

**PLAINFIELD'S  
EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER  
and  
FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER**



**PARENT HANDBOOK  
2009 - 2010**

## **AIDS EDUCATION**

Section 10-19(b) the General Statutes of the State requires that Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) instruction be offered. It is recommended that some instruction be offered at least once during the kindergarten through grade 2 sequence, grade 3 through 5 sequence, grade 6 through 8 sequence, and grade 9 through 12 sequence. The Plainfield Public Schools will meet the State's recommendations for the kindergarten through grade 2 sequence and the grade 3 through 5 sequence by offering AIDS instruction to the first, third, and fifth grade classes.

## **ADVERTISING**

The public school maintains careful control on the way in which students are exposed to materials and announcements, other than those related directly to school sponsored programs and activities. Caution is exercised to prevent exploitation of the system and its students. District prescribed standards shall be met.

## **ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE POLICY (JFCH)**

The use, possession, and/or sale of alcoholic beverages and drugs are forbidden on all school property. This prohibition applies to all students participating in all officially sanctioned school activities wherever they are conducted. This prohibition includes transportation to and from such activities on school buses and/or other officially sanctioned transportation facilities. Discipline up to and including expulsion may be applied for violation of the above at the discretion of the Board of Education.

Recognizing that drug use and abuse may be indicative of serious underlying problems, every effort will be made to offer a student help and assistance, including early identification, referral for treatment, and after care support. Disciplinary procedures will be administered with the best interest of the student, school population, and community in mind.

The Plainfield Public Schools staff, in cooperation with local law enforcement officials, will work collectively in an effort to help students understand the serious legal, social, and medical consequences associated with alcohol and drug abuse.

## **ARRIVAL ~ Early Childhood Center**

The school day begins promptly at 9:00 AM and 12:45 PM. The busses arrive at 8:50 AM for the morning session and 12:40 PM for the afternoon session. Parents transporting their children should arrive no earlier than 8:50 AM for the morning session and 12:40 PM for the afternoon session. The school is not adequately staffed for supervision before those times.

If you bring your child to school, you must park in the parking adjacent to Butterworth Street. **You must walk your child into the ECC building, unless there is a staff member outside with the buses.** Do not drop off children outside alone.

**PARKING IS NO LONGER PERMITTED AT THE REAR OF THE SCHOOL.**

## ASBESTOS

Legislation requires all school buildings to be reevaluated to determine if asbestos is present and if it poses a significant health hazard to the building occupants. The district has on file plans showing the location of asbestos in each building and measures are undertaken to comply with regulations to maintain a safe school environment. Request to review these plans may be made in the school office.

## ASSEMBLIES

Periodically throughout the school year, assemblies are conducted that add to and enrich our school curriculum. Some assemblies take place at the ECC while others maybe held at the Plainfield Town Hall or other schools in the district.

It should be noted that school administration reserves the right to determine if a child is eligible to participate in extracurricular activities including to assemblies, concerts, field trips, field day etc. This may be based on several concerns including but not limited safety, and behavior issues.

If a child is absent from school the day of an evening event or extracurricular activity, or if a child is sent home from school because of an illness they will not be permitted to partake in an after school program if they have not met the timelines as spelled out under health services section.

## ATTENDANCE/TRUANCY POLICY

In compliance with the truancy policy law, the following procedures will be used to check on absences:

1. The parent/guardian must phone the school (564-6400) before 10:00 AM to report the reason for the absence. A designated person will call the parents/guardians who have not phoned the school to report the student's absence with a reason.
2. The child is to bring a note explaining the absence. A full explanation is necessary, especially information about communicable diseases, i.e. chicken pox, measles, etc.; in order to alert other parents and staff members.
3. The student will receive an excused absence for a regularly scheduled day for:
  - reasons of health, including illness, incapacity, or doctor's visits
  - religious holidays
  - court appearance
  - funeral in the immediate family
  - suspension or expulsion**\*\*Please note: Family Vacation is an unexcused absence.**
4. If your child arrives at school late, after 9:00 AM or 12:45 PM, please bring him/her to the office before going to the classroom. In this way, the recording of an absence may be removed.
5. Schools are responsible for teaching children. However, the school cannot do its job if a child is absent. A child who misses a day of school also misses a day of learning that might never be replaced. You can help by making school a top priority. By

building the habit of daily attendance, you will help your child to see that school is important. *We will monitor attendance, excused and unexcused absences, as well as tardy arrivals and early dismissals. Each month the amount of time out of school will be reviewed, and parents will be contacted by letter or phone if the numbers give us cause for concern.*

6. A student, age five to sixteen, inclusive with four (4) unexcused absences in one month or ten (10) unexcused absences in a school year, will be considered a truant. A Child Study Team Meeting will be called to determine a plan to address the truancy. The Superintendent may file a written complaint with the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters for a Family with Service Needs.
7. After twenty (20) unexcused absences, the student will be identified as a habitual truant. The Superintendent may file a written complaint with the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters for a Family with Service Needs.

## **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Board of Education is committed to the betterment of all students and staff in the Plainfield School District. The board meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM in the Plainfield High School Library. We encourage you to attend whenever possible.

## **BULLYING POLICY** (see Appendix)

## **BUS GUIDELINES**

All bus rules and guidelines are designed with the safety of our students as our first priority.

**At pick-up time**, we expect an adult to be waiting with the child. The child needs to be at the stop and visible to the driver in order for the driver to stop the bus. It is everyone's responsibility to be at the bus stop on time so as not to delay later pick ups for other families. Parents are expected to monitor their child's behavior at the bus stop. Students waiting at bus stops are expected to behave in an appropriate manner. When the bus arrives at the stop, students should line up and enter the bus in an orderly fashion without any pushing or shoving. Once a child has entered the bus, he/she must comply with school rules and policies. While on the bus, *back packs must be removed and held on the child's lap*. Students must remain seated and keep hands and feet to themselves. It is important that children understand that it is unsafe to distract the driver while he or she is operating the bus.

**At drop-off time**, an adult must be visible at the stop to receive the child. Since the drop-off time is affected by a number of variables, the adult should be prepared to receive the child at any time after school dismissal (11:45 for AM and 3:30 for PM).

Any change of transportation must be submitted **in writing** to the school by the parent or legal guardian for the Principal's approval and will take 48 hours to change. No changes will be accepted via the telephone, as the caller's identity cannot be verified. Changes requested strictly for social reasons (someone wants to play at someone's house) are not permitted.

Bus drivers will send a written notice to the Principal when any bus rules are broken. The Principal will speak to the student about the reported behavior and generally follow up with a

phone call to the parent. A copy of any warning notice will be sent to the parent(s). If a student continues to misbehave after having received a warning notice, he or she may be suspended from riding the bus for a period of time to be determined by the Principal. Concerns about transportation should be addressed to the bus coordinator, preferably in writing. Issues requiring immediate attention should be dealt with by calling the bus coordinator at 564-6460.

**CALENDAR** (See Appendix)

### **CELEBRATIONS**

Outside food is not permitted to be brought to the classrooms for celebrations. There are many children with various food allergies and the school cannot monitor ingredients. A parent may read to their child's class or send in stickers or pencils for the class to recognize a special day.

### **CELLULAR PHONES/DEVICES**

Students are not permitted to be in possession of a cellular phone or pager while on school property. This also includes riding the bus to and from school. Items of this nature will be confiscated and returned only to the parent. The Principal may grant written permission if a reasonable basis exists for having the device.

### **CLASSES**

The ECC's morning session runs from 9:00 AM - 11:40 AM. The afternoon session runs from 12:40 PM - 3:30 PM.

### **CONFERENCES AND VISITATIONS**

Parents and others are always welcome to visit this center. Upon arrival, please report directly to the office and sign in. For conferences with teachers, it is always best to schedule an appointment; this may be done by calling the school at 564-6400. In this way, the teacher can provide their undivided attention to your concerns. Occasionally, parents will write letters to teachers and desire an answer in the form of either a phone call or letter. Our teachers are more than willing to respond, however, it is not always possible on the same day. We ask that you be patient in this regard.

Parent Conference dates are: November 19, 2009, and March 31, 2010. There will be no school for students on these days.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND MANDATED REPORTING**

Conversations and incidents that involve a family or child are to be held in strict confidence between the staff and those involved in the situation.

The State of Connecticut requires that any and all suspected cases of child abuse be reported to the State Department of Children and Families. Therefore, we are obligated by law to report such occurrences.

## **DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS**

Parents and former students (18 years old and older) are informed by the School District when educational records are scheduled to be destroyed and are advised on how they may obtain copies of the records before destruction. Notice (regarding record destruction) will also be placed in local newspapers following the custodian's review.

## **DISCIPLINE**

This school is a learning community. It is responsible for educating those children who attend. Therefore, it must establish and enforce guidelines that provide reasonable order and an atmosphere where learning can take place. There must be a set of procedures for dealing with inappropriate student behavior, including ones for suspension and expulsion.

Discipline is intended to foster student growth while assuring each student of an acceptable environment in which to learn. In keeping with the philosophy that discipline is a means of teaching and that the most effective teaching is done in a positive manner, disciplinary efforts are to be as positive as possible. We will utilize positive reinforcement and redirection whenever possible. Time out is used only in extreme circumstances when a child needs to be removed from the group. (See Time Out policy.)

Parental involvement will be sought at all three levels of infractions. Parent(s) or legal guardians may be notified by telephone, personal contact, letter, or certified letter. A conference may be conducted between the student, parent(s) or legal guardians, appropriate school personnel, and other individuals. A Child Study Team meeting may be scheduled as well. (State law requires notice to a parent or guardian of any proposed short or long-term suspension or expulsion.)

## **DISMISSAL**

If it becomes necessary to remove your child from school during school hours, and you have not sent in a note, you must come to the office. You will have to sign out your child in the logbook. If you are not familiar to the office personnel, you will be asked to show identification. Only those listed on the student's information sheet will be allowed to remove him/her from school. We respectfully request that you make medical appointments for your child outside of school hours whenever possible.

You must park in the parking adjacent to Butterworth Street.

**PARKING IS NO LONGER PERMITTED AT THE REAR OF THE SCHOOL.**

## **DRESS CODE**

A student's overall appearance should fall within the generally accepted definitions of neatness, cleanliness, and safety. The appropriateness of dress will be determined by the school administration. Clothing and footwear should be appropriate for daily indoor and outdoor activities. **Open toed sandals, high heels, shoes with wheels in the heel, and flip flops are not appropriate for school wear.**

## **EMERGENCIES**

Every attempt is made to notify parents if injury or illness occurs during the school day. **It is essential that the emergency information you submit be kept up to date.** Decision-making becomes most difficult when we cannot reach parents, or someone you designate, in times of emergency.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are extremely valuable extensions of school experiences. They provide great benefits to the educational development of our children. Field trips are well planned for the purpose of providing concrete learning experiences. Parents of students at ECC are notified of planned field trips and must sign a permission slip allowing their children to go on the trip. Students are expected to behave in a courteous, respectful, and safe manner and are reminded that all school rules apply.

## **FIRE/INTRUSION ALERT DRILLS**

Fire drills and other safety drills are conducted on an average of once a month. Instructions for each type of drill are reviewed by the teacher on a monthly basis. Instructions for evacuating the building (in the case of a fire drill) are posted in each room, and EXIT signs help guide occupants out of the building.

## **GIFTS TO TEACHERS**

We strongly discourage gifts being given to the teachers and staff.

- Due to financial implications, the students could be placed in an embarrassing position with his or her peers resulting in either isolation from others, or to avoid this, purchasing a gift which he or she cannot afford.
- Teachers and staff do not expect gifts.

See attached copy of Policy GBI, Staff Gifts and Solicitations

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

The primary objective of our school health program is to promote the well being of children so that maximum learning can take place. This will be accomplished through a process of screenings at various points in the year. The school nurse will conduct the screenings. Parents will be notified if it is felt that follow-up is needed.

The school health officer's rulings on communicable diseases, which warrant exclusion, are as follows:

Chicken Pox/Varicella	Out of school usually until all lesions have disappeared
Measles/Rubeola	Out of school until rash disappears
German Measles/Rubella	Out of school one week

Whooping Cough/Pertussis	Out of school usually at least 3 weeks
Scarlet Fever/Scarlatina	Out of school until a physician permits student to return
Head Lice/Pediculosis	Exclude from school until condition is cleared up. The school nurse will advise parents of the appropriate therapy at the time of exclusion. (Material is available at the local pharmacy.) Parents may be alerted to this problem by persistent scratching of the head by the child.
Vomiting	Out of school 24 hours from last episode
Pink Eye/Conjunctivitis	Out of school 24 hours from first application of antibiotic
Fever	Out of school 24 hours fever-free

## **HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS**

There is much fun and enthusiasm in the celebration of holidays. As adults we too enjoy sharing the excitement of the activities that are associated with these special days. However, we must be careful to recognize that children view holiday activities differently than adults, and that some families do not celebrate or practice any holidays.

As a public school we must be respectful of the beliefs and practices of all students. We therefore must change some of the traditional activities that have been associated with holiday celebrations in the classrooms. Please understand that changes in the practices of any holiday celebration will be in keeping with the rights of all students.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework for kindergarten students is assigned by the teachers when appropriate to reinforce important concepts of student's learning and development. We do believe strongly that children should be sharing in a daily reading experience with an adult.

The following guidelines have been established for the assignment of homework in the Suggested Time Allotment:

- Grades K-2: 10-20 minutes each school night
- Grades 3-6: 30-60 minutes each school night
- Grades 7-12: In middle and high school, the amount of homework will vary by subject. Most middle and high school students will also have homework projects such as research papers and oral reports that may have deadlines weeks away. They may need help organizing assignments and planning work times to make sure homework is turned in on time.

## **INTERNET/COMPUTER USE**

Parents must sign a consent form for their child to have permission to use the Internet in school. Students will only be allowed to use the Internet while in school under direct adult supervision.

## **KEEPING THE SCHOOL INFORMED**

When completing your child's information sheet, please provide the school with your home, cell and work numbers, and at least two emergency contact names. If at any time these numbers change during the school year, you must notify the office immediately. This is information that is vital for the school to have.

When completing the information sheet, please check the Parental Restriction's box if there are any legal restrictions. The legal document must be provided to the school to ensure your child's safety. If there are any changes throughout the school year regarding divorce decrees, restraining orders, adoption papers, etc., please provide this information to the school immediately.

## **LIBRARY**

The following guidelines apply to the use of the Library:

1. Permission form must be signed and returned to school.
2. All books may be signed out for 1 week.
3. No books may be borrowed by a child unless previous ones have been returned.
4. Damaged or lost books will be paid for by the parent/guardian. Report cards will be held at the end of the school year if library books are not returned to the school or paid for.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

A Lost and Found box is located in the main office. Parents are requested to periodically check this box for any items that the child might be missing.

## **MAKE-UP**

1. Afternoon classes will not be made up when we dismiss early due to weather conditions or other emergencies.
2. Morning classes will not attend or be made up when a delay of the opening is called.

## **MEDICATION**

Due to Connecticut State law, the school nurse, principal, or teachers are not allowed to give any medication: narcotic, prescription, non-prescription, or cough drops, to any pupil without specific written authority from the student's attending physician and written permission from the parent or guardian. Forms for this purpose are available at school. The medicine needs to be delivered to the school nurse, (to be kept under lock), by a responsible *adult*, in the original container, labeled with the child's name, and directions for administering

Medication should never be sent to school with the child. *Any child with medication will be referred to the principal and school nurse. The medicine shall be confiscated and held under lock until an adult can come to school to retrieve it.*

Prescribed medication should not be administered during school hours if it is possible to achieve

the desired effect by giving the medicine at home.

## **NEWSLETTERS**

School newsletters will be sent home on a monthly basis, covering school events, classroom happenings, and informational sections from the library, guidance, and the nurse. The Family Resource Center newsletter may also be issued on a monthly basis with a calendar of events sponsored by the FRC and information that will be a resource to families.

## **NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS/DELAYED OPENING/EARLY DISMISSAL**

A delay or school closing on a scheduled school day will be announced in the following manner:

1. The fire alarm will sound in all villages at 6:30 AM.
2. The radio stations listed below will carry the announcement.  
WTIC - 1080 AM and 96.5 FM in Hartford  
WICH - 1310 AM and 97.7 in Norwich  
WINY - 1350 AM in Putnam  
WPRO - 630 AM in Providence
5. The television stations listed here will also carry the announcement.  
WVIT - 30 (4)  
WTNH - 8  
WTIC - 3

Occasionally, it becomes necessary to close school early or have a delayed opening. Should this occur, the following procedure will be used:

1. The early closing or delayed start will be announced over the same radio/TV stations as the school cancellations.
2. If there is an early dismissal announcement, there will be no afternoon session.
3. In the event of a district-wide delayed opening, there will be no morning session.

## **NUT FREE SCHOOL**

In our commitment to the well being of all Early Childhood Center students, we are a "Nut Free School." This means that we do not allow any food to be brought into the school that contains any peanut/nut related products. This policy is in effect because some of our students have severe allergies to nuts and nut products.

### **Guidelines for a Nut Free Classroom**

- Bringing food into classrooms for celebrations is not allowed.
- Only specific foods requested by the teacher for special activities will be allowed.
- Any residue from peanut/nuts must be cleaned from hands, toys, books, clothing, school bags, etc. before entering the building.
- Please see attachments for additional information: "Why is My Child's School Nut-Free?"
- As all children share classrooms, books, materials and equipment, this guideline must apply to everyone.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

The success of the program depends heavily on parent participation. Please check the newsletters and your child's backpack for information for all events. If you have information for us that will help your child to have a successful day, please share it with us. Research shows clearly that children are more likely to succeed in school and learning when their families actively support them. When family members read with their children, talk with their teachers, participate in school activities and volunteer at school, they give children a tremendous advantage. You are an important partner in this journey of learning. We welcome your ideas and suggestions. If you have any talents or skills to share, we would be happy to invite you into our classroom. Let us know if you would like to join us or to help with an activity or project. We have an open door policy where you may visit at any time.

### **"READ TO YOUR CHILD DAY"**

Here at the ECC we encourage parents and grandparents to visit our school and celebrate your child's special day by reading his or her favorite book. This is a gift that will last a lifetime and will be enjoyed by all the students in your child's class. All you need to do is notify the teacher in advance that you are coming in to read on the day of your choice.

## **PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)**

The ECC has an active PTO. All parents are members of our PTO and are urged to attend meetings or programs. Meetings are held on the first Monday of the month at 6:30 PM in the ECC workroom. Free baby-sitting is always available!

Elections for new PTO officers are held at the first meeting of each school year. Elected offices are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Social Chairpersons.

## **PETS/VISITING ANIMALS**

All requests to bring animals or pets (mammals, birds, reptiles/amphibians, etc.) to school must be addressed to the Principal in advance. The Principal has the discretion to permit or deny the presence of animals in the classroom or on school grounds. The Principal will take into consideration any students and teachers with allergies before any animals are permitted to be brought into the school. No domesticated animals, such as dogs, cats, or primates shall be allowed in school unless proof of appropriate or current rabies vaccination is provided. No live wild animals (skunks, raccoons, bats, etc.) will be allowed in the school unless under the control of an individual trained in the care and management of the animals (ex. Veterinarian, zookeeper, animal control officer).

## **RECESS AND ILLNESS**

Occasionally parents will request that we keep a student in at recess time if they have a cold or other malady. It is our feeling that if children are well enough to be in school, they normally are well enough to go outside for recess. It is generally agreed that the fresh air and a moderate

amount of exercise are more beneficial to good health than remaining indoors. Generally, requests for exclusion from recess or physical education are accompanied by a doctor's excuse.

### **REPORT CARDS**

The purpose of report cards is to provide parents with a frame of reference upon which to track their child's academic/social growth. Report cards are issued 3 times a year. This year they will be issued on November 18, 2009, March 30, 2010, and the Last Day of School. *Please note that report cards cannot be issued early to accommodate vacations.*

### **SEARCHES**

A student may be searched by administrators if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated, or is violating, either the law or the rules of the school. The scope of the search must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the age and the sex of the student and the nature of the suspected violation.

The Board of Education authorizes the search of student lockers, desks, and other school property used by students for the presence of weapons, contraband, or the fruits of a crime. If the search is justified at its inception and the search, as actually conducted, is reasonably related in scope to the circumstances which justified it in the first place.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY**

It is recognized by the Plainfield Board of Education that sexual harassment is forbidden by federal and state law and will not be tolerated by the Plainfield Public Schools. Employees and students are expected to adhere to a standard of conduct that is respectful and courteous to fellow employees, students, and to the public.

Should sexual harassment be alleged, Board policy dictates that it shall be thoroughly investigated, that there shall be no retaliation against the victim of the harassment, and that the problem/concern shall be appropriately addressed. The Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Mr. James Blair, is responsible to oversee Title IX issues as directed by the Superintendent.

### **SNACK BREAK – The ECC is remaining a peanut/nut-free school**

A short break, (up to 10 minutes) will be scheduled daily. A beverage may be brought from home, or milk can be purchased at school. Milk will be sold by the week at the cost of \$.50 per day. If you feel that something more substantial is necessary, you may send your child with a small snack. We suggest a healthy snack of fruit or vegetables. Any snack that contains nuts, nut products or nut oils will not be allowed to be opened. It will be returned home. Please note that we will not be able to provide warming or cooling of anything brought from home.

### **SPECIAL SERVICES**

The Plainfield School Department does provide for the special education needs of children. Programs are available for children with learning disabilities, those who are educable mentally

handicapped, speech impaired, emotionally disturbed, socially maladjusted, physically handicapped, etc. Parents are always encouraged to participate in the planning for any special education program. Parents are a vital part of the Planning and Placement Team. Procedural guidelines are listed on the district's website and are also available by calling Mr. James Blair, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, at 564-6401.

### **TEXTBOOKS AND SCHOOL PROPERTY**

Once a student has been issued an item of school property, the full responsibility for the care of that item rests with the parent/student. Reimbursement will be required for damaged and lost textbooks, library books, and other educational materials before a final report card is issued. Proper care must be exercised for school property at all times, including furniture, equipment, and the building itself.

### **TIME OUT POLICY**

In extreme circumstances when a child needs to be removed from the group, "Time out" is utilized. A designated safe and quiet area is available for a child to de-escalate when negative and unsafe behaviors deem it necessary. If a child engages in unsafe behavior, staff may escort the child to the designated area. While in "time out," the student is expected to follow staff direction. When "time out" is over, the child will discuss what happened with the staff and a plan will be made to avoid future incidents.

### **VALUABLES**

The school administration and staff cannot be responsible for valuables which students bring to school. It is recommended that students leave all valuables at home. Note: No walkman, cell phones, electronic games or toys are allowed in school.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

In an effort to provide each child with additional support we invite and encourage all parents to become involved in their child's education. One way to do this is to become involved in our volunteer program. Teachers are in great need of your help throughout the year. We encourage all families to volunteer in their children's classrooms. Our goal is to give each child five extra minutes of adult time as often as possible. The Plainfield Board of Education in compliance with the "Volunteers for Children Act" asks all volunteers to agree to a background check. In the attachments, a volunteer form has been included. We hope you will consider completing this information form and returning it to the school. If you need any additional forms, please send a note in with your child.

### **WEAPONS AND DANGEROUS INSTRUMENT POLICY 5020** (See Appendix)

### **WHEN NO ONE IS HOME**

In the event that no one is home to receive a child off the school bus every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian. The following steps will be taken:

- AM students will be returned to the Early Childhood Center to await pick-up.

- PM students will be brought to the day care program at the Recreation Department Child Care Center (564-1819) on Route 12 and will remain there until 6:00 pm. There will be a fee for this service, which will include an hourly rate and an emergency day care fee.

See attached bus policy.