



PLAINVILLE
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Inspire • Prepare • Engage

Plainville Community
Preschool
Handbook
2023-2024



Dear Parents,

On behalf of the Plainville Community Schools, we are excited to welcome you and your child to the Plainville Community Schools Preschool! This handbook is designed to provide families with an overview of the components and policies related to our preschool program. **For more general information and policies related to our elementary schools, please also refer to the Elementary Student Handbook that can be found on the Powerschool Registration that you completed on-line to enroll your child into the program, as well as each school's website.**

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions at any time, please contact the school principals:

Toffolon School - Alicia Atteratto, Principal - 860-793-3280

Wheeler School - Andrew Batchelder, Principal - 860-793-3290

Linden Street School - Jeff Wallowitz, Principal - 860-793-3270

or the District Preschool Coordinator:

Vicki Trzcinski, Director of Special Services, at 860-793-3214

Program Philosophy

The Plainville Community Preschool Program strives towards developing readiness skills for all children as they prepare for kindergarten and beyond. Our preschool program provides experiences that will allow each individual child to develop at his or her own pace in a supportive and enriching environment. The learning opportunities are active, promote discovery and inquiry-based learning, and provide each child with foundational knowledge and understanding from which future learning can take place. A critical aspect of best practice in early childhood education is the inclusion of all children and families with diverse backgrounds, cultures and values. We implement a high-quality, inclusive program that supports the learning of all children.

Program Vision Statement

The Plainville Community Preschool Program, in collaboration with our parents and the community, strives to provide children with excellent experiences in a safe, engaging, and nurturing learning environment where they are prepared with the critical skills to **reach their full potential** now and in the future.

Guiding Beliefs

Relationships in the classroom, home, and community shape the way children learn, interpret, and connect with others.

Purposeful play allows children to explore ideas, talk about experiences, actively participate, and make choices. This is a fundamental part of learning.

Families are the primary caregivers and educators of young children. Frequent communication with our families fosters collaboration and exciting, shared learning experiences.

A dedicated team of highly qualified professionals instruct through **thoughtful planning, respectful interactions, and implementation of best practices**. The team uses developmentally appropriate practice to create a balanced approach to learning that integrates play-based and academic components in order to foster curiosity, discovery, and positive relationships.

Our **curriculum** is aligned to the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards(CTELDS), and is guided by each child's life experiences, interests, family, and community.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Plainville Community Preschool operates as part of the Plainville Community School District within each of our 3 elementary schools. Our program follows all policies and procedures as required by the Plainville Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools, and building Principals. The details included within this handbook are intended to communicate the details of our preschool program philosophy and guidelines as a NAEYC accredited program, but may be subject to revision at any time as required by the Board of Education or its designee. Every effort will be made to communicate any significant changes to families in a timely manner.

Enrollment Policy

The Plainville Community Preschool program is designed to prepare students for the transition to kindergarten at age five (5). Children who will be four (4) years of age by 12/31/22 are eligible for preschool. Children who will be five (5) years of age by 12/31/22 are eligible for our kindergarten program. If the preschool program reaches capacity, children will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which the completed registrations are submitted. Students on the waiting list may be offered a seat at a different school from their geographic “home school” and will need to provide their own transportation if they accept that seat.

Our program also includes children with disabilities or identified developmental delays as required by IDEA starting at age 3 as defined in the child’s Individualized Education Plan.

Schedule of Operation

Our comprehensive program runs on a full-time basis Monday through Friday from 8:50 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. While the goal is for all students to participate in our program full-time, we understand that all children may not be ready to participate for a full day. If parents would like to have their children participate in a partial day, they should contact the principal to discuss the specific details.

The program follows the school day/school year district calendar. A copy of this calendar can be found at www.plainvilleschools.org.

When schools have early dismissal days, preschool will follow the elementary school schedule and also dismiss at 1:30 PM . Preschool students are welcome to participate in our childcare program being offered during Data Team Early Release Days. This program will not be offered on parent conference days or before holidays.

Preschool Daily Activities

Our program includes a balance of active/quiet, indoor/outdoor, child initiated/adult initiated and individual/small/whole group activities. The sequence of events occurs at a predictable time

each day so that children become familiar with the pattern of a day. The routine may change during the year to accommodate the children's changing needs.

Each teacher will provide parents with a detailed daily schedule and will notify parents of any changes as they are made throughout the school year. Schedules will include lunch and quiet time each day. The following is an example of a daily schedule that may be adapted by the teachers.

8:30 - 9:40 - Welcome, personal greeting, breakfast, student directed play

9:40 - 10:00 - Group meeting - circle time, songs, story time, jobs/social emotional learning

10:00 - 11:30 - Centers (including differentiated small group instruction as needed and snack)

11:30 - 12:30 - Outdoor play/lunch

12:30 - 1:30 - Rest/quiet time

1:30 - 2:30 - Transition from nap/snack/creative play

2:30 - 2:45 Closure activity

2:45 - 3:25 - Outdoor play/prepare for dismissal

Rest Time

The program has a daily scheduled rest time. In some classes cots are provided. In others parents are asked to provide a labeled yoga or nap mat. All children are encouraged to bring a small blanket and pillow that will be sent home weekly for cleaning. Due to limited floor space, please do not send in full size pillows, mats, blankets or large stuffed animals.

We recognize that not all children will need to sleep, but they can all benefit from some time to relax after a busy morning. If children are not napping, they may engage in a quiet activity or silent reading.

Intentional Teaching

All of our learning experiences are designed to allow children to explore their world through intentional teaching practices. Our teachers thoughtfully provide a mix of *child-guided experiences* - acquiring knowledge and skills through their own exploration and experience, including through interactions with other children, and *adult-guided experiences* - set-up situations in which the teachers introduce information, model skills, etc. With all experiences, the staff monitor the balance of both types of experiences to ensure they are offering opportunities for all children to learn and grow in meaningful ways.

Preschool Curriculum

Our preschool program uses the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) for planning and implementing meaningful learning experiences. The CT ELDS covers eight developmental domains including: cognition, social and emotional development, physical

development and health, literacy, creative arts, early mathematical discovery and early scientific inquiry. Teachers are required to attend workshops and trainings on best practices for implementing and assessing student progress towards the ELDS standards.

Teachers use the CT ELDS to plan experiences based on the individual interests, needs and abilities of the children in their class. Weekly, teachers will use prior observations and assessments to create learning experience plans that identify and show connections to the CT ELDS. The ELDS strands, progressions and indicators are worked into an activity, classroom center or other experience. Teachers will then implement the experience and observe and/or assess each child individually based on the outcome of the experience.

Teachers also implement the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children. This model uses evidence-based approaches that support the learning and engagement of ALL children, giving teachers and families concrete strategies for promoting healthy social-emotional development for young children. This relates directly to the personal and social development portion of the CT ELDS curriculum. For more information about the Pyramid Model, please refer to the website: <https://challengingbehavior.org>

The current curriculum units have been developed to explore the following topics: All About Me and My Community; Fall; Traditions; Exploring Winter; How Things Move; and How Things Grow. Each unit encourages and celebrates the values, beliefs and experiences of all families in our program. As part of each unit, families are encouraged to discuss their child's learning at home and help children share those discussions in school and with the community.

Guidance and Teaching of Social Emotional Skills/Discipline

Our schools have a team-based process for responding to challenging behavior. In young children, challenging behavior is defined as being hurtful to self or others, persistent, disruptive, destructive or interfering with learning for a child or peers. All of our classrooms utilize The Pyramid Model of evidence based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development. The Pyramid is based on a public health model of promotion, prevention, and intervention. At the core of this model is the formation of nurturing and responsive relationships with children, families, and colleagues. Strategies include actively responding to children's needs, supporting children's play, supporting and responding to children's communication, providing feedback and encouragement for appropriate behavior, and partnering with families.

A second core feature of the Pyramid model is the creation of high quality supportive environments. Practices include designing the classroom for safety and predictability, planning a rich, exciting, developmentally-appropriate curriculum, providing adequate, motivating materials, creating well-defined play centers, developing a balanced schedule for large and small groups and teacher-led/child-led times of instruction, teaching classroom rules, and providing clear directions. Teachers are expected to always provide a clear beginning, middle and end to each activity of the day. They also support children in knowing what children are supposed to do, how to know if they are progressing, how they know when they have finished

the task, and what comes next. Visual schedules are often used to support the development of these skills.

A third core feature of the Pyramid model is the explicit instruction of social emotional skills. Weekly lessons of age appropriate social emotional skills, solution kits, anger management strategies, individualized social skills stories, role plays, and puppets help children learn how to identify and express their emotions, play cooperatively with peers, use problem-solving skills, make friends, initiate and maintain play, and use strategies to handle disappointment and delay gratification.

The fourth feature of the Pyramid model is the use of a team-based approach, including families, to create and implement individualized interventions for children with persistent challenging behaviors through the creation of Positive Behavior Support Plans to prevent the challenging behavior, teach replacement behaviors, and reinforce positive behavior choices. The team will collect data about behaviors of concern and develop a hypothesis of the function of the behavior and identify antecedents and consequences which surround the behavior.

Staff do their very best to keep all children safe. However, there are times when children hit, kick, pinch, spit, or bite when exhibiting challenging behavior. Children who exhibit challenging behavior need support and intervention. We will not remove a child from a learning environment unless the child is causing harm to him/herself or others.

Per Connecticut Statute, no student will be suspended out of school or expelled from our program unless an expulsion hearing has determined that the child was in possession of a firearm in school or during a school-sponsored event. Staff trained in physical management techniques will not restrain or seclude a child unless there is imminent danger. As a public school setting with a continuum of supports and services, program staff will provide ongoing support and collaboration for families to ensure that no child is excluded.

Staff may NEVER use physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when addressing student behavior. Physical punishment includes shaking, hitting, spanking, slapping, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair or ears; or requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time. Psychological abuse includes shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, or withholding affection. Coercion includes rough handling (shoving, pulling, pushing, grasping any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; or physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).

Assessment and Progress Reporting

Children's skills are assessed in many ways throughout the school year in the domains of Cognition, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Health, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Creative Arts, Science and Social Studies. Assessment methods include naturalistic observations, planned experiences and family input under the direction and supervision of our certified teachers. All assessments are designed to be sensitive to and respectful of family or cultural identities or values. Teachers monitor student growth daily through observations and data collection (notes, checklists, photos, videos, work samples, etc.) about what they observe. They also may assess students by asking them to perform a particular task individually or in small groups, as well as asking families for information about how a child is demonstrating their skills at home and in the community. All educators receive ongoing training and teaching resources to support their understanding of the assessment process and utilize Professional Learning Community meeting times to ensure that educators are assessing children's skills in similar ways.

All students will be assessed in the areas of language, cognitive, gross motor, fine motor, and social and emotional development within three months of beginning the program. Results will be shared with parents and school-based teams will follow up with parents about any screening results that may indicate a significant developmental delay or disability that may impact their child's educational program. Parents may also request that their child be referred to special education at any time if they suspect their child may have a disability. For more information about diagnostic assessments and special education, parents are encouraged to call the Special Services office at 860-793-3214.

Written reports of children's interests, strengths and areas of growth within each of the domains will be outlined and available for families two times a year in November and May. Scheduled conferences will be held twice a year in November and May. In November, teachers will present their findings with families over the first three months of school and collaborate with families to develop goals for the child. Teachers will use this to inform their instructional practices throughout the remainder of the school year. Summary reports of progress for all students will also be used to assist in program curriculum revision, professional development for staff, and overall distribution of program resources across schools and classrooms.

The end result will assist teachers in differentiation for each child and allow them to better plan according to the needs of the class. Families and teachers can then use the assessments to work collaboratively on the skills and the goals of the children. We encourage families to become actively involved in the progress their children make towards the learning targets. We encourage open and active communication with families regarding the assessment process and how the information from the assessment process is used to plan and implement lessons and maximize each children's learning and development. Parent feedback about whether the assessment methods used by our program will meet their child's needs is always welcome.

It is important to understand that assessments are confidential and are to be shown only to the parents of the given child. Other students' progress and assessments will not be discussed with others.

A summary of the learning domains and progressions based on the Early Learning and Development Standards with examples of a continuum of expected behaviors or skills from birth to age 5 can be found at the end of this handbook. It is important to note that while many children will be able to demonstrate most of the skills and behaviors included in this summary by age 5, children develop at varying rates and may not perform at the same level for every domain or progression. It is the pattern of skills and growth that teachers will discuss with families to set common goals for learning and development.

Family Involvement

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school based on communications and interactions. It is important to keep lines of communication open and share as much information as possible. This is important for consistency and growth. We would like to involve parents/guardians as much as possible in the program. All families are welcome to participate without prejudice or bias.

We also strive to include families that may not be fully proficient with English. Please make the school staff aware of your communication needs and we will be glad to provide documents in the family's native language when possible, or we will secure an interpreter who will facilitate communication between the school and the family. The Plainville Adult Education Program also provides English proficiency classes for any interested family members.

We encourage parents to become involved with the program. Parents/Guardians are invited to share skills, hobbies or cultural traditions with our students. Please let one of our staff know if there is something you would like to share. Some additional family participation opportunities are as follows:

- Volunteer in the classroom
- Do a special project with the children
- Attend a field trip
- Attend a parent workshop
- Make items for the classrooms
- Read stories to your child's class
- Eat lunch with your child
- Share with the children what you do at work
- Help with fundraising
- Share your child's birthday celebration at the school

Families can also stay involved by:

- Observing our program and meeting with our program director to learn about program policies and procedures prior to a child's enrollment.
- Providing completed program evaluations. Each family will have an opportunity to evaluate our program by completing a survey annually.
- Joining the Parent/Teacher Organization at your child's school which is a vital link

between the school, community and the parents it serves.

- Attending a School Readiness Council meeting. All families are invited to join this council. Members of the Council include Adult Education Professionals, the Public Librarian, and other local community representatives. The council discusses issues relating to the school readiness program as well as helping provide information for families including adult education programs and library services.

Communication

Open communication is the key to a good relationship between our staff and the families we serve. Our program has an open door policy and parents/guardians are welcome to visit the program at any time. Additional forms of communication are as follows:

- School Folders - All children will have a folder to organize all written information that adults need to share on a daily basis. It is important that families review folder contents each day for information about the program and/or children's needs. Parents are also encouraged to include information they want to share with staff as the folders are also reviewed each day by our staff as well.
- Newsletters - The program will regularly provide newsletters about what your child has been learning about, what they will be learning about next, classroom activities, special days and events, and activities that you can do at home to support your child's development.
- Conferences - Parent conferences are held twice a year. You will be asked to make an appointment to meet and discuss your child's progress. In addition, parents may ask to meet anytime during the year to discuss concerns.
- Family Activities - Throughout the year the preschool team will offer special activities for families and staff to spend time together with children in fun and creative ways. Please watch for additional information about these activities and feel free to make suggestions about ideas that you would like to see included in our program

Addressing Family Concerns

Any family member that has a concern about the program in any way should first bring the matter to the child's teacher. If the outcome is not satisfactory, a conference with the principal should be requested within 5 calendar days of the event or events causing the complaint. If the outcome of the conference with the principal is not satisfactory, a conference with the Superintendent or designee can be requested within 2 calendar days following the conference with the principal. If the outcome of this conference is not satisfactory, the student or parent may appear before the Board of Education, in accordance with Board policy.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Building Security and Access

For the safety and security of all of our children and staff all of our elementary building doors are locked at all times. When dropping off or picking up students outside of scheduled times or when visiting the school while it is in session, security buzzers are located at the primary entrances to the building. Visitors are asked to announce themselves and report directly to the main office where a staff member will greet you and assist with any requests or direct you to the requested location. All visitors walking throughout the buildings must be identified with a name tag and must notify the main office when they leave the building.

Arrival and Departure Procedure

At the start and end of each day, parents who transport their children to school are asked to drop off at the designated area for preschool between 8:30 AM and 8:50 AM. Staff will greet families and students and escort them to their classrooms starting at 8:30 AM. Children will not be allowed to enter the building prior to this time. Bus students will enter the building and be escorted by staff to their classrooms.

At the end of the school day, parents are asked to wait outside the building. Walkers must be picked up by a designated adult or sibling that has been identified on the school pick-up list. Staff will release children to families in a safe, orderly manner as quickly as possible.

Please refer to your child's school documentation for additional information regarding the drop-off and pick-up procedures for each school.

Families are encouraged to turn off vehicles in parking areas to reduce idling, except when vehicles need to idle in extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperature.

Release of Students From School

Under no circumstances may a student leave the school or school grounds during school hours without permission from his/her parents or guardians and school administration. In the event it is necessary for a student to be dismissed early, a parent or guardian should send a written request to the office. Telephone requests for early dismissal of a student shall be honored only if the caller can be positively identified as the student's parent or guardian. Children of single-parent families will be released only upon the request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible for the child and who is identified as such in the school records, unless prior arrangements have been made with the school. Arrangements should be made with the building administrator regarding the parent or guardian to pick up the student in the office.

If someone other than a parent/guardian picks up the student, the person appearing in the school office should bring a note of identification from the parent or guardian and a driver's license.

Staff Supervision of Children

Children will always be supervised by staff. Children are not to be left unattended. Staff keep children in sight most of the time, with the exception of brief periods (up to 5 minutes in a safe environment that is fully enclosed and free of safety and environmental hazards, such as the child's use of the toilet) when a child cannot be seen but can still be heard. If a child is out of the direct sight and sound supervision of all teaching staff, it is for no more than 1 minute and the child is in a safe environment.

At all times there shall be a minimum staff/child ratio of 1:10 and a maximum group size of 20 in classrooms and other indoor settings.

Outdoor Supervision

The outside playground area shall be supervised by a minimum of two staff people or one staff person for every ten children, whichever is greater. Staff shall position themselves so that all areas of the playground are supervised. Teaching staff position themselves to see as many children as possible. All staff shall remain standing and walk around the playground area to supervise the children. No staff shall stay in one area of the playground for longer than 10 minutes when supervising children. Children shall only be allowed to come into the building from the playground with a staff member and that person shall remain with the child until they return outside.

Hand Washing

It is the policy of the Plainville Community Preschool Program that every child and staff member washes his or her hands immediately upon entering the classroom in the morning. Children must wash their hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds, rinse both hands thoroughly and then dry their hands with a clean paper towel. Lastly, the paper towel should be used to turn off the water supply. Children and staff must also their hands after toileting, after handling body fluids (e.g. blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or touching any mucus, blood or vomit), before meals and snacks, before preparing any food, and after playing in the water or sand.

Diapering Plan

Toilet training is a developmental process. If your child is being toilet trained at home, we will be glad to follow through with the procedure at school. For children who require it, our diapering plan is as follows:

1. Staff and children will wash their hands thoroughly and dry them with a paper towel.
2. Staff will put on vinyl protective gloves.

3. Child will be placed on disposable changing paper.
4. Soiled diaper will be changed and child will be cleaned with wipes.
5. Soiled diaper, wipes and changing paper will be disposed of in a covered diaper pail.
6. Gloves will be removed and a new, clean diaper will be applied to the child.
7. Staff will use wipes to clean their hands and the child's hands.
8. Changing paper will be replaced.
9. Staff will again wash their hands and dry with a paper towel.
10. The soiled diaper changing table will be cleaned and sanitized daily.

Children who require diapering will always be checked by staff and wet or soiled diapers or training pants will be changed at least every 2 hours and when the child wakes up from a nap.

Parents are required to provide disposable diapers or training pants and wipes. A package of each should be sent in with your child on the first day of school. Be sure to write your child's name on each package. Our staff will inform you when these items are running low and need to be replaced.

Health Services

The Plainville Community School's nursing services are designed to provide care to students who become ill, are injured while in school, or students who have special medical management requirements or allergies, asthma, diabetes, or feeding needs. The school nurse is in the building between the hours of 8:30 AM and 3:40 PM every school day. You will be notified if your child becomes ill at school. It is very important that we are able to reach you or someone designated by you in case of an emergency. Please keep telephone numbers current.

In the event of a pediatric medical emergency, 911 will be called. If necessary, an ambulance will transport the child and a staff member to the closest available emergency room. The staff person with the child will bring along relevant information about the child, including demographic information and any medical information included in the child's health file. The parent or guardian will be contacted immediately and asked to meet the child at the hospital or call the emergency room to authorize emergency medical treatment. If the parent is unavailable, a nursing supervisor at the emergency room is called upon to give administrative permission.

- Parents will be notified immediately of an emergency. Efforts to contact a parent/guardian will continue until reached.
- The cost of emergency transportation is the responsibility of the parent.

Families who need assistance with securing medical insurance, on-going well-child care, immunizations, and health, dental and nutritional screenings are encouraged to contact the school nurse for additional information and support.

Administration of Medications

Parents of students requiring medication during school should contact the school nurse as all medications must be administered by the nurse during the normal school day. Per State guidelines, the school nurse may train staff to administer some medications during field trips and other activities off school grounds. Medication administration forms are required to permit the administration of medicine in school. They are available from the school nurse. All medication must be in the original container with proper labels and will be stored in a locked storage cabinet in the nurse's office.

The District does not allow the ingestion of marijuana for palliative (medical) use in any school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities, on or off school grounds.

Emergency Epinephrine Use: Public Act 14-176 requires the administration of epinephrine as emergency first aid to students experiencing allergic reactions, even if the student does not have parental authorization or the order of a qualified medical professional. In the absence of the school nurse, the administration of epinephrine may be done by qualified personnel who has completed required training. Please notify the school nurse in writing annually if you do not wish your child to receive epinephrine as emergency first aid by qualified personnel in the absence of a school nurse.

Sunscreen should be applied by parents prior to children's arrival to school. If parents would like sunscreen re-applied during the school day, parents must provide the sunscreen and a written note explicitly allowing staff to re-apply it. Parents are asked not to send spray sunscreen in order to prevent overspray that may negatively impact other children.

Absences and Exclusions from School

The school nurse will ask parents/legal guardians to pick up a student who becomes ill during school hours or who has an illness or injury that, in the professional judgment of the school nurse, needs to be observed at home or assessed by a medical doctor.

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- Elevated temperature of 100 degrees F. and above
- Seizure, head injury, severe headache, blurred vision or dizziness
- Severe asthmatic episode or respiratory difficulty
- Chest pain or pressure
- Generalized allergic reaction
- Weeping or unusual rash
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Communicable illness
- Injury requiring sutures
- Fracture
- Soft tissue injury
- Dental injury
- *9-1-1 will be called in an emergency for immediate transportation to the hospital.*

To safeguard the health of all students, we ask parents/legal guardians and staff to monitor their children and themselves for possible communicable diseases.

Students and staff should stay home from school if they:

- Have an elevated temperature of more than 100 degrees F.
- Have vomited or had diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Have large amounts of yellow/green mucus discharge from nose
- Have a severe sore throat (possible strep throat)
- Have conjunctivitis (pink eye) with discharge
- Have an active infestation of head lice (see below for additional information on head lice)
- Have a communicable illness

Students and staff should remain home:

- For at least 24 hours after an elevated temperature returns to normal without fever reducing medication
- For at least 24 hours after their first dose of antibiotic medication
- For severe earache, with or without fever
- For at least 24 hours after vomiting/diarrhea has ended
- Until 24 hours after treatment for conjunctivitis is initiated
- Until they are adequately treated for head lice, scabies, or other infestation/communicable disease, and assessed by the school nurse
- Until chickenpox/shingles vesicles or any rash with drainage has dried and completely scabbed over

If parents decide to have their child not attend school for the day, contact the school any time before 9:00 AM on the day of the absence by telephoning the school. If the school does not hear from you, the school nurse will call the home to inquire about the child's absence.

If it is not possible to telephone the school on the day of absence, the parent is requested to send a written excuse to the school on the date of the student's return. The student should submit the written excuse directly to the office.

When your child returns to school, please provide a signed note stating the reason for the absence. Teachers are required to maintain a file of such notes for the year. Parents may be asked to submit evidence of medical problems when circumstances warrant.

Health Records

A cumulative health file is maintained for each student. This file includes notations of past illnesses, results of physical examinations, and other pertinent health information. Parents are notified of any deviation from the normal pattern of health and suggestions are given for follow-up.

All accidents involving any injury will be recorded and filed with the school nurse.

Likewise, it is important that parents notify the school nurse in case of a student's illness. If a student is to be excused or limited for an extended period from participation in school activities, he/she is required to bring a statement signed by a physician. The school nurse is available to parents and students for conferences regarding health issues.

School nurses maintain health records using the Connecticut "Health Assessment and Record Form." These records are accessible to certified staff working with the child and to school aides if permission is granted by the nurse and/or building administrator. Parents may request to inspect the health records of their child. Copies may be provided if requested. Original copies of the record are sent when a student transfers to another school in the state. If moving out-of-state, a copy will be forwarded. Health records are maintained for at least six years after the student graduates. The District will comply with the requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) to maintain the privacy of protected health information.

Physical Examinations

All students must present evidence of a physical examination upon enrollment to the district. (C.G.S. 10-204a) Health assessment shall also be required in grade 6 (or 7) and in grade 9 (or 10). All students in grades K-6 and grade 9 will undergo vision screening by the school nurse. Hearing screening will be conducted for all students in grades K-3, grade 5 and grade 8. Postural screening will be conducted for all students in grades 5 through 9. If a homeless student, as defined by federal statute, lacks immunization/medical records, the school will enroll the child and refer the parent/guardian to the district's liaison for the homeless.

Vision and Hearing Screenings

Vision and hearing screenings will be provided for all children in our program during the school year. Parents will be provided with a written report of results and recommendations for follow-up medical treatment based on the results. Screening results will be maintained in each child's health record that is housed in the building nurses office.

Immunization Records

All students must be immunized against certain diseases and must present a certificate from a physical or local health agency. If the student should not be immunized due to medical or religious reasons, a statement from a physician or the parent must be provided per State law. In the event that a confirmed case of any of the vaccine-preventable diseases to which children are susceptible is reported within the school in which the program operates, children who have not been vaccinated will be excluded from the program as recommended by the District Medical Director for as long as they are susceptible to contracting the disease. In such cases, parents will be contacted by the School Nurse for detailed guidance.

The required immunizations as outlined by the State of Connecticut will be provided to all

parents at the start of each school year. The school must enroll any homeless student even if the student is unable to produce the required medical and immunization records. For further information regarding immunizations contact the school nurse.

Head Lice

Current public health standards and research-based recommendations indicate that routine screening and management at home are the key factors in the effective control of head lice. Mass screenings for head lice are no longer conducted routinely in our schools. Head lice are usually best controlled when managed through a combination of mechanical and chemical means, along with housekeeping techniques currently recommended by public health experts. If you have any questions about this topic, or if you need information about prevention or management, please call your child's pediatrician or the school nurse.

Nutrition and Meals

The District participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers to students nutritionally balanced breakfasts and lunches daily. Free and reduced price lunches are available based on financial need. Information on this program is sent home at the beginning of every school year and can be obtained from the Plainville Community Schools website. www.plainvilleschools.org

It is the intent of the Board of Education that schools take a proactive effort to encourage students to make nutritious food choices. Food and beverages offered for sale to students, whether in the cafeteria, school store, or vending machines will meet federal and state standards and guidelines. All sodas and sports drinks will not be available for sale.

In conformity with applicable law, necessary accommodations will be provided, where required, for students with food allergies, including emergency procedures to treat allergic reactions which may occur. USDA regulations require substitutions or modifications in school meals for children whose disabilities restrict their diets. A child with a disability must be provided substitutions in foods when that need is supported by a statement signed by a licensed physician. The physician's statement must identify the child's disability, an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet, the major life activity affected by the disability, the food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet, or choice of foods that must be substituted.

For children with special feeding needs, such as food intolerance, allergies, health concerns such as diabetes or weight management issues, or conditions that require the use of specialized feeding equipment, staff will document the type and quantity of food the child consumes and share this information with families on a daily basis. Please contact your child's teacher and/or the school to discuss your child's needs and to develop a communication plan that works for both the family and the school staff.

Children who eat breakfast and lunch at school will be encouraged to brush their teeth after lunch.

Green Cleaning Program

A green cleaning program to clean and maintain our schools was implemented on July 1, 2011. The program provides for the procurement and proper use of environmentally preferable cleaning products in the school. Fragrance-free and least-toxic products are used in our program. The cleaning products used meet standards approved by the Department of Administrative Services and minimize potential harmful effects on human health and the environment.

Parents/Guardians may request a written copy of the District's policy pertaining to the green cleaning program and a written statement which includes the names and types of environmentally preferable cleaning products used in the school and where in the building they are applied; the schedule for applying the products; and the names of the school administrator or designee whom the parent/guardian or student may contact for more information.

No parent, guardian, teacher, or staff member may bring into the school facility any consumer product which is intended to clean, deodorize, sanitize or disinfect.

Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Policy

State law mandates all teachers to report suspected abuse and neglect. Such reports will be made to the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). Specific procedures governing the reporting of abuse and neglect are in effect, and staff receive yearly training in their use. DCF will be contacted if there is reason to believe a child has non-accident injuries which appear to have been caused by the person responsible for his/her care; has physical injuries inconsistent with and explanation of the injuries; has a condition resulting from maltreatment, such as malnutrition, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities (such as food, clothing or shelter), emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment; has been neglected (abandoned or denied proper care and attention or is permitted to live under circumstances which harm his/her well-being); or is suspected to be in danger of any of the above conditions. These procedures also apply to concerns about staff who have been accused of abusing or neglecting a child in the program.

Reporting of child abuse and neglect is a responsibility which is taken seriously. If there is any doubt about reporting suspected abuse or neglect a report will be made. The school will work with the parents and appropriate social agencies in all cases.

Life can be stressful. If you feel you may need help in coping, please ask for help. We can refer you to any number of helpful resources.