

# Linked Together

## Parent Handbook

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Linked Together before and after school child care program. We know that finding the right place for your child is a very important and often challenging decision to make. We also understand that it is ultimately important that you feel secure and as though your child's emotional, social, developmental, and physical needs will be met when leaving your little one in the care of others. Our program has been developed with all of this in mind. We are excited to be able to offer the families of Newmarket a program that will:

- Give children the opportunity to play, learn, and grow in an accepting and encouraging environment.
- Enable children to explore, embrace, and become a healthy part of the social, emotional, and physical world around them on both a local and global level.
- Encourage creativity and wonder.
- Teach respect and compassion for our teachers, friends, families, and nature.
- Support and meet the diverse childcare needs of the families in our community.

This Handbook has been developed to give you a thorough introduction to our unique program and its processes and procedures. Building a partnership with our parents is vital to the program's success so please take some time to thoroughly read through each section of this handbook and feel free to contact us directly if you have any additional questions that need to be answered.

Please remember that your input and ideas will only help us grow and are always welcome. Thank you once again for joining us as we look forward to having the opportunity to watch your child play, learn, and grow in our inspiring and encouraging environment!

Yours in the best interest of the child,  
Ree Cooper, Executive Director  
, Site Director

## **Agency Mission**

### **History**

Linked Together is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring and supporting the youth of our community and surrounding areas to identify and achieve their goals through a variety of learning experiences and community participation.

Linked Together was established on July 1, 1996. When we opened our doors, we were licensed for 45 children and we were housed out of the school cafeteria. In August 2002 we expanded our agency and not only used the cafeteria but also a Kindergarten classroom in the school. The children divided into two groups. Kindergarten and first grade use the kindergarten room while second through six grades are in the cafeteria. The expansion allowed us to serve 15 more children a day taking us from 45 daily to 60 daily. A new component of the program that we added in 2006 is service learning. The children pick a project that is a need in our community. The students learn and develop through active participation to find a solution to that need. In the summer of 2015, we increase our numbers to 90 children each day. We started using a first-grade classroom which became our homework room where children could have a quiet room to complete homework assignments or read quietly. A part time Group Leader was added to our staff. In the summer of 2016, we increased our numbers to 120 and changed our starting aged from 5 years to 4 years and 8 months to coincide with the age of starting school. We added a second Kindergarten classroom. We also added a full time Group Leader position. As a non-profit organization, Linked Together is overseen by a Volunteer Board of Directors whose function is to set policies, oversee the financial management of our center and uphold the By-laws of the agency. Parents are encouraged to join the Board.

## **Program Philosophy**

The goal of our program is to help each child to become a well-rounded person. The staff of the school age program believes that learning is a life-long process and that everyone is capable of such learning. Learning should be an enjoyable process which fosters creativity, self-esteem and most importantly, curiosity. At our program it is a natural process accomplished in a warm, caring and safe atmosphere. The process originates from each child and is facilitated by the staff.

It is our task to help our youth to understand, establish and live by the values of our community. We believe that each student will be some sort of leader in his/her adult life, and we practice the necessary skills of communication and logical thinking. We teach fundamental skills such as caring for the well-being of others and caring for the well-being of their environment. We also believe that mistakes in judgment occasionally will be made. It is not our job to say "you're wrong;" it is our job to show them that there may be a different way.

## **The Program Environment**

Before school care is offered from 6:30 am- 8:30 am. Parents may sign children in any time between those hours. Morning snack is offered between 7am and 7:30 am. Quiet free play choices will be offered.

Our after school care is offered from school dismissal- 6:00pm. As the children arrive our routine is attendance, announcements, bathroom trips and then the children go outside for outdoor activities, weather permitting. When we return inside from recess, we do bathroom trips again followed by a snack. Then the children engage in the following choices: arts and crafts, group game, Stem activity, science projects, character development, multicultural activities and Service Learning to work on a community project. At 5:00pm all of the children gather together for Free Time with games and manipulatives. Our staff creates an environment where children can learn through exploration and interaction with appropriate materials, adults and other children.

## Our Hours of Operation

We are open Monday through Friday from 6:30- 8:30AM and from school dismissal-6:00 PM when the Newmarket Elementary School is in session. In addition, we are in session from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM on vacation and staff PD days. Please refer to the Agency Calendar about our days of closure and vacation schedules.

**LATE PICKUPS:** As the parent, you agree that if you or your designated pick up person picks up your child after 6:00 PM, you will be charged \$1.00 for every minute that your child is there after closing. We will use the clock in the Linked Together site to determine the time. **THIS FEE SHOULD BE PAID DIRECTLY TO THE STAFF IN CASH AT THE TIME YOU PICK UP YOUR CHILD. If this occurs on a regular basis, child care may be terminated.**

If by 7:00 pm Linked Together has not heard from the parent/guardian and the staff has been unsuccessful in trying to reach emergency contacts listed on the child's file, Linked Together will contact the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and the police department to report the child has been abandoned. Linked Together will then release the child to the care of these services.

## Snow Policy & Emergency Closings

**Closure:** If the Newmarket School District is **closed**, Linked Together will be **Closed**.

**Snow Delay:** If the Newmarket School District has a **two-hour delay**, Linked Together will also have a **two-hour delay** and open at 8:30 until school begins

**Delay to Cancellation:** If a snow delay goes to a cancellation, Linked Together will close. Parents will be contacted to come and pick up their children.

**Early Release Due to Snow:** If there is an early release from school due to inclement weather, Linked Together will operate from the early release time to 6:00 PM.

Please note that if weather conditions on a delay to cancellation or early release due to snow cause roads to be extremely hazardous, the Executive Director will notify parents that the program will be closing early.

**Emergency Closings:** In the event of floods, power outages, furnace problems, etc. that cause the Newmarket Elementary School to close for the safety of the children, Linked Together will also be closed.

**SNOW DELAYS AND CLOSINGS ARE MADE ON WOKQ, WERZ FM AND WMYF AM RADIO STATIONS AS WELL AS WMUR CHANNEL 9 TV.**

**Vacation Weeks:** During vacation weeks, the decision to open and run Linked Together will be made with the assistance of the Newmarket Public Works Director.

**REGULAR RATES ARE CHARGED FOR ALL WEEKS, THEREFORE, YOU WILL BE CHARGED FOR SNOW DAYS, FLOOD DAYS, NO HEAT DAYS, NO POWER DAYS and Holidays.**

### **Sign in & Out**

All children must be signed in and out daily for tuition purposes. When signing your child in, please state who will be picking up your child if other than you. Your child will not be released to anyone who is not on the emergency form. If the person is not listed, we require written permission from the parent or legal guardian. The person picking up your child must be at least 16 years of age. If the staff does not know the authorized person, a picture ID will be requested. You may add new names to your list at any time by notifying the Site Director. If you think you cannot pick up your child by 6:00 PM and did not talk to a teacher when dropping your child off, (for example an emergency arises and your car breaks down, flat tire, etc.) please contact the Executive Director or the Site Director at 498-0928 or email the agency at [simbaree@myfairpoint.net](mailto:simbaree@myfairpoint.net) or [Linkedprogram@gmail.com](mailto:Linkedprogram@gmail.com) before 2:00 PM. The safety of your child is very important to us and is not taken lightly or for granted, therefore clear and direct transfer of information to a teacher is necessary.

**ONCE A CHILD IS SIGNED OUT, THE PARENT/GUARDIAN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY AND SUPERVISION OF THEIR CHILD**

## Snacks & Meals

**Regular Program:** A healthy snack will be available for your child each day in our morning and afternoon programs. If your child has any dietary restrictions, please be sure to indicate them on the medical form.

**Full day program:** During full day programs, lunches must be brought from home. Breakfast and an afternoon snack will be available. If you send food that needs to be refrigerated, please use a lunch box that can hold an ice pack. Please do not send candy or sweetened drinks in your child's lunch. We will heat food as needed by microwave.

## Field Trips

The program may go on walks in the neighborhood or to a nearby park. Children will be accompanied by the appropriate staff at all times. A note will be left on the door to the cafeteria telling parents where their children are if they should arrive and the program is gone. Parents may pick up their children from wherever the destination may be.

Field trips may be scheduled during school vacation days and are a part of our summer program. Parents will be notified, and permission slips will need to be signed by a parent for your child to attend. Please read the permission slip carefully as some field trips require your child to bring special items to participate in the field trip. We require seat belt use. We have a first aid kit on our van.

## Holidays & Absences

**Holidays:** Linked Together will be closed for all major holidays including but not limited to: Independence Day, Labor Day and the Friday before, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving and the Friday after, Christmas, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day and Memorial Day. All days off will be posted in advance.

Linked Together has three vacation weeks a year. One is in the winter and falls over the Christmas break of the Newmarket School District. The other two fall at the end of the summer just before school starts to allow the custodial staff to clean the space that we use and have it ready for the new school year to begin. Please check the agency calendar for the exact dates.

**Absences:** It is absolutely necessary to know where all of our children are. If your child is going to be absent due to illness, riding the bus home for the day or going to a friend's house, Doctors appointments, special after school activity and such, please contact the Executive Director or Site Director at 498-0928 or email the

agency at [simbaree@myfairpoint.net](mailto:simbaree@myfairpoint.net) or [Linkedprogram@gmail.com](mailto:Linkedprogram@gmail.com) before 2:00 PM. This allows the staff to have an accurate list of children participating each day. If your child has a contagious illness, please let us know so that we can post it to alert other parents as it is required by law.

### **Payment Fees and Procedures**

**Deposits:** A DEPOSIT OF TWO WEEKS TUITION WILL BE REQUIRED. One week of tuition will cover the child's first week in the program. The second week of tuition will be held in escrow and will be applied to the child's final week.

**Registration Fee:** An annual registration fee of \$40.00 (\$30.00 for each additional child residing in the same household) is required upon enrollment for any program, regarding if status is full time, part time, or hourly (drop off). These fees help to offset the administrative costs.

**Activity Fee:** An annual activity fee of \$50.00 per child is required upon enrollment for programs operating September through June. For children that enroll from January through June the fee will be \$25.00. These fees help to offset the costs of special events, and to help cover the cost of art supplies and various program materials.

**Payment Procedures:** Payment for childcare is due on a weekly basis, one week in advance. Payments **must** be received by Linked Together by Friday for the following week of care. Payment is considered late if not received by the close of the program on Wednesday of that week. If payment has not been received for two (2) weeks, your child will be receiving a Friendly Reminder for payment. If payment has not been received by the third week, a final notice will be sent. On the **Final Notice only cash**, bank check/money order will be accepted. A **pre-payment** bi-weekly or monthly schedule can be arranged. Parents can contact their bank and make arrangements to have their weekly tuitions mailed to Linked Together; 2 Bass Street; Newmarket, NH. A tuition agreement for each child and will be kept on file in the office.

Please remember that your weekly contracted tuition is the amount of your tuition agreement. Bills are issued weekly, **You are responsible to pay weekly for child care services even if you do not receive a bill!!!** To change your child's contracted tuition agreement, **a two-week written notice** must be communicated to the Site Director. You will be allowed to change your child's schedule at the beginning of the program without being charged a re-registration fee. After 30 days, you will be required to pay a re-registration fee of \$15.00 for each tuition change. Parents/Guardians who intend to withdraw their child(ren) from Linked

Together are required to give a two-week written notice or two weeks tuition. **The last day of enrollment must be on a Friday**; therefore, notice given in the middle of a week will be in addition to the required two-week charge. Tuition is charged regardless of your child's attendance; this includes absences due to illness or other reasons.

### **Make Checks Payable to Linked Together**

**Please indicate child's name and dates being paid for on your check.**

Payments are placed in the tuition mailbox just inside the door of the supply closet. If you are paying cash, please make sure that your payment is in a sealed envelope with your name and your child's name on it and what you are paying for (i.e. tuition for the week of September 1<sup>st</sup>, deposit for February vacation, etc.) before it goes into the tuition box. Please do not leave payments on the table or by the sign-in sheet.

A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for the first returned check per family. If a family has a second returned check, the fee is \$30.00. A third returned check from the same family will be charged \$35.00 and future payments will be required by money order or cash.

### **Overdue Payment Procedures**

Payment is considered overdue if it is not received by Friday for the following week. If payment is not received on time, an overdue notice will be sent. Late payments will result in the imposition of late payment fees.

If payment arrangements are not made, or the account brought up to date, by Friday of the second week, a letter will be sent indicating the amount due and officially terminating the child's enrollment effective the following Friday.

If payment is not received, the account may be turned over to a collection agency or further collection efforts taken.

### **Vacation Weeks, Non-School Days and Early Release**

Full day programs will be provided on a space-limited basis. Registration is required. Registration for care will begin two weeks prior to the scheduled day off. Child care is limited to 30 children, therefore, registration is on a first come, first served basis. Children must bring lunch, sneakers and appropriate clothing for outside activities.

## Health Policy

A child may not attend school with any of the following: fever over 100.5 F, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, severe cough or complaints of severe pain, or has a positive Covid test. If your child gets any of these symptoms, they will be placed in an area isolated from the other children. You will be called immediately and asked to come get your child. For this reason, please keep your registration form updated.

**Medication:** During the school year, the school nurse dispenses medication. Linked Together staff members will transfer medicine to and from the Nurse's office with permission from the nurse. During full day programs, school vacations and the summer program, prescription and non-prescription medicines will only be given to your child after you have filled out and signed a Medication Release Form. Staff will document the times that the medication was given. All medicine must be in the original bottle with the Pharmacist's label. Non-prescription medicine will only be given when a signed note from the physician stating the name of the medication and dosage is accompanied by the medical request form.

The program is not set up for the care of ill children so please keep your child home when they are not feeling well. **If your child is absent from school due to illness or sent home by the school nurse due to illness, they may not attend the program. IF A CHILD IS WELL ENOUGH TO ATTEND SCHOOL, THEY ARE WELL ENOUGH TO PLAY OUTSIDE.** Please do not ask us to keep your child inside while others are outside.

## Injured Child/Accident Reports

The staff treats minor injuries such as scrapes or small cuts will be treated with soap and water, bruises and bumps will be treated with ice. Parents are notified of such treatment in writing through an accident report describing the nature of the injury and actions taken. Please sign and return this accident form. A copy will be kept on file at the site. If we determine that outside treatment is required, but there is no emergency, we will notify the parent to pick up the child at the program to transport to the physician or clinic for treatment. If emergency care is required, 911 will be called. Parents will be called first if possible. Parents are responsible for any emergency service charges. Our staff are trained in CPR and First Aid.

## Discipline Policy

Good classroom discipline begins with good classroom supervision. Staff is responsible for supervising the students at all times. Discipline shall be fair and consistently applied. It shall occur in a timely manner and be appropriate to the

infraction and the age of the child. Consequences for misbehavior shall involve restating rules and appropriate choice options when possible.

Our staff shall:

- Be within sight or hearing of children at all times
- Monitor children's play for appropriate child to interaction, intervening when necessary.
- Know their students, monitor individual students for frustration, anger, and intervene when necessary.
- Set clear classroom rules, guidelines, and limits to maintain a safe environment.
- Help each child develop self-control and respect for others.
- Monitor her/himself for frustration/anger level and take appropriate breaks when needed as the situation will allow.

### **Linked Together Child Care Behavior Policy**

The guidelines for the child care behavior policy are designed to provide a child care environment where fun and relaxation can take place and where rights, dignity and safety of all children and staff are inspired.

#### *Behavior Guidelines:*

The following guidelines will be discussed with all children attending the program. Through encouragement and praise, these guidelines will be promoted on a regular basis.

1. RESPECT yourself, each other, staff and LINKED TOGETHER property.
2. Be SAFE and practice safety awareness at all times.
3. Use words to express feelings of anger and frustration. Hitting, kicking, fighting and bullying will not be tolerated.
4. Treat others as you wish to be treated.
5. Loud voices, running and sports activities will only be allowed outside or in a designated indoor play area.
6. Use manners and polite language.
7. Pick up after yourself. It is everyone's responsibility to help keep our space neat and clean.

## **Behavior Termination Policy**

Child Care services for children participating in Linked Together will be terminated due to repeated (defined as every day or a least once per week) or severe inappropriate behavior (as determined by our staff and board of directors). In dealing with misbehavior, the following steps will be taken by the Linked Together staff:

1. Verbal warning to the child
2. Verbal communication with the parents/guardian
3. Written incident report signed by the staff and site director.
4. Child will be suspended for the following contracted day of care.
5. Child will be suspended for the following week of care.
6. As a final measure, the child will not be allowed to return to the program.

Linked Together reserves the right to suspend and/or terminate child care services immediately when the health, welfare or safety of other children is at stake.

## **Child Abuse Policy**

The state of New Hampshire observes the mandatory reporting policy. Under these guidelines, all staff, volunteers, parents and adults in and around our agency are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse.

## **Parent Communication**

Communication with our parents is of the utmost importance to us. The staff will make an effort to talk to parents regularly about how their child is doing in the program. Please feel free to call the Executive Director with any questions or concerns that you have when they first arise. With everyone's cooperation, we will attempt to resolve any problems quickly. Together we can make this a successful program. We will send out regular announcements via both hardcopy (please check your child's folder) and e-mail. You are also encouraged to visit the Linked Together Web site at [WWW.LINKEDTOGETHER.ORG](http://WWW.LINKEDTOGETHER.ORG) for any updates that may be posted. If you have an email account, please make sure to post it on your registration form.

## **Volunteers**

We welcome and encourage parents to spend time in and contribute to our program. If you have a special skill or hobby, or you know someone who might wish to share some time with us please let the director know. Volunteering is a great way to watch your child grow and interact with other children while getting to know the program better.

## **What to Wear**

- Appropriate should be brought every day
- A change of clothes suitable for play should be brought
- During cold weather, please be sure that your child is dressed for outdoor play including a warm jacket, gloves, hat, snow pants and boots if there is snow on the ground. Please remind your child to bring their snow gear to the program from their classroom
- In the fall and spring the mornings are cold and some afternoons are warm. We deal with many parents and it is impossible for the staff to read the minds of parents, as to what they feel are okay for their child to go out with. Therefore, it is the policy of Linked Together that unless there is a note from the parent stating otherwise, the child must wear the apparel that they wore to school in the morning.

## **Lost Articles**

The staff of Linked Together is not responsible for any lost items; however, if you mark all of your child's belongings with your child's name, we are willing to help locate items.

## **Toys**

We discourage children from bringing toys into the program. Materials needed for play and activities are provided.

## **Enrolling your Child**

Children ages 5-15 are enrolled in the Linked Together program. No child will be refused enrollment because of gender, race, color, sex, handicap or national and ethnic origin or that of their parents. Clients are eligible for enrollment on a first come/first serve basis, following the priorities listed below:

- Linked Together children previously enrolled in the fall program (to include those who disenroll for the summer).
- At risk children referred by the Division of Children and Youth Services.
- Siblings of enrolled children (in order to keep families together)

- From the waiting list

A prerequisite to enrollment in our Fall program is that the child be enrolled in the Newmarket School System, with the exception of scheduled school vacations and summer vacations.

Before starting the program, you must register your child by contacting the Site Director. Registration includes filling out the registration, transportation and release of information forms. Please keep the Site Director and staff updated to any **changes** in phone numbers, email addresses, employment and addresses.

Documentation of immunizations shall be on file for each child on the first day the child is in attendance at the Linked Together program.

In addition, in accordance with the New Hampshire Child Care Agency Licensing Rules, every child must have an up to date physical on file **within 60 Calendar days of admission**. Physical examination records for children shall be updated as follows: "For children ages 6 and older day care agencies shall have on file a copy of the most recent physical examination record or physical examination update which is on file in the child's school provide the examination was completed within the past 2 years."

To comply with this regulation the following policy has been adopted:

1. An initial notice will be sent out in advance requesting a physical be scheduled
2. In no receipt of date of physical is received, a second notice will be sent out two weeks before the 60 days or renewal deadline.
3. If an updated physical has not been received after 60 days or renewal deadline, your child will be immediately withdrawn from Linked Together.

**Registration is for contracted slots of one to five days per week throughout the school year.** Contracted slots mean that you have reserved a spot for your child(ren) a certain number of days per week for the school year. You are required to pay for your contracted slots whether your child attends the program on a contracted day of care or not.

### **Withdrawal from the Program**

Parents wishing to withdraw their children from the program must give a **written two week notice**. Parents who fail to do so will be responsible to pay for the child's

scheduled contracted days until proper notice is received. At this time, the week's tuition that was paid as an escrow fee at the time of registration and placed in the escrow account will be applied to the child's last week of attendance.

### **Removal from the Program**

If a behavioral or safety problem persists which interferes negatively with the functioning of the program or the safety of the staff or any of the children, or if staff has concerns that the program is not a good fit for a child's specific needs, the director and staff will take all steps necessary to inform and with the parents to find a solution that will allow the child to succeed and stay in the program. If, in the view of the staff, the problem is not corrected or the child's behavior is severe, or a solution that is in the best interest of the child, is unable to be found Linked Together reserves the right to request that the child be removed from the program with one week notice to the family. When the health, welfare and safety of other children are at risk, Linked Together reserves the right to terminate services immediately. The procedure will be subject to the Agency's discretion.

# The Linked Together

## Receipt of Parent Handbook

I have read and fully understand the policies and procedures outlined in the Linked Together Parent Handbook. I understand that parents are expected to adhere to the policies and procedures as outlined within.

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

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this sheet with your enrollment forms.