of the line. Headcounts will happen every five minutes.

# **Required Materials**

- 1. Permission slips
- 2. First Aid Kit
- 3. Clipboard containing:
  - a. that day's attendance
  - b. children's "If Lost" headshots.
- 4. Each child must wear a Brighter Futures field trip "If Lost" lanyard.
- 5. Pocket lanyards for each teacher containing:
  - a. Class list with that day's attendance
  - b. Class total number
  - c. Emergency phone numbers
  - d. Brighter Futures phone number

6. A copy of Brighter Futures missing child procedure

# **Other Field Trip Policies**

Only staff members or the child's parents are allowed to take children to the bathroom.

# **DUTIES OF CLASSROOM STAFF**

Each classroom has a set of opening, nap time, closing and weekly cleaning tasks. Below are some general things that must be completed each day. Staff members are expected to familiarize themselves with the classroom specific duties.

# **MORNING DUTIES**

Make sure all program room doors are unlocked; mix new bleach water; put away sanitized toys; straighten toys and shelves; re-stock supplies such as soap, paper towels, toilet paper, diapers, wipes, etc.; and complete room set-up for the day's lesson plan.

# NAP TIME/NOON DUTIES

Straightening of shelves; sanitizing toys; cleaning tables/chairs/floors; curriculum planning; wash dishes; complete daily activity sheets for children; and prepare for afternoon.

# AFTERNOON/CLOSING DUTIES

Wash or spray toys that have been mouthed by children with bleach solution and air dry; take trash to dumpster, sanitize trash can, and replace trash bag; put toys and equipment away; check outdoor play area for equipment that needs to be put away; sanitize tables, chairs, and shelves; wash dishes; empty bleach solution; vacuum carpets; lock all program room doors after the last parent leaves for the day.

# ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Staff members are expected to greet each child and parent by name upon their arrival to the classroom. Arrival is the opportune time to discuss how the child's night was, what he/she ate for breakfast, special instructions for the day, etc. Upon arrival, each child must have direct contact with a staff member. Staff should be looking for previous injuries, signs of illness, or unusual behavior.

# **ARRIVAL**

During the enrollment process, each family completes an "Emergency Contact and Parental Consent" form. This form provides authorization for select individuals to pick-up children from the center. If you are not familiar with the person attempting to pick-up a child, you must request photo identification and check the "Emergency Contact" form. At the end of the day, staff must check the attendance clipboard to verify all children have been signed out.

# **DEPARTURE**

Brighter Futures charges a late fee of \$35 from 6:01 pm-6:15 pm and \$25.00 every 15 minutes after 6:15 pm After 3 instances of a child being picked up late, enrollment will be reviewed and potentially cancelled. If a child is picked-up after 6:00 pm, please make a note on the attendance clipboard and inform the Director or Assistant Director the following day. If parents do not

arrive by 6:00 pm to pick up their child, attempt to contact them at all available phone numbers. If the parents cannot be reached, attempt to contact the authorized pick-up persons.

#### LATE PICK-UP

If you are unable to reach the authorized pick-up persons by 6:15 pm, contact the Director or Assistant Director. The Summerville Police Department or South Carolina DSS/CPS will then be contacted.

# **GUIDANCE STRAGITIES**

Every adult who cares for children has a responsibility to guide, correct and socialize children toward appropriate behaviors. These adult actions often are called child guidance and discipline. Positive guidance and discipline are crucial because they promote children's self-control, teach children responsibility and help children make thoughtful choices. The more effective caregivers are at encouraging appropriate child behavior, the less time and effort adults will spend correcting children's misbehavior.

Effective guidance and discipline focus on the development of the child. They also preserve the child's self-esteem and dignity. Actions that insult or belittle are likely to cause children to view their caregivers negatively, which can inhibit learning and can teach the child to be unkind to others. However, actions that acknowledge the child's efforts and progress, no matter how slow or small, are likely to encourage healthy development. Teaching children self-discipline is a demanding task. It requires patience, thoughtful attention, cooperation and a good understanding of the child. Brighter Futures staff will use only positive guidance techniques.

When interacting with young children, staff should ask themselves the following questions: "Am I..."

- Validating feelings?
- Asking open-ended questions?
- Encouraging problem solving?
- Respecting children's choices?
- Using praise and positive reinforcement?
- Talking with children not at them?
- Circulating throughout the classroom?
- At the child's eye level?

# **REASONS FOR MISBEHAVIOR**

If caregivers understand why children misbehave, they can be more successful at reducing behavior problems. Listed here are some of the possible reasons why children misbehave.

- Children want to test whether caregivers will enforce rules.
- They experience different sets of expectations between Center and home.
- A child does not understand the rules or is held to expectations that are beyond their developmental levels.

- They want to assert themselves and their independence.
- They feel ill, bored, hungry or sleepy.
- They lack accurate information and prior experience.
- They have been previously "rewarded" for their misbehavior with adult attention.

#### **PREVENTINGMISBEHAVIOR**

Child misbehavior is impossible to prevent completely. Children, usually curious and endlessly creative, are likely to do things parents and other caregivers have not expected. However, there are many positive steps caregivers can take to help prevent misbehavior.

- Set clear, consistent rules. (e.g., walking feet; gentle touches)
- Make certain the environment is safe and worry-free.
- Show interest in the child's activities. (e.g., participating in activities with the children so they stay interested in longer periods)
- Encourage self-control and independence by providing meaningful choices. (e.g., "You may pick up the blocks or art Center.")
- Focus on the desired behavior, rather than the one to be avoided. (e.g., "Ashley, please use gentle touches with your friends.")
- Build children's images of themselves as trustworthy, responsible and cooperative.
- Give clear directions, one at a time.
- Say "Yes" whenever possible.
- Notice and pay attention to children when they do things right. (e.g., "Joey is playing so nicely. I like it when you keep the blocks on the table.")
- Encourage children often and generously.
- Set a good example. (e.g., using a quiet voice when children should be quiet)
- Help children see how their actions affect others.

# RESPONDING TO MISBEHAVIOR

Below are strategies Brighter Futures staff will use to respond to child misbehavior. Remember, however, that it's always a good idea if rules are explained fully and clearly understood before misbehavior occurs. Whenever possible, involve children in making the rules for the classroom.

#### Redirection

• This strategy should be used most frequently when working with young children. If a child is not following the rules or being uncooperative, quickly get the child's attention and introduce another activity. For example, "Kate, please help me water the flowers now. You've been riding the bike for a long time and it's now Logan's turn."

# • Logical Consequences

• These are structured consequences that follow specific misbehaviors. The child should be able to see how the behavior and the consequence are directly related. For example, Andrew is standing on his chair at lunch. His teacher should remind him that if he stands on his chair, he could fall and get hurt; this will make him sad.

# • Participate in the Solution

• If a child damages something, he/she needs to help in fixing it or in cleaning up. If a child causes someone distress, he/she should help in relieving that. For example, "It

made Brandon very sad when you told him he was ugly. What can you do/say to help me make him feel better?"

# • Natural consequences

 Allowing children to experience the consequences of their behavior is also called learning the hard way. For example, Laura does not put her books back in her Center bag after she finishes reading. One day she loses a book, and therefore must find a way to replace it. Only use natural consequences when they will not endanger the child's health or safety.

# • "Take a break" or "Cozy Corner"

• In some instances, a child may need to be removed from a particular situation in which he/she has become overwhelmed or violent. The child should be directed to "take a break" or sit in the "cozy corner." This strategy gives the child a chance to calm down, regain control, and reflect quietly on his/her behavior away from others. Once the child has calmed down, staff should talk with the child about the actions that led up to and resulted in needing a break or being sent to calm down. For example, "Hannah, we have talked often about how hitting is not acceptable. But because you hit John, please leave the blocks Center and go to the cozy corner. I will talk to you when you are ready."

If these actions do not help in reducing or changing behavior the following will take place:

- 1. Staff will report behavior and what strategies have been attempted to the Director (s).
- **2.** The Director will observe the child and meet with the Lead Teacher to develop a behavior management plan.
- **3.** The behavior management plan will be discussed with the parents and then put into practice.
- **4.** The Director, Lead Teacher and Assistant Teachers, and parents will evaluate the behavior management plan. If needed, adjustments will be made.
- 5. The Center with partner with an organization to help: Tri-County Therapy, PEAR, etc...

\*\* If a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the child will be removed from the classroom and possibly the program for a period.

#### USEFULPHRASES

The following phrases are useful when problem-solving with children.

- Instead of "No" or "Don't"
  - o Say "Please stop", "I don't like that", "That's not OK", or "That is not a choice"
- Instead of "That's not nice"
  - o Say "That's not OK", "Please use gentle touches", or "That hurts Jordan"
- Instead of "No running"
  - o Say "I need you to use your walking feet" or "You may run when we go outside"
- Instead of "Stop crying"
  - o Say "I need you to use your words to tell me what is wrong"

- Instead of "Can you put away your toys?" (If it is not a choice, do not pose it as a question)
  - o Say "You may help me pick up the blocks, or help Alyssa pick up the puzzles"
- Instead of "I said yes" (when a child tells you "no")
  - o Say "No is not a choice; I need you to..."

# **BITING POLICY**

Biting is a behavior that usually appears between the ages of one and **three years old.** While biting is an age-appropriate behavior, it is important to remember it is also an unacceptable behavior in a childcare environment. Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, sensory exploration, cause and effect, imitation, crowding, seeking attention, frustration and stress. Biting is not something to blame on children, their parents or their teachers. There are a variety of strategies we implement at Brighter Futures to prevent and stop biting.

This is the process followed when a child bites:

- The biting child is stopped and told, "Biting hurts" in a firm voice. Teachers should remain calm, being careful not to show anger or frustration towards the child.
- The biting child is removed from the situation. Depending upon the observed motive for the bite, the separation may include re-direction or meeting the child's needs. As little attention as possible will be placed on the biting child, to avoid reinforcing the behavior.
- Appropriate first aid will be provided to the child who was bitten. The bite will be
  washed with soap and water; cold compress will be applied to reduce pain and swelling.
  A bandage will be applied if necessary.
- If the skin is broken with a bite, both parents will be notified, and the biter will be sent home for the day.

It is important to explore the reasons for biting when it occurs. Teachers need to work with parents to gather information about the child's behavior and begin observations to determine the reasons for biting. Examples of triggers would be communication deficits, transitions, hunger, lack of sleep, need for oral stimulation or teething pain. Once triggers are identified, staff can work on prevention strategies and start teaching replacement skills.

Below are the steps the teacher will take to identify triggers and replace the behavior:

- 1. The teacher will examine the context in which the biting is occurring and look for patterns. The following questions should be asked:
  - Was the space too crowded?
  - Were there too few toys?
  - Was there too little to do or too much waiting?
  - Was the child who bit getting the attention and care he/she deserved at other times?
- 2. The teacher will change the environment, routines or activities if necessary.
- 3. The teacher will work with the child who is biting to resolve conflicts and frustrations in more appropriate ways.

- 4. The teacher will observe the child, to get an idea of why and when they are likely to bite.
- 5. The teacher will identify children likely to be bitten and make special efforts to reduce their chance of being bitten.
- 6. The teacher, parent and Director will meet regularly to regulate an action plan and measure outcomes.
- 7. If biting continues the teacher will observe the group more closely and work with the parents to seek out additional resources as necessary to shadow the child who is biting.

All information is confidential, and the names of the children involved in the incident are not shared between parents. In addition, biting is always documented on an Incident/Accident Report which is completed and signed by a teacher and parent. A copy is provided to the parent and the original kept in the child's permanent enrollment file in the office.

# REMOVAL OF A CHILD FROM CLASSROOM

Children cannot be removed from the classroom as we do not have extra staff available to correct ratios. In rare instances, children may be brought to the main office and the Director and/or Assistant Director will assist the child in calming down and/or help staff manage the classroom. Teachers must call the office and speak to the Director and/or Assistant Director before removing a child from the classroom.

If at any time a child's behavior becomes threatening to themselves, other children, staff or teachers, the Director and/or Assistant Director should be immediately notified.

# **MEALS AND NUTRITION**

Brighter Futures follows the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) nutrition and practice guidelines for meals and snacks.

- Prior to each meal, tables must be washed with soapy water. Each table must then be sanitized with bleach water and either air-dried or wiped clean with a dry paper towel.
- All staff and children must wash their hands before and after each meal, for at least 20 seconds.
- Staff shall sit with children at the tables and supervise all mealtimes. Staff should encourage conversation by asking questions or talking about the food; good table manners should be modeled.
- First-serving child sized portions will be provided for all staff. Each staff member is expected to eat the meal provided, in order to model good eating habits.
- Children will never be forced or bribed to eat. Children must have every food on their plate. However, if a child states that he/she does not like a particular food, they may place just a small amount (ex: one or two peas) on their plate.

• Following every meal, tables and chairs must be washed with soapy water and sanitized with bleach water.

At Brighter Futures Center, children are provided a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack. Brighter Futures follows the nutritional guidelines established by the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Menus will be posted on the bulletin board near the main entrance. You may request a copy to take home if you would like.

Children will be encouraged to sample all the foods that are offered but will never be forced to eat. Please inform your child's teacher if your child cannot eat a certain food or has different dietary needs (e.g., vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant) so a substitution can be made. We must have a doctor's note on file for food allergies. For certain dietary restrictions, you may be asked to provide food from home for your child.

- Breakfast is served between 7:00 am and 7:50 am
- Lunch is served between 11:00 am and 12:00 pm
- PM Snack is served between 2:00 pm and 3:00 pm
- Late snacks (if given) are served between 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

# PEANUT/NUT FREE CLASSROOMS

Due to the extreme nature of some allergic reactions to peanuts/nuts and products containing peanuts and/or nuts in some children, The Center is peanut/nut free. The Director will notify you of any other allergies in the classroom. Per our Confidentiality Policy, only the allergen will be identified, not the child.

Parents of children in an allergen aware classroom are responsible for providing foods that are free of the identified allergen for their child's lunch. The important thing to remember is to read the label of all food item parents send to school with their child. Many foods which we do not think of as containing peanuts or nuts have in fact been made in the same factories as peanut/nut containing foods and are therefore considered to be contaminated. When reading the label look at not only the ingredients listed, but for statements such as, "may contain traces of peanuts." For example, Plain Chocolate M & M's have this statement on the label.

# PARENT RELATIONSHIPS

Many of our employees will become well acquainted with the parents of the children. This is an important part of providing quality care, but there are a few guidelines to which staff members must adhere:

- Address parents by their first name.
- Talk with parents about an issue with their child only if you are not in the classroom with children.
- Never talk about concerns about a child in front of any other children.
- When stating a concern about their child, also state at least two positive things about their child. Don't focus only on the negative.

- Do not use other children's names when discussing behavior concerns and/or incident reports.
- Avoid the phrase "I don't know." Instead, say "I'm not certain of the answer for that; can I get back to you?" then find the answer and reply to the parent as soon as possible.
- Conversations at pick-up and drop-off should be brief; your chief responsibility remains with the supervision of the children. If you feel a parent needs more time or attention, ask to schedule a time to meet outside the classroom.
- Employees are not allowed to date parents.

# HANDLING PARENT COMPLAINTS

- Listen carefully.
- Many times, a person just needs an opportunity to air his/her feelings and feel they've been heard.
- Repeat what you have heard the other person say, trying to summarize it in one sentence. ("You're upset that Gavin isn't able to stay awake for dinner and seems crabby at night.")
- State the changes that you think the parents would like to have made. ("You would like us to make sure Gavin lies down for at least an hour every afternoon.)
- State what you will do to solve the problem. ("I will speak with the other teachers and make a note on his chart to make sure the message reaches everyone.")
- Follow through. If you tell a parent, you will do something, do it promptly and follow up with them immediately afterward. ("I spoke with the other teachers last week; how are things going with Gavin? Did you notice a change?")
- If you are unsure how to solve the complaint, refer parents to the Director and/or Assistant Director. ("I'm not sure how to answer that; the Director and/or Assistant Director will be able to better help you.")

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**1. Introduction** At Brighter Futures Child Development Center, we are committed to fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional growth. This Staff Development Plan is designed to enhance the skills, knowledge, and effectiveness of our team in providing high-quality early childhood education and care.

# 2. Goals and Objectives

- Ensure all staff meet and exceed state licensing and accreditation requirements.
- Enhance teaching strategies and child development knowledge.
- Foster a collaborative and supportive team environment.
- Improve classroom management and child engagement techniques.
- Encourage ongoing professional growth and career advancement.

# 3. Professional Development Opportunities

- Orientation & Onboarding Training: All new employees will complete a structured orientation, covering center policies, curriculum, safety procedures, and child development best practices.
- State-Mandated Training: Employees will complete all required courses, such as CPR/First Aid, Child Abuse Prevention, and Health & Safety Standards.
- Monthly In-Service Training: Regular training sessions will focus on topics like behavior management, inclusion strategies, and effective communication with parents.
- Annual Professional Development Days: A full-day event dedicated to workshops, guest speakers, and team-building activities.
- Continuing Education Support: Encouragement to pursue additional certifications such as the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.
- Mentorship & Peer Learning: Experienced teachers will mentor new staff to promote knowledge-sharing and professional growth.
- Conferences & Workshops: Opportunities to attend industry-related conferences and training to stay updated with the latest trends in early childhood education.

#### 4. Evaluation and Feedback

- Self-Assessments: Staff will complete self-evaluations to reflect on strengths and areas for improvement.
- Supervisor Observations: Classroom observations will provide constructive feedback to help refine teaching practices.
- Performance Reviews: Conducted annually to assess progress, set goals, and discuss career advancement.
- Staff Surveys & Feedback Sessions: Regular input from staff will help shape future training initiatives and ensure relevance.

# 5. Incentives & Recognition

- Professional Development Stipends: Financial support for employees pursuing higher education or certifications.
- Employee Recognition Program: Acknowledging outstanding performance through awards and incentives.
- Career Advancement Opportunities: Encouragement for internal promotions based on skills development and leadership potential.
- Employees are eligible for pay raise based on performance, attendance, and professional development achievements.
- **6. Conclusion** Investing in our team's professional growth ensures the highest quality of care for the children and families we serve. Through this structured Staff Development Plan, Brighter Futures Child Development Center aims to empower educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to excel in early childhood education.

# **EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATION**

All employees are classified as either "exempt" or "non-exempt" from overtime compensation according to the overtime provisions of state and federal laws. Non-exempt employees are entitled to overtime pay. Exempt employees are not.

In addition, employees will be classified as the following:

Full-time: An employee who is normally scheduled to work a standard forty-hour workweek.

Part-time: An employee who is normally scheduled to work less than thirty-five hours per week and is not temporary.

Regular: An employee who has completed their six-month introductory period.

Temporary: An employee who is hired to temporarily supplement the work force or to assist in the completion of a specific project. Employment beyond the initial stated period does not in any way imply a change in employment status.

# SAMPLE POSTION DESCRIPTIONS

There are three tier classes for employees at Brighter Futures: Tier I, Tier II and Tier III. A staff member's tier determines eligibility for benefits such as paid vacation leave or health insurance, as well as a staff member's pay rate. There are different responsibilities, expectations, and qualifications for each tier.

Positions Covered: Lead Teacher, Assistant Teacher, Floater

**Pay Scale:** \$12.00 – \$16.00 per hour

# Tier 1: Entry-Level (Floater & Assistant Teacher I)

- Position: Floater / Assistant Teacher I
- Pay Range: \$10.00 \$12.50 per hour
- Requirements:
  - High School Diploma or GED
  - o Must complete required DSS training within 90 days
  - o Passion for working with children
  - Strong teamwork skills
  - No prior childcare experience required

# Responsibilities:

- Support classroom teachers as needed
- Supervise children during transitions and breaks
- Assist with mealtimes, diapering, and light cleaning
- Provide a nurturing and safe environment

# **Bonuses & Incentives:**

- \$100 sign-on bonus after 90 days with good attendance
- \$50 referral bonus for bringing in new hires (after 60 days of employment)
- Yearly loyalty bonus based on performance

# **Tier 2: Intermediate (Assistant Teacher Level II & Experienced Floater)**

- Position: Assistant Teacher II
- Pay Range: \$12.50 \$14.50 per hour
- Requirements:
  - o At least 6 months to 1 year of childcare experience
  - o Completion of DSS-mandated training
  - o CPR & First Aid Certification (or willingness to obtain)
  - Strong classroom management and communication skills

# Responsibilities:

- Assist the Lead Teacher with lesson plans and activities
- Maintain a structured and engaging learning environment
- Communicate with parents regarding daily progress
- Support children's development through interactive play and instruction

# Bonuses & Incentives:

- \$150 bonus for earning a Child Development Associate (CDA) certification
- \$50 performance bonus every 6 months for consistent attendance & positive parent feedback
- \$100 holiday bonus for employees with one year of service

# Tier 3: Lead Teacher (Experienced & Certified)

- Position: Lead Teacher
- Pay Range: \$14.50 \$16.00 per hour
- Requirements:
  - At least 2+ years of childcare experience
  - o Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or higher
  - o CPR & First Aid Certification
  - o Strong leadership and curriculum planning skills
  - Ability to train and mentor assistant teachers

# Responsibilities:

- Create and implement age-appropriate lesson plans
- Supervise and mentor assistant teachers and floaters
- Ensure classroom meets safety and licensing requirements
- Build strong relationships with parents and staff
- Track children's progress and maintain developmental records

# **Bonuses & Incentives:**

- \$200 annual retention bonus for teachers with 2+ years of service
- \$100 bonus for successfully mentoring a new hire for 3 months
- Quarterly classroom excellence bonus (\$50–\$100 based on parent & admin feedback)

#### **BENEFITS**

Eligibility for benefits is determined by employment status. Tier I and Tier II staff members are eligible for:

- Vacation and sick leave
- Non-paid holidays
- Individual or family health, dental, vision, and life insurance coverage (when offered)
- Discounted childcare (50 % off weekly rate, not combined with 2<sup>nd</sup> child discount))
- IRA Retirement plan (up to 3% match of contributions) (when offered)

Benefits will be offered to employees without discrimination to any person on the basis of race, color, age, creed, sex national origin, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, physical/mental disabilities or marital status.

# **VACATION (PAID TIME OFF{PTO})**

Paid vacation is available to employees following the six months of continuous employment with the Center and is provided based on the following calculations:

During the first 2 (two) years of employment, vacation time will be earned at the rate of .0192 hours per hour worked. Earned vacation can be taken after 1 (one) year continuous employment.

During the 3rd (third) through 5th (fifth) years of employment, paid vacation time will be earned at the rate of .0384 hours per hour worked.

During the 6th (sixth) and following years of employment, vacation time will be earned at the rate of .0586 hours per hour worked.

#### NOTES:

Paid vacation time of regular employees will be earned on a fractional basis. Fractional vacation weeks will correspond to the average number of hours worked during the preceding year.

Example: Employee "A" works 25 hours per week for 52 continuous weeks

 $25 \times 52 = 1.300 \text{ hours}$ 

Earned vacation equals 1,300 hours worked x .0192 = 25 hours

Earned vacation leave cannot be taken until after six months of employment or before it is accrued and approved.

Vacation may be taken in half-day increments of time.

Upon termination, unused earned vacation will be paid in a lump sum in the employee's final paycheck.

Vacation leave must be scheduled at least one week (two weeks is preferred) in advance using the absence approval form. The form should be completed for approval after the staff member has made arrangements for coverage during their time off. Only one full-time staff member per classroom may be absent at a time, unless there are unusual circumstances. Paid time off may not be used within the first week of a new school year (August) or schedule change. The Director and/or Assistant Director must be notified in advance of all absences. Full-Time and Part-Time Assistant Teachers, and Part-Time Aides should also notify the Director and Lead Teacher of any absences.

A maximum of one-week paid vacation may be carried over from one calendar year to the next. However, no more than one week of vacation may be taken at one time, except under extraordinary circumstances. The employee desiring to take a one to three days' vacation, sick or personal leave must complete a Leave Request Form two weeks before the first day of the scheduled leave. Any leave over three days, a request form must be given one month in advance of the first day of the request leave. Director's and supervisors request for more than one week of vacation should be in writing at least ninety [90] days prior to the beginning of the requested vacation period.

Brighter Futures encourages all employees to make the most of their vacation time. Regular breaks from daily work make everyone more productive. However, because circumstances do not always permit everyone to take vacation time when it is requested, the Center will offer employees the option of taking the dollar equivalent of their earned vacation hours at their regular hourly rate. The option for the dollar equivalent is offered only if the desired vacation cannot be approved by the Director due to scheduling conflicts. Arrangements to take earned vacation pay should be made at least (1) one payroll period in advance.

# **SICK LEAVE**

Sick Leave is choice available to employees following their first-year anniversary with the Center and is provided based on the following calculations:

During the first 2 (two) years of employment, sick leave will be earned at the rate of .01 hours per hour worked. Earned sick leave can be taken after six months of continuous employment.

During the 3rd (third) through 5th (fifth) years of employment, sick leave will be earned at the rate of .02 hours per hour worked.

During the 6th (sixth) and following years of employment, sick leave will be earned at the rate of .03 hours per hour worked.

Earned sick leave cannot be taken before it is accrued and approved.

Sick leave may be taken in half-day increments of time.

Upon becoming unemployed with the center, voluntary, involuntary or termination, unused sick leave will not be paid in a lump sum in the employee's final paycheck. Unused sick leave is forfeited.

A maximum of one-week sick leave may be carried over from one calendar year to the next. However, no more than one week of sick leave may be taken at one time, except under extraordinary circumstances. Requests for more than one week of sick leave should be in writing at least ninety [90] days prior to the beginning of the requested sick leave period, unless undue circumstances.

# **HOLIDAY**

According to applicable restrictions, Brighter Futures may grant non-paid holiday time off to all eligible employees immediately upon hire. If offered, holiday leave requests will be calculated based on the employee's straight time pay rate (as of the date of the holiday) times the number of hours the employee would have worked on that day.

Possible non-paid holidays are as follows:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- Day after Christmas

To be eligible for holiday leave you must have worked your scheduled hours the days before and after the holiday. If a recognized holiday falls during an eligible employee's paid absence (e.g. vacation, sick leave), holiday leave will be provided instead of the time off benefit that would otherwise have applied. If a recognized holiday falls during an eligible employee's unpaid absence (e.g. unpaid leave of absence), no holiday pay will be provided.

# **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

# FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS

The Child Development Center conducts monthly fire, emergency/evacuation, and lockdown drills. Parents, staff, and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency/lockdown drill or real fire/emergency/lockdown situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the Center. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into the Center. Parents may wait with the child's class in the designated safe zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

# EMERGENCYMEDICAL/DENTALPROCEDURE

It is important that parents complete and update, as needed, an Emergency Contact and Parental Consent Form. This form contains contact information for both the parents as well as the individuals authorized to pick up the child in the event of illness or emergency. In addition, the form allows Brighter Futures Center staff members to seek emergency medical or dental care from authorized care providers in the event of serious injury. It is the responsibility of the parents to complete this form and to make corrections to this information when necessary.

- If a child becomes ill or injured after arriving at the Center, the Director or Lead Teacher will attempt to contact the parent(s) at all available telephone numbers. If a parent cannot be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts/authorized pick-up persons on the Emergency Contact & Parental Consent form will be called.
- Children who are ill or seriously injured will be sent to the office and remain under the supervision of the Director until a parent arrives.

# If the child requires immediate medical attention:

- The staff member who witnessed the emergency will remain with the injured child and instruct someone else to call 911. If no one is available, first ensure the child is stable and if possible, bring the child with you to call 911 for Emergency Medical Services (EMS).
- If EMS must transport a child to the hospital, a staff member who witnessed the emergency will accompany EMS with the child to the hospital, bringing the child's physical exam, immunization records, and Emergency Contact & Parental Consent Form.
- The Director will contact the parent(s).

# FIRE, TORNADO, BOMB OR OTHER EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Fire regulations and tornado warning procedures are posted near the exits in each classroom. Fire and tornado drills are conducted each month; all classrooms are required to participate. In the event of a fire, bomb threat, or other evacuation emergencies, the children and teachers will immediately leave the building and meet on the sidewalk northeast of the building. In case of a tornado, each classroom has a designated area to seek shelter until the emergency is over.

Children and teachers will take shelter at Senior Helpers next door for emergency evacuations. Parents will be called as soon as safely possible following an emergency.

For the safety of children, parents, and staff, we ask that parents do not attempt to pick up their child **during** an evacuation emergency so a proper head count of the children can be conducted

to ensure all children was safely evacuated out of the building. Once the children and teachers are in a safe space and accounted for, the children will be released to their parents.

# BLIZZARD/SEVEREWINTER WEATHER

The Director will monitor the weather and local news stations throughout the day to determine when it is appropriate to close the Center early or cancel care for the following day. The Director and Lead Teachers are responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the situation. Routine classroom activities will continue until parents arrive.

# MISSING OR ABDUCTED CHILD

- In the event of a missing child, the Lead Teacher will search for the child in the immediate area, while another staff member calls the Director to help with the search.
- If the child cannot be located in a reasonable amount of time, the Director will notify the police, DSS and the child's parents.
- In the event of an abducted child, the Lead Teacher must **immediately** contact the Director, the Police Department, and the child's parents.

# **DANGEROUS INTRUDER**

A dangerous adult is considered someone who is displaying inappropriate or threatening behavior, carrying a weapon, or showing signs of intoxication from either drugs or alcohol. This also includes an individual that is prohibited by court order from picking up or having contact with a child.

If there is an intruder or dangerous adult in the Center:

- Staff members in the immediate area will position themselves between the children and intruder/dangerous adults.
- A staff member will attempt to have the parent/intruder move to the hallway and close
  the classroom door, while a second staff member calls the Director to assist with the
  situation.

# IN THE EVENT OF AN INTRUDER OR DANGEROUS ADULT:

- Staff members will be notified by the Director of the threat using the "All Page" feature on the telephones.
- ALL staff and children must return to their classrooms; lock all classroom doors; and sit on the floor away from doors and windows. Wait for an "All Clear" from the Director before continuing with activities.
- The Director, or a staff member designated by the Director will be on watch.
- The Director will contact the local police department to notify them of the situation.
- The Director will instruct the intruder or dangerous adult to leave the premises, maintaining visual contact with the individual until the police arrive, or until the individual leaves.

#### **POWER FAILURE**

Staff members and children should remain in the classroom and if possible, proceed with activities as usual, or may go to the outdoor playground until power resumes.

If power cannot be restored within a reasonable amount of time, the Center will close and DSS and parents will be contacted.

- Lead Teachers are responsible for contacting parents to inform them of the closing and of the need to immediately pick up their child.
- Activities will resume as soon as possible until parents arrive.

#### **WEAPONS**

Brighter Futures Center will not permit or tolerate the possession, display, or use of weapons by any person on Center premises or vehicles, while the person is participating in or attending Brighter Futures events and activities, or while the person is away from Center grounds, if such conduct directly affects the good order and management of the district. This does not apply to a guard, law enforcement officer, or member of the armed forces on the property for official business. Parents, teachers or children who violate this policy may be subject to expulsion and/or other disciplinary action. Weapons shall be taken from children and others who bring them onto Center premises, vehicles or to Center activities. Violations of this section will be reported to law enforcement agencies in accordance with the law.

# **Definition of Weapons**

Any object which could be used to injure another person, and which has no Center-related purpose will be considered a weapon. An object which has a Center-related purpose, but which is used to threaten or inflict injury will also be considered a weapon. Weapons include, but are not limited to, knives of all types, guns, firearms, fireworks, explosives or other chemicals, and simulated (including toy) weapons.

# **SANCTIONS.**

Students may be subject to expulsion for violating this policy depending on the weapon. The administration may impose a lesser sanction if in their judgment all the circumstances surrounding the incident warrant a less severe sanction. The following serve as guidelines for the administration when weapons which are not firearms are involved.

- 1. Suspension for three to five days for possession of a weapon.
- 2. Suspension for five to ten days for display of a weapon.
- 3. Suspension with recommendation for expulsion for displaying a weapon in a threatening manner or for use of a weapon to inflict harm or injury to another person or for placing others in imminent danger.

HANDLING, STORAGE, AND DISPOSAL OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND BIOLOGICAL CONTAMINANTS POLICY

Brighter Futures Child Development Center is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for children, staff, and visitors. To ensure the safety of all individuals, we strictly regulate the handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and biological contaminants in compliance with state and federal regulations.

#### STORAGE AND USE OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

- a. Toxic substances must be stored out of the reach of children in a locked cabinet. Toxic substances or hazardous materials include but are not limited to: chemicals, cleaning products, disinfectant sprays, insecticides, gasoline products.
- b. Toxic substances must not be used while children are present.
- c. Flammable materials should be stored in a separate building or area away from high temperatures and ignition sources, inaccessible to children.
- d. Toxic substances and hazardous materials must be stored away from food and medication.
- e. Poisonous plants must not be allowed in the center.
- f. Chemicals used to control odors must not be allowed, e.g., moth balls, air fresheners, essential oils, toilet/urinal deodorizer blocks.

# HANDLING AND DISPOSAL OF BIOLOGICAL CONTAMINANTS

- a. Staff must follow universal precautions when handling bodily fluids. This includes using disposable gloves, properly washing hands before and after contact, and safely disposing of contaminated materials.
- b. Any material that comes into contact with bodily fluids, such as tissues, disposable gloves, and cleaning rags, must be placed in a sealed plastic bag and disposed of in a designated, covered waste bin.
- c. Surfaces contaminated with bodily fluids must be cleaned and disinfected immediately with an approved disinfectant.
- d. Any soiled clothing must be placed in a sealed plastic bag and returned to the child's parent/guardian at pickup.
- e. Staff members who come into contact with bodily fluids must wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water immediately after removal of gloves.

# COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING

All staff members must adhere to this policy at all times. The program director is responsible for ensuring compliance and conducting regular checks to verify that hazardous materials and biological contaminants are managed appropriately. Any violations of this policy will result in corrective action, including retraining and possible disciplinary measures.

This policy must be reviewed annually and updated as needed to remain in compliance with local, state, and federal guidelines.

This policy is designed to promote the health and safety of all children, staff, and visitors at Brighter Futures Child Development Center. Adherence to these guidelines will help ensure a secure environment for everyone involved.

# **QUESTIONS/CONCERNS**

If you have a question or concern, do not hesitate to bring it to the attention of the teacher most directly involved. If the concern is not resolved, the Director. If not resolved, the OWNER can be reached at <a href="mailto:slmarshall@bfcdc.com">slmarshall@bfcdc.com</a>. The Director is available to assist parents and staff in resolving concerns.

# **POLICY CHANGES**

The Center reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to change any policies through written communication with families. The Center utilizes e-mail as the prime form of communication. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure we always have an up-to-date e-mail address on file.