



CLAYTON EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER

2023-2024

FAMILY
HANDBOOK



Herma S. Simmons Elementary School

300 West Chestnut Street

Clayton, NJ 08312-1983

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Clayton Public School District

District Administration

Mr. Nikolaos Koutsogiannis, Superintendent
Mrs. Fran Adler, School Business Administrator

Mission Statement

Clayton Public School District will collaborate with parents and the community to provide a safe, caring, and engaging learning environment where all students achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards along with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to succeed in a global society.

Vision Statement

Preparing Students for the Opportunities of Today and the Future

Early Childhood Education Program Mission and Beliefs

Clayton Public School District's Early Childhood Program is committed to providing high quality instruction and experiences that will develop the whole child. Through the united efforts of staff, parents, and the community, all students will make academic and social-emotional progress in a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment that promotes a life-long love of learning. We value:

- A print-rich environment that provides oral and written language opportunities.
- An environment that is safe, supportive, and allows children to explore and initiate their own learning.
- Teachers who are eager to participate in professional development opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills in early childhood education.
- Active learning experiences that support and extend individual development for all students.
- The development of social-emotional skills, including empathy, kindness and integrity and believe these are integral to the development of the whole child.
- Teachers who provide developmentally appropriate instruction based on individualized needs/academic levels which are inclusive of students with special needs and ELL learners.
- An Early Childhood Program that celebrates the diversity and culture of children and families.
- Open communication and collaboration with parents and guardians that is constant so that the home, school, and community work together to develop the whole child.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the Clayton Public School Preschool Program. The preschool years are a very special time for all young children. Throughout the year, they will change and grow so much. We are so thankful that we have the opportunity to share in this experience with you. Our Preschool Program will provide your child with a safe learning environment to explore and learn in a variety of ways. It is our job to promote a learning environment that enhances every child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. The sky is the limit in our Preschool Program.

We will make every effort to work together with you so that your child will have a positive learning experience. Throughout the year, we will be offering programs for the whole family. We encourage you to be as involved as possible. Our united efforts will provide your child with a well-rounded preschool experience.

This handbook houses all of the pertinent information needed to further understand our Preschool Program in Clayton. Please read the information in its entirety and feel free to ask any questions or offer suggestions for our program. We look forward to this amazing preschool journey with your child and his/her family. There is no doubt that it will be one to remember.

Thank you,
Early Childhood Education Staff

Please Visit Our Website

Go to www.claytonps.org

Under "Schools" select the "Clayton Early Childhood Center"

Philosophy and Curriculum

The Clayton Early Childhood Center (CECC) promotes an environment where children become independent, confident, lifelong learners with a strong sense of self. We proudly offer a positive, child-centered preschool experience that fosters a love of learning in a nurturing community. In each child, we strive to cultivate:

- Autonomy
- A sense of belonging
- Respect for others
- Enthusiasm for exploration

Our Curriculum

We offer a child-centered and developmentally appropriate program for three- through five- year-old children. CECC has chosen to implement the play-based learning framework of Creative Curriculum® for Preschool. Creative Curriculum® is a comprehensive system of learning based on research and knowledge regarding all areas of child development – social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language.

The teachers use their own experiences, as well as the interests of the children, to adapt the curriculum to be unique to each class. Classroom observations and assessments become important tools for the teachers to communicate with parents.

Play allows children to learn about the world and themselves. As children play, they learn new skills, develop coping mechanisms, test new ideas, and master their bodies. Creative Curriculum® for Preschool provides extensive guidance for teachers in the content areas of literacy, math, science, social skills, and the arts. As children make choices about where to play in the classroom, they are learning a variety of skills. For example, building with blocks promotes material exploration, as well as spatial planning, symbolic representation, dramatic play, and social interactions. In the area of art, teachers emphasize the process rather than the finished product. As children use art materials, they are planning and carrying out a task while using symbols to represent their ideas.

Our play-based curriculum offers children many opportunities for positive interactions with other children and adults. We treat each child with respect and reinforce his/her value as an individual and as a unique member of the CECC community.

Volunteer Opportunities

CECC encourages parents to become involved in the preschool. Teachers regularly include parents in special celebrations and welcome parents who want to share special talents with the class. CECC also asks that parents share their talents and time to help make the school the special community it is. There will be times when teachers will

solicit parents and families to participate in activities within the classroom. Any participation before or during the events is greatly appreciated.

Nondiscriminatory Policy

CECC admits students of any race, color, religion, and national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities and does not discriminate in administration of its educational and admission policies.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality plays a vital role in promoting respect for every individual and fostering a strong community. CECC takes confidentiality very seriously and makes every effort to protect each family's privacy. Communication among staff and parents about children should be kept confidential at all times. CECC recommends that conversations about a child, behavior, or incidents should be conducted in private, away from the child and other members of the CECC community. Discussions in the hallways and during arrival and dismissal times should be kept to a minimum. If a parent has a question or concern, we suggest that this parent first contact the teacher via email or in person to arrange a time to discuss.

Communication

Communication between home and school is vital to a successful preschool program.

School-Wide (Non-emergency) Information:

The CECC office/teachers communicate with parents in a number of ways:

- Email
- Global Connect calls
- District website
- Parent Orientation
- Back-to-School Night
- Notices sent home in child's folder
- Social Media

Classroom Information

- Weekly newsletters and recaps from each class are sent home in a paper copy to parents in their child's folder.
- For information about bringing food for birthday and classroom parties, please make sure to review the "Food at CECC" section. In accordance with our Class Party and Birthday policy, **only store-bought foods** can be served, and the food provided must be preceded by a completed list of ingredients and food label

- notifications, submitted to the teacher *at least 2 class days* before the food is served. Food must adhere to our nut- free policy.
- Please be sure to check the contents of your child’s backpack each night so that you can find important notes, art projects, and so forth.
 - Artwork from different classes will rotate on the hallway bulletin boards throughout the year.
 - Please see the “Emergencies” section of the handbook and our Emergency Plan (found online at www.claytonps.org under Herma Simmons Elementary School) about how communication will occur during a school-wide emergency.

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

The Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a pupil. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a pupil’s ability to learn and a school’s ability to educate its pupils in a safe and disciplined environment. Since pupils learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Parents are asked to refrain from advising their child(ren) to avoid or ignore possible incidences of harassment, intimidation and bullying. The anti-bullying messages given to students at school via the school counselor(s) and the Second Step Program are for students to report incidences right away. See Policy 5512.01 for additional information.

Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT)

The CECC has a team of individuals who work together to support our preschool students in the most effective ways possible. The Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT) helps preschool staff modify children’s challenging behaviors (i.e. physical, social, language, and emotional) that block successful participation in a general preschool classroom through development and implementation of intervention plans. Intervention plans will address a variety of behaviors (i.e. a child who hits, a child who needs assistance with socializing, a child with separation anxiety from the caregiver, a child unable to learn new concepts, a child who cannot eat independently with utensils, a child who does not speak). Our PIRT is a dynamic group of educators who are focused and determined on providing each and every preschool student with the best education possible. It is made up of the Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialist (PIRS), the school’s guidance counselor, early childhood teachers, the School Psychologist, and the Preschool Instructional Coach. The district administrators will also make themselves available when needed by our PIRT.

Preschool Intervention and Referral Team Responsibilities:

- Support classroom teachers in order to provide strategies for children who are exhibiting difficulty in the classroom as indicated through the screening process or the observation of the classroom teacher and PIRS.
- Provide support including written strategies for classroom staff, modeling strategies in the classroom when appropriate, providing professional development and providing consultation to classroom staff, parents, administrators and master teachers.
- Provide ongoing professional development based upon the Positive Behavioral Support pyramid for district staff (i.e. administrators, teacher assistants, master teachers, teachers)
- Coordinate data from ESI-R screenings and follow through with children scoring re-screen and refer
- Facilitate transition of all PIRT case files to other programs as necessary (i.e. Kindergarten, CST).
- Consult with necessary professionals as applicable (i.e. classroom teacher, master teacher, administrators, social workers, family workers, parents).
- Conduct classroom visits as necessary to implement the PIRT intervention plan. These visits may include observations, providing feedback regarding the child or support plan, providing recommendations and modeling strategies when appropriate.

Special Education/Inclusion Policy

The Clayton Board of Education assures compliance with Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14-1.1 et seq. The rules set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14 ensure a free appropriate public education is available to all students with disabilities between the ages of three and twenty-one, including students with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school:

- The obligation to make a free, appropriate public education available to each eligible student begins no later than the student's third birthday and that an individualized education program (IEP) is in effect for the student by that date;
- If a child's third birthday occurs during the summer, the child's IEP Team shall determine the date when services under the IEP will begin;
- A free appropriate public education is available to any student with a disability who needs special education and related services, even though the student is advancing from grade to grade;
- The services and placement needed by each student with a disability to receive a free, appropriate public education are based on the student's unique needs and not on the student's disability; and
- The services and placement needed by each student with a disability to receive a free, appropriate public education are provided in appropriate educational settings as close to the student's home as possible and, when

the IEP does not describe specific restrictions, the student is educated in the school he or she would attend if not a student with a disability.

Children with disabilities participating in early intervention programs assisted under IDEA Part C who will participate in preschool programs under N.J.A.C. 6A:14 will experience a smooth transition and have an IEP developed and implemented according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.3(e) and N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7. See Policy 2460 for additional information.

Child-Specific Information

- During arrival and dismissal times, staff members must devote full attention to all of the children. Please keep conversations brief. If you need to communicate specific information, a written note or email is preferred.
- Parent-teacher conferences are held at least two times per school year (fall and spring). During conferences, the teacher will prepare an evaluation for the purpose of sharing observations and documenting the development of each child.
- If, at any time, you have special concerns, please feel free to contact your child's teacher – use email, send a note, or call the office to leave a message. During school hours, teachers cannot accept phone calls. If you have a message for a teacher during school hours, please call or email the office, and we will relay the message. The teacher will respond as soon as possible.
- If you wish to talk to the teacher at length, you can email the teacher and, if needed, arrange a time to meet in person or over the phone.
- Please communicate with the teacher about any changes at home or within the family (i.e., parent on a trip, family member in the hospital, sick grandparent). These changes can affect your child's behavior, and it is useful for staff to be aware of these developments. CECC will always respect your privacy.
- **If your child is going to be out of school for any reason, please let the school office know.**

Admissions

CECC admits students of any race, color, and national and ethnic origin. If parents have any major educational, social, or developmental concerns about their child entering CECC, parents need to discuss these concerns with the Early Childhood Supervisor before the child's first day of class. It is important that a positive and appropriate learning environment be established for each child. In an effort to create the best fit for your child and family, CECC reserves the right to place children in classes by age, gender, and developmental level. CECC does not discriminate in administration of its educational and admission policies.

PLEASE NOTE: On occasion, a classroom is not an optimal fit for a child or family. CECC is a school that will make every effort to work collaboratively with families to resolve any challenges that arise. Additional resources may need to be used to support a child's success in the school environment. If, after all reasonable efforts are exhausted,

and a problem cannot be resolved, CECC reserves the right to change a child's assignment. In the event that your child's class assignment will be changed, we will contact you to discuss the details of the change. This can occur at any time during the school year.

These forms must be on file before a child attends class

1. Health Inventory
2. Emergency Form
3. Asthma/Allergy Action Plan (if applicable)
4. Medication Consent Form (if applicable)

Positive Discipline Policy

CECC is committed to providing a safe and positive learning environment for all children. The school's behavior policy encourages children to develop social skills that reflect many of CECC's values, including self-control, respect for others, and a positive self-esteem.

Teachers model appropriate behavior and guide positive interactions among children and adults. Nurturing these social skills is a central component of Creative Curriculum®, and it helps children grow as successful, lifelong learners.

CECC's commitment to an age-appropriate and play-based curriculum ensures that activities are child centered and promote positive social interactions. Teachers carefully design the environment, communicate and enforce clear boundaries and expectations for behavior, and use nonverbal cues and/or redirect a child's behavior to foster success.

When a problem arises, the teacher relies on modeling appropriate behavior, teaching peacemaking skills, and presenting stories or scenarios that reinforce the desired behavior. Children learn to make suitable choices and develop techniques for regaining self-control when they feel frustrated. Instructive and individually appropriate consequences help to strengthen the child's self-control and self-esteem.

When a child experiences a particularly challenging time, the school encourages parents and teachers to work together and develop appropriate strategies. If a specific circumstance needs attention, the teacher will follow these procedures:

- The teacher will observe and document a child's behavior.
- The teacher will discuss the child's behavior with a parent and inform him or her of learning-based strategies the teacher will implement. The teacher will discuss options with the Preschool Intervention & Referral Team (PIRT). (see PIRT team section of the handbook)
- The teacher will follow up with the parent about how these strategies are influencing the behavior.

- If concern persists, a conference will be held with teacher, parent, and the PIRT to discuss options to help the child further develop appropriate social skills.
- Staff members will make reasonable efforts to work with the child and his/her family to resolve behavioral concerns. At any time, an individual plan of action may need to be implemented, depending on the severity of the concern. If needed, there is opportunity for teachers and the Early Childhood Supervisor to seek support from outside resources. The plan may include removal of a child from the classroom and/or calling the parent to take the child home. Repeated severe problems may result in a required meeting with the school principal and Early Childhood Supervisor.

Dress Code

Herma Simmons Elementary School respects students' rights to express themselves in the way they dress. All students who attend our school are also expected to respect the school community by dressing appropriately for a PK-5 educational environment. Student attire should facilitate participation in learning as well as the health and safety of students and the adults that supervise them. This policy is intended to provide guidance for students, staff, and parents/guardians.

- Your child should be dressed for active and participatory play. CECC does not want a child's creativity hampered because he/she is wearing clothing that should not get dirty.
- Your child should wear sturdy, protective shoes (**no sandals or flip-flops**), which will enable him/her to run, climb, and ride bikes with ease.
- Children go outside most days, so please dress your child appropriately.
- In the winter, hat and mittens are needed every day. Snow pants and warm boots are important whenever there is snow on the ground.

Requirements:

1. Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to approximately 3 to 4 inches in length on the upper thighs. Tops must have shoulder straps.
2. Shoes must be worn at all times and should be safe for the school environment (pajamas, bedroom shoes, slippers, or flip flops shall not be worn, except for school activities approved by administration).
3. See-through or mesh garments must not be worn without appropriate coverage underneath that meet the minimum requirements of the dress code.
4. Headgear including hats, hoodies, and caps are not allowed unless permitted for religious, medical, or other reasons by the administration.
5. Clothing may not depict, imply, advertise, or advocate illegal, violent, or lewd conduct, weapons, or the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances.

6. Clothing may not display or imply vulgar, discriminatory, or obscene language or images.
7. Clothing may not state, imply, or depict hate speech/imagery targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected classification.
8. Sunglasses may not be worn inside the building.
9. Clothing and accessories that endanger student or staff safety may not be worn.
10. Apparel, jewelry, accessories, or manner of grooming that, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark or any other attribute, denotes membership in a gang that advocates illegal or disruptive behavior is prohibited.

Extra Clothes

Young children occasionally have accidents. Please send in a spare set of seasonal clothes that fit: pants, shirt, underwear, socks that will be kept in the classroom. **If your child is in pull-ups, you must pack them and wipes daily in his/her book bag.** Please dress your child for an active day, which includes painting, outside activities, climbing, running, etc.

Backpack

At CECC, we encourage children to be independent. Therefore, we strongly recommend a backpack that is easy for your child to manage when putting away his/her own things. Each day your child needs to bring a backpack, clearly marked with your child's name, to hold his or her lunch box, extra clothes, art, treasures, and important communication. Please be sure to check the contents of this bag each night so that you can find important notes, view art projects, and so forth.

Food in Our Preschool Classrooms

NO NUT POLICY

We ask that parents of all children not send any food or food product that lists peanuts and/or tree nuts on the ingredient label. CECC has adopted a "No Peanuts or Tree Nuts at School" policy. We ask that parents carefully monitor foods being packed in lunch boxes to ensure that no peanuts, peanut oils, or other nuts or nut oils are among the foods selected (allergy-wise, coconuts are considered a fruit and are okay). Food labels/ingredients may change over time, so it is always recommended that you read the label before purchasing snacks. Please read labels carefully to make sure the products are nut free. This includes labels that read "May contain traces of peanuts/nuts," "May contain traces of almond," "Manufactured in a plant that processes peanuts," and so forth. Rule of thumb: if in doubt, make another choice.

In classrooms where children have potentially life-threatening sensitivities, CECC may consider additional safety measures and address the situation on a room-by-room basis. Food and baked goods need to be store-bought only and not prepared at home. Food sent to CECC for special occasions (birthdays, class parties, etc.) must be free of all nut ingredients and a list of those ingredients given to the teacher.

For those who need more information about reading an ingredient label, review information on the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis website (<http://www.foodallergy.org/section/about>). Parents of children with allergies are asked to provide a supply of safe treats to be used in lieu of store-bought and bakery-prepared items. Talk with your child and help him/her understand that food sharing is not allowed. This is a preventative safety measure to reduce food allergy exposures. Hand washing and tabletop washing are additional risk-reduction measures that are used.

Please be aware that although we can monitor what parents and staff bring into the classrooms, we cannot guarantee that students will bring in no nuts at any given time. We will do our best to monitor food and communicate with our families.

PEANUT-FREE/TREE NUT-FREE SNACK LIST

Thank you for your consideration and support in keeping the food-allergic children safe from having a life-threatening allergic reaction at school.

Please avoid snacks that contain the following: peanuts, peanut flour, peanut oil, or peanut butter or other nuts. This list includes snacks with almonds, filberts, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nut, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts. Coconuts are okay.

Food labels/ingredients may change over time, so it is recommended that you read the label before purchasing snacks. Please read labels carefully to make sure the products are nut free. This includes labels that read “May contain traces of peanuts/nuts,” “may contain traces of almond,” “Manufactured in a plant that processes peanuts,” and so forth. When in doubt, make another choice.

Kellogg’s, Keebler, General Mills, Betty Crocker, and Quaker Oats brands are excellent at clearly labeling allergens on the box. Examples of clear labels include: CONTAINS PEANUT AND EGG INGREDIENTS.

Snack

CECC provides small daily snacks during the course of our full-day program. We often offer animal crackers, goldfish, or other whole grain crackers, and water.

If your child has a specific food allergy of any sort, you will be given the opportunity to communicate with the teacher, in advance, regarding snacks so that you may prepare an alternative treat for your child.

Birthdays and Class Parties

Simple birthday snacks may be provided by parents to recognize children's birthdays. Please set a date with the teacher one week in advance. Less notice may result in a date other than your first choice. This time is necessary to assess the safety of all children who use your child's classroom, primarily with regard to life-threatening allergies. Be prepared to tell the teacher the snack that you would like to serve so that other parents can send a safe alternate treat, if needed. Snacks provided by families must be store bought and should be small portions (one cookie, mini-muffin, doughnut hole, etc.). Store-bought foods provided for birthdays must be preceded by a complete list of ingredients, submitted to the teacher at least two class days before the food is served.

Each class will have its own distinct way, determined by the teacher, to honor birthdays. We ask that parents not distribute favors, goody bags, or paper goods. **Also, CECC will not be able to distribute birthday party invitations.** This includes parents putting invitations in cubbies.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. Advance planning is vital to the safety of our children and to smooth daily classroom procedures.

School Hours

Regular Day Schedule

Full Day 3 Year Old Preschool	9:20 AM – 3:20 PM
Full Day 4 Year Old Preschool	9:20 AM – 3:20 PM

Early Dismissal Day Schedule

Full Day 3 Year Old Preschool	9:20 AM – 1:20 PM
Full Day 4 Year Old Preschool	9:20 AM – 1:20 PM

Two-Hour Delay Schedule

Full Day 3 Year Old Preschool	11:20 AM – 3:20 PM
Full Day 4 Year Old Preschool	11:20 AM – 3:20 PM

Attendance

Children enrolled in a preschool classroom at CECC are required by State regulations to attend and be on time on a regular basis. Regulations further require that all parents must sign and adhere to the attendance policy set forth by the State of New Jersey. We know children require and adjust well to predictable routines and consistency, which is achieved through regular attendance. Parents/guardians are required to report a student's absence daily by **9:00 AM by calling (856) 881-8704 x 3000 or x3001**. Such calls will

notify the school that the home is aware of the absence. However, the absence will not be excused until the appropriate written documentation is provided. All written documentation of consecutive absences should be written on the same documentation. Multiple dates that are not consecutive will not be accepted. Regular attendance ensures your child will receive all the benefits of the program including academic and social/emotional success.

YOU WILL JEOPARDIZE YOUR CHILD’S SLOT IN OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM IF:

- **He/She is habitually absent.**
- **He/She is late more than (4) times.**
- **He/She has more than (4) unexcused late arrivals or early dismissals.**

*Please note that if your child(ren) does not regularly attend school, they may not be allowed to attend special student events such as field trips, class celebrations, Fun Day, and other school events.

*Your child must be present the day of a special event in order to attend the event.

Arrival and Dismissal

In order for the school to function effectively, it is extremely important that the students be on time each and every day. The school day begins at 9:20 AM and all students are expected to be in their assigned classrooms by 9:30 AM. Students who arrive to school at 9:30 AM or later must sign in at the main office and receive a late pass to enter class. Students must be in attendance for at least four hours (until 1:20 PM) to be counted as present for a full day.

Arrival

- You must escort your child to their designated entrance and make sure that the teacher or receiving staff member knows that your child has arrived.
- **Attendance sign-in-** Classroom staff takes attendance.
- **Late arrival-** Please be considerate and try to arrive on time. Frequent late arrivals are disruptive to the class and your child’s school day **and could jeopardize your child’s spot in our program.** When you arrive late, please go directly to the Simmons Elementary School Main Office to sign in on the posted attendance sheet. Preschool students will not be permitted to walk themselves to class at any time. When students arrive late, a school employee will walk the child to class.

Dismissal & Pick-Up

- **Attendance sign-out-**If your child leaves early, they will be taken to the office and parents will have to sign students out in the main office and classroom staff will additionally record the time your child left school on the classroom attendance sheet.
- It is important that all children be picked up on time. Our staff members have responsibilities both before and after class sessions, so it is important that parents be mindful of dismissal times in order for our school day to go smoothly. It is also upsetting to your child when he or she is unexpectedly the last person in the class to be picked up.
- **Early pick-up-** Students picked up early from school will have to be signed out in the main office. Your child's slot could be jeopardized if you have more than four unexcused early dismissals. Children will only be released to the custodial parent(s) or those on file who are authorized by the custodial parent. If there are pick-up restrictions, the school **MUST** have on file a copy of the court order. Anyone who is authorized to pick up children will be asked to provide picture I.D. and must be at least eighteen years old. **Please be sure that you and all authorized persons allowed to pick up your child know the name of your child's teacher.**

Additional Sign-Out Procedures

- When a student is to be dismissed differently from his/her usual method a note from the parent is required. This note must contain the name and relationship to the student of the person who will accompany the child at dismissal.
- Once students have been placed on their bus, they will not be removed.
- In the case of emergency, a phone call placed by the parent (custodial, if applicable) is sufficient to permit dismissal to another adult.
- If a person arrives and states that he/she is to pick a child up from school and the office staff has not been informed in writing or by phone by the child's parent/guardian, the emergency sheet is checked.
- This person must be at least 18 years of age and on the emergency contact list in order to sign the student out.
- In the event that a handicap disallows physical entry to the building, a member of the professional staff will accompany the student to the vehicle. The sign-out page for the day will be brought out so that the individual will sign it with the above-mentioned information. In either case identification must be shown, even if this individual is formally known to staff members.
- In the event that contact cannot be made, the student will not be released until the parent verifies the change in dismissal.
- No students can be signed out after 2:45 PM.

Bus Conduct/Parking Lot

The Clayton Board of Education requests the cooperation of parents, students, and all staff in its effort to provide the safest transportation possible. Please review this section of the handbook with your children to ensure that they know what is expected. Knowing proper procedure at bus stops and while riding in school vehicles diminishes the chance of student injury. This was prepared to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all students. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the **Transportation Office**. The telephone number is **694-0100 ext 254 Mrs. Maureen Smashy**

Procedures While Waiting at the Bus Stop

Most accidents involving students occur either at the bus stop or while the student is crossing the road to board the bus. As a consequence, we ask that students and parents pay particular attention to the following:

- Students will wait for the bus at their designated stops. They should not wait on the shoulder of the road but in a location where they are visible to all drivers.
- Students should not participate in activities that may cause them to run into the street.
- Students should not start approaching the bus until it has come to a complete stop and the driver has signaled it is safe to board the bus. Small children should board first.
- Once the driver has signaled that it is clear, students should enter the bus single file without pushing and shoving. They should cross in front of the bus in clear view of the driver.
- At no time should students run to catch the bus. We ask the cooperation of all parents to ensure that their children are at the bus stops five (5) to ten (10) minutes prior to the normal arrival time.
- If any student is habitually late for the bus, the Transportation office will contact the parent/guardian.

Procedures While Exiting the School Bus

- Prior to their arrival at the bus stop, students should have all their belongings ready.
- Students are to remain in their seats until the bus has come to a complete stop.
- If students are to cross the street, they are to walk on the shoulder of the road to a location in front of the bus where they can clearly see the driver. They are to wait for the driver to signal that all traffic has stopped and that it is safe to cross the road.

Appropriate Behavior on the School Bus

- All students are expected to adhere to the district Code of Conduct while riding the bus. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action in accordance to the Discipline Code.

Parking Lot

- You may not park and leave your vehicle, even for a short period of time, in the spaces along the side of the building.
- Drive slowly through the parking lot. There are children and parents who may be walking through the school parking lots.
- Drivers of large SUVs should be especially careful, since small children can be very hard to see and they can dart around quickly in a parking lot.
- Be mindful of the school busses during arrival and dismissal. Cars should not be parked in the bus lanes.

*****It is against the law to leave unsupervised children in your car in the parking lot at any time.***

Dropping Off Items

If a parent wishes to drop off any item to their child, they first must report to the Main Office. An office staff member will take the item to the child's classroom. **Parents may not take items to the classroom.** Forgotten items (lunch, sneakers, etc.) are to be clearly marked with the name of the pupil and the teacher and left in the office for delivery to the pupil. **See policies for visitors.**

Emergency School Closing SCHOOL NUMBER: # 809

In the event of an emergency, our students may need to be dismissed from the school grounds before the end of the day (e.g. should a gas leak occur on a day with sub-freezing weather). Therefore, it is necessary that the main office has updated contact telephone numbers for each child. Please return the emergency form within the first 3 days of school and call the main office with any new telephone numbers or contact persons.

Holiday Celebrations

Items sent in for parties are to be dropped off at the Main Office. Parent/Guardians who do not want their child to participate in holiday celebration must notify the teacher **prior** to party so other non-academic activities can be arranged.

Lunch Program

Parents should send lunch and a drinking cup/water bottle in a lunch box. Please label your child's lunch box clearly with your child's name on the outside of the lunch box. Please send in food that does not need to be served hot.

CECC encourages parents to promote good eating habits by sending in nutritious items for lunch. Please pack a relatively small lunch, with no candy, and no more than one small dessert. CECC offers milk at this meal, or you can send in a box drink (no sippy cups or glass bottles please).

Each class will be scheduled for a 30-minute lunch period each day. Student lunches including milk are available. Unpaid debts will be sought at the close of the year. If your child's account remains unpaid, their charging privileges will be suspended at the start of the next school year.

Free and reduced lunches are available to families who qualify. Applications for free or reduced lunches will be sent at the beginning of the year. **Please note: You are responsible to pay for all meals your child eats prior to your child being accepted into the free/reduced lunch program. After your child is accepted in the free/reduced lunch program, your child will either receive their meals at a reduced price or free of charge.**

Each year, regardless of your current financial situation, families must submit a new application for the new school year. Any lunches eaten during the time the application has not been submitted, will be charged and the parent is responsible to pay. **EVERYONE MUST SUBMIT A NEW LUNCH APPLICATION EACH YEAR.** Students will be permitted to charge **TWO** lunches when there is no money on their account. Thereafter, students will be provided a cheese sandwich or another substitute lunch. All charges must be paid in a timely manner. Parents may log onto: www.myschoolbucks.com to manage their child's lunch account information or they may download the application onto their phone or portable device for their convenience. Questions about the lunch program can be answered Food Service Director, 881-8701 ext. 2309.

Student prices in Simmons Elementary School for the 2023-2024 will be as follows:

Student Full Price Lunch: \$3.00

Student Reduced Lunch: \$.40

A La Carte Milk: \$.60

Transfer Requests

Parents/guardians are to notify the school immediately of changes of address, phone, or emergency arrangements. When families relocate, they should notify the school and request a records transfer slip. The new address is necessary because the State of New Jersey requires the name and address of the new school. Main office staff has up to 3 days to process your transfer request, although most requests are processed much sooner.

Visitors

To insure maximum safety for the children in our schools, all parents and visitors are required to report to and register directly with the school office. No one is permitted in the halls or classrooms without authorization from the office. Visitors will receive a **pass** identifying them to the students and school personnel. **Be mindful that you will be stopped and asked to report to the office for a visitor's pass if you do not have one. At no time may a parent or visitor enter the building through any other doorway other than the front doors. Failure to comply will result in notification of Local Law Enforcement. Administration reserves the right to prohibit any visitor(s) from the building at any time.**



Health Services

Emergency Forms/Student Health History Records

Emergency and Annual Health History Update forms **MUST** be submitted during the first week of school. All emergency action plans for asthma, allergies, diabetes, seizures, and other chronic illnesses must be submitted at the beginning of each school year, and are also due during the first week of school. Action plans and medical information forms (except diabetes) can be found on the district website and printed at your convenience, both at the beginning of the school year, and any time a medical update is needed due to new diagnoses, etc. All students must submit a physical exam on first entrance/registration into the elementary school, along with updated immunizations. All medications i.e. inhalers, epi-pens, and medications for chronic illnesses must be accompanied by a completed Medication Consent form and brought in by the parent/guardian as noted below.

Medication

1. All medication given in school must be accompanied by a prescription, in its original container and labeled appropriately.
2. Medication must be brought to the main office by a parent/guardian. Medication must be given directly to the nurse or an administrator. Secretarial staff **MAY NOT** receive medication. If other arrangements need to be made for medication drop-off, please contact the nurses and they will work with you to arrange a convenient time.
3. Students **ARE NOT** permitted to transport medications between home and school. School personnel will not administer medications sent in with students.
4. Elementary school students are not permitted to carry medication on their person before, during, or after the school day.

5. Medication will only be given if your child has a signed Medication Consent Form on file. Students who do not have this signed form on file are not authorized to receive medication from school nursing staff.

Picking up Sick/Injured Students

Students will only be released to an approved parent/guardian that have an appropriate identification. Children will not be released to individuals that do not produce identification. This is for the safety of your child. Parents may give verbal consent over the phone if the person picking their child up is not on their emergency list, and that person must show appropriate identification.

TOO SICK FOR SCHOOL?

Herma Simmons Elementary School works with Gloucester County Department of Public Health to protect children from communicable diseases. Keeping children home when they are too sick for school protect other students and staff from potential illness.

Symptoms that a child is too sick for school:

If your child has any of the following symptoms, please keep him/her home from school. If the child has been sent home from school, please follow the below guidelines for returning to school following illness.

If your child becomes ill at school it will be necessary to pick him/her up as soon as possible. Please have current phone numbers and a current emergency contact on file with the office.

Fever: Temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Child must not have a fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to school. If your child is sent home from school due to a fever, your child SHOULD NOT return the next day.

Vomiting: Child should not return to school for 24 hours following the last episode of vomiting. If a student is exhibiting either of these symptoms, please do not send him/her to school. If a student develops these symptoms during the school day, they will be sent home.

Diarrhea: children with watery stools may not return to school until 24 hours after their last episode of diarrhea.

Eye infection: Pink eye (conjunctivitis) or thick mucus or pus drainage from eye should not return to school for 24 hours after treatment is started.

Lice: Children may not return to school until they have been treated and are free of live lice.

Immunizations: for a list of required immunizations for your child, please go to <http://nj.gov/health/ad/immrequirements>. All PreK students as required by NJ state law need to have a flu shot annually between September 1st-December 31st of each year.

IF YOUR CHILD IS NOT WELL ENOUGH TO PARTICPATE IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE DAILY SCHEDULE, PLEASE KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME. 24 HOUR RULE: ANY CHILD WHO HAS SHOWN SIGNS OF ILLNESS IN THE PREVIOUS 24 HOURS MAY NOT ATTEND CLASS.

Parent must notify the office immediately if a child:

- Is diagnosed with any communicable diseases including strep throat, pink eye, lice, pinworms, or any other of the diseases common to a school environment. The notification is important so that CECC can inform the parents within your child's classroom to be on the lookout for symptoms.
- Has any allergies or if you have any concerns about any aspect of your child's health.
- Is taking medication, as medicine may affect your child's behavior.
- If a child is absent for three days or more due to illness, the parent must provide a written statement from the physician stating that the child is well enough to return to school.
- Unless we receive a doctor's note requesting a child to stay indoors, we expect every child to participate in outdoor play.
- Head lice sometimes occurs in school because it is contagious and easily passed from child to child. You may want to look online for more information and to find examples of what lice look like in order to check your child's head correctly (www.cdc.gov/lice/head/treatment).
 - Please inform us immediately if your child has lice. We are required by licensing to follow certain procedures regarding the cleaning and removal of materials (dress-ups, etc.) within a classroom with lice.
 - We also reserve the right to implement additional procedures, such as head checks, if a persistent lice problem was to occur. Please get into the habit of routinely checking your child's head. If all parents check heads regularly, we can avoid any outbreaks in the school.

Field Trips

Field trips can be an important enriching experience for our children. Teachers plan trips appropriate for their class that will provide a well-rounded experience. Information and permission slips will be sent home in school bags each time a field trip is planned. In order to attend a field trip, each child needs a signed permission slip and/or payment of any necessary fee. Any child in the class who requires any type of emergency medication (for allergic reactions, etc.) should be accompanied by one of his/her parents who will bring the child's necessary medication for the field trip. **No siblings may accompany you and your child on the field trip. A sibling is a distraction for the chaperoning parent and for the group and can present a liability for everyone.**