

# Little Scholars

## Family Handbook

### **Vision Statement**

Little Scholars is committed to creating a program where each child is provided opportunities and experiences to love, laugh and learn everyday! Our passion is to have a program where parents feel confident that they are leaving their children with teachers who truly love and care for them child!

### **Mission Statement**

Little Scholars operates as a ministry of Granite United Church whose purpose is to reach New England for Christ by sharing the hope and love of Jesus!

Our role is to provide a program where teachers meet children's wants and needs, where children can explore and learn in a safe and loving environment designed for them, and where children develop a lifelong love of learning.

Our teachers do this through a biblically based curriculum that provides foundational building blocks to help children succeed, as well as building balanced learning environments based on the foundation of social, emotional, cognitive, physical, language and spiritual development for each child.

Our focus is to build relationships with families founded on mutual trust and respect through open communication, to partner with parents to raise up their children to be the best that they can be, and to know God, love God, and develop strong family values.

Our passion is to leave a legacy in the life of each child filled with the love of God and teachers, knowing that they had the best start to reach their dreams!

### **Little Scholars Objectives**

- To help children feel secure in our love and in the love of God in order to form a solid foundation to build their self esteem.
- To recognize each child's individual needs and abilities.
- To provide a safe and stimulating environment in which each child can love, laugh and learn.
- To nurture children's independence and help them gain self-confidence.
- To provide activities and enrichments that encourage social, emotional, cognitive, physical, language and spiritual development.
- To keep communication open and honest with parents.
- To emphasize Christian living and encourage character building at an early age.
- To treat every child with respect and dignity.

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**Danyelle DiCecca, Director**  
**603-893-0898**  
**ddicecca@littlescholarsdaycare.com**  
**www.ilovelittlescholars.com**  
**603.893.3445 fax**

### **Center Hours of Operation**

Monday- Friday 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

### **LS Non-Discrimination Statement**

In providing Child Care services to children and their families, Little Scholars does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, ethnicity, national origin, cultural heritage, disability, toilet training, development, marital status, or sexual orientation of parent(s).

### **LS Enrollment Process**

An inquiry can be made through calling one of our centers or completing an online form. During this call or on the form you will include information that will help the Little Scholars staff determine if an opening is available. The information needed is the child's age and date of birth, the number of days and hours needed for care, and the ideal start date. Upon receiving this information, the Little Scholars staff will be able to notify you if there is a current opening in the program or if there is a waitlist.

A parent or guardian is able to schedule a tour with our Little Scholars staff at one of our locations. Tours are usually conducted in the morning in order for parents to see the classroom and children in their learning environments.

Parents or guardians will receive an enrollment form to enroll in an open spot or to be put on our waitlist. An \$85 non-refundable registration fee is due when this form is submitted. Parents or guardians will receive an enrollment agreement to complete prior to their child's start date. A current physical and immunization record is required to be submitted with the enrollment agreement **prior** to the child's first day. The first week's tuition is due the week prior to the child's first day. The tuition can be paid with a check along with the Enrollment Agreement, by completing an automatic payment form (credit card or bank account), or by paying online at myprocare.com.

The child can visit their new classroom the week prior to their start date. They can spend an hour in the classroom to meet their new friends and teachers! During this time, the parent or guardian can meet with one of our Little Scholars staff to review the enrollment agreement and to receive any additional forms or information needed for enrollment to begin in our center!

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Children's records are reviewed 3 times a year to ensure physical and immunizations are up to date. New Enrollment forms are sent out in September to update all personal and medical information. Parents review personal and medical information as they transition classrooms. Child's information is also stored on ProCare Childcare Management System.

In the event a parent's primary language is not English a staff member who is familiar with the language will be the primary contact and will train the teaching staff to help communicate, including translating printed materials. If there is not a staff member familiar with the language, we will attempt to translate materials using online tools as well as connect with another parent or staff from second location or from church who is familiar with the language.

### Licensing Information

The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is the licensing authority for Little Scholars Daycare, Haverhill MA. Parents may contact EEC for information regarding the program's history as a center. EEC main office number is (617) 988-6600. The EEC Lawrence Office's phone number is (978) 681-9684. The EEC Lawrence Office is located at 360 Merrimack St., Building 9, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Lawrence, MA.

### Tuition Policy

Tuition is due weekly on the Friday prior to the week of care. Tuition rates are based on the program your child is enrolled in and the amount of days they will attend. Tuition rates are subject to an annual increase and parents will be notified.

The full tuition is due weekly, regardless if your child was out for any reason or if the school was closed. No credit will be given for absences.

Little Scholars Daycare uses ProCare software to keep an account of all children's information. Payments are also processed through ProCare using Tuition Express. For payments, you can choose to pay weekly automatically through ACH or credit card, online at myprocare.com, or you can submit a cash or check payment in one of our payment mailboxes. Checks can be made out to Little Scholars Daycare. You will receive a monthly statement directly from the office reflecting all charges and payments.

A service charge of \$25.00 will be charged for any returned checks. If the office receives three returned checks, the account must then be paid through online payments, cash or money order. **No credit** will be extended. If the account cannot be brought up to date within ten working days, we will withdraw your child from the program.

A re-registration period will happen annually that includes a fee of \$45 per family and an updated registration packet. For children in our Infant and Toddler Program, the re-registration will be every fall. For children entering Preschool, K4 or Kindergarten, information will be sent

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to families in the winter to give ample time to register for a spot in the next class. If your child is enrolled after June 1st, there will be no re-registration fee due in the same year.

Every family will be eligible for a free week of tuition during the year. Your account must be at a zero balance in order to use the free week. You may submit a paper form or email the office to use the free week.

### **Immunizations and Physical**

In accordance with the state regulations, you will be required, upon admission of your child, to submit an immunization record, a current physical and a listing of any special health or medical needs. Your child must have, or be in the process of, obtaining all immunizations at the medically appropriate times. An updated record must be submitted to the office after each physical. If for any reason Little Scholars cannot obtain a copy of the child's record, the child may be asked to leave until a copy can be added to the child's file. If you are not immunizing your child for any reason, please ask the director for an exemption form.

### **Dropping Off and Picking Up**

All children are to be brought in and escorted to the classroom by the parent or adult responsible for the child. Please make sure that the child is under supervision before leaving the premises. Please do not ever drop your child off at the outside door.

When picking up your child, please make sure that you let the supervising staff know that you are taking your child.

Children should not be brought into their classroom before their designated drop-off time or picked-up after the designated time agreed upon during the enrollment process. Staff are scheduled based on the number of students enrolled and early drop-off or late pick-ups often affect teacher: student ratios. If you need to change your schedule, please inform the office two weeks prior.

A parent must notify the staff in the event that someone other than him or herself will be picking up the child. A photo ID will be required before we will release the child to this person. In the event that a person who staff has not yet met comes to pick up the child, a photo ID will be required and compared with the child's records. We will not release a child to anyone without prior parental approval and proper ID. In the event that a parent has not notified us of an alternate pick up, the director or teacher will contact the parent before releasing the child. Parents will have the opportunity during the enrollment process to inform the staff of people who will regularly be picking up their children. In this instance, we do not need to be notified every time. In addition, an older sibling may not pick up a child unless they are written as an authorized pick up person that can present an ID at pick up time.

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Please be very careful coming in and out of the parking lot, as children often run out the door ahead of their parents. Please do not leave children unattended in the car! If you need assistance, one of our staff will gladly help you!

### **Transportation**

Parents are responsible for providing all transportation for their child to and from school, including escorting them into and out of the school. For children arriving from a school bus, staff will meet children at the drop off location or the front entrance in order to escort them safely into the building.

In the event of a medical emergency, the first responder, director or lead teacher will call 9-1-1 or the ambulance service to transport a child to the hospital. If there is a need to evacuate from the premises to another safe location, staff will use their cars or vehicles owned by Granite State Baptist Church to transport the children.

For field trips, transportation will be coordinated through a local transportation company, through parent chaperones or staff chaperones.

### **Late Pick Up Fee**

A late pick up fee will be charged for any child not picked up by our 6:00 p.m. closing time. The late fee will be \$10.00 for the first 5 minutes and \$1.00 for every minute thereafter. The pick-up time recorded will be based off the teacher's time noted at pick up. The same fees will also apply on early release days if you do not arrive by the scheduled closing time.

In the event that you are stuck in traffic or an unforeseen event or emergency arises, it is still your responsibility to find an alternate pick-up person for your child in order to avoid the late fee.

Parents must also adhere to any other scheduled pick-up hours that the child is enrolled in, including half-day enrollments. If a child is here past their scheduled half-day time, it will result in being charged a full day of care.

### **Absences from School**

If your child will be absent, please notify the school by phone. If your child is absent due to an illness, please notify the staff of the illness so that we can watch for symptoms with the other children. Please follow our illness policy for when your child can return to school. Absences cannot be made up due to limited space. Full tuition payment is still required when your child is absent.

### **Closing Dates**

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Little Scholars will be closed during major holidays and for teacher conferences and development. Please see the current school calendar for all closings. The calendar will be sent home annually (additional copies can be requested through the office), and viewed online. Parents are still required to pay full tuition during weeks that contain a holiday.

### **Cancellations | Delays | Early Dismissal**

Little Scholars will make a decision to cancel, delay, or dismiss early based on the weather conditions and potential safety of our families and staff. We may also be closed in cases of power outages or other building issues that will prevent us from providing proper care for your child. Parents are still required to pay full tuition during a week that contains a snow day.

You can find information about our opening status by doing any of the following:

Parent Email

Parent Text Alert

NH WMUR TV

Facebook: [facebook.com/LittleScholarsDaycare](https://www.facebook.com/LittleScholarsDaycare)

Phone Message: 603-893-0898

### **Change of Schedule**

If you would like to decrease the number of days and/or hours that your child currently attends, a two-week written notice is required. If you are interested in increasing the number of days/hours, you can make a request with the director to find out the availability of space. An increase will be allowed as space becomes available.

### **Notice of Withdrawal | Termination of Care**

In case of withdrawal for any child from the program, Little Scholars requires a notice in writing two weeks prior to the withdrawal. If notice is not given, Little Scholars reserves the right to bill you for two additional weeks.

In the case of termination, each family will be given two weeks notice in writing in order to find alternative care. During this two-week period, your child and their peers will be prepared for the departure. We want your child to know how special they are and that they will be missed. We will do everything that we can to help you find a placement that is appropriate for your child.

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### What to Expect in the Classroom

#### Staffing

At Little Scholars, we hire educators whose main goal is to love and nurture your child academically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Each staff member hired at Little Scholars is background checked and fingerprinted through the State of New Hampshire. Each employee is put through an extensive interview process to make sure they fall in line with the mission and vision of the daycare. After much consideration, the new staff member is trained with a current staff member and completes extensive training hours before starting their journey at our center. Many of our staff members are also involved in Granite United Church. They not only provide excellent love, care and education throughout the week at Little Scholars, but they also devote many volunteer hours to the church and community around us!

#### Classrooms (Programs) at Little Scholars

##### Infants (6 weeks to 15 months)

We customize a daily schedule that meets the needs of each individual infant. We encourage emotional, social, cognitive, language, and fine and gross motor development daily through play.

##### Toddlers (16 month to 2 years 9 months)

Your toddler loves to explore and learn about the world around them. We encourage each child to experience learning through play and hands on activities. Throughout the day, independence and making choices are encouraged as well as using manners and being good friends.

##### Young Preschool (2 years 9 months to 3 years)

Your child will enjoy their days exploring the world around them as they learn through hands on teacher-directed activities! Children will engage in learning centers and independent educational play that will add to the learning experience!

##### Preschool (3 years to 4 years)

Your preschooler 's day is structured to help your child make choices, finish projects, and encourage development of their language and cognitive skills through independent and group learning activities.

##### Pre-Kindergarten (4 years to 5 years)

In Pre-K, we foster creativity and imagination while presenting academic learning to help children develop to their full potential by giving them a strong academic foundation for Kindergarten and beyond.

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### Kindergarten (5 years to 6 years)

In Kindergarten, our days and weeks are filled with many wonderful experiences and opportunities to learn and grow. Our program presents ample academic challenges balanced with fun and developmentally appropriate activities and time for reading and thinking.

### School Age

#### (6 years to 12 years)

As children grow through our program, there comes a time when they transition to another school. Through our program, we have established trust with your child and we want to continue to be by their side to help them conquer any challenges they find in their new school! We use a STEM based philosophy paired with continued academic focus to help continue the children's love for learning in our after school programs, vacation week camps and summer camp!

### Curriculum

Little Scholars uses ABC Jesus Loves Me Curriculum in our Toddler, Preschool and K4 Program. This is a Bible-based curriculum with a focus on academic excellence and the foundations of Christian living. We also create a theme-based curriculum to be used in sync with the ABC Jesus Loves Me program. Combining the high academic standards with an emphasis on creativity truly gives our students the best possible head start when transitioning to elementary school. Your child will gain confidence through hands on activities with positive reinforcement. We provide creative and stimulating discovery areas that will challenge your child to learn through teacher-initiated activities and role-play. Each child will have the opportunity to learn on their own level and at their own pace through one-on-one teaching time!

### Curriculum Fees

Our K4 and Kindergarten class require several individual books to support the curriculum. A curriculum fee will be due with the Re-Registration Fee. The fee is subject to change annually based on the cost of materials.

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### **Daily Outside | Gym Time**

Outdoor play is an important part of our program! Children are encouraged to be active and live healthy lives. We do this by giving each class ample time outside, or in the case of inclement weather, in our large gross motor rooms. Teachers offer gross motor activities and sensory activities outside as well as encourage free play to build social skills and problem solving. Parents are responsible for providing weather-appropriate dress for outdoor activities such as winter gear for snow play, sneakers for outdoor play and bathing suits for water play.

If your child is not feeling well enough to play outdoors, then they will need to remain home until they are feeling well enough to participate. We are unable to, at the request of a parent, keep children indoors while the other children go outside.

Because we feel strongly that children learn through play, we do not prevent children from getting messy outdoors. Your child may play in mud, sand, dirt, snow, puddles, or rain. Please make sure they are dressed appropriately for these kinds of activities. We encourage you to provide a complete change of clothes (including shoes) in their backpack.

### **What to wear**

Parents should send their children in washable, comfortable clothing. We would like parents to provide a change of clothing, marked with their name, to keep at school for back up in case of messy accidents. Please do not send your child in flip-flops, dress shoes or open back shoes. We recommend that your child wear sneakers and socks each day. This type of footwear is best for the active days they will be having. Little Scholars is not responsible for lost clothing.

During the warm, sunny months, it would be helpful to us if you would apply sunscreen before dropping your child off in the morning. We will reapply before going out again in the late morning and afternoon.

### **Names on Personal Items**

Children's names must be written in permanent marker on a sticker label on all personal belongings. This includes water bottles, lunch boxes, snacks, sunscreen, bug spray, clothing items, sleep items, etc. All of the classrooms have permanent markers available if needed.

### **Snack | Lunch**

Parents are responsible for providing a lunch and two snacks per day. 6 ounces of milk is provided at lunchtime (whole milk for children 1 and 2 years of age, 1% milk for children 3 and older). If your child drinks more than the 6 ounces of milk per day OR drinks soy or almond milk, please send in enough milk for each day. Please send in a water bottle each day. If your child requires a special diet, the parent must provide any special foods. Remember that each item you bring from home needs to be labeled.

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Tuesday through Friday, you will have the option of buying hot lunch. A lunch calendar and order form will be sent home in the middle of the month for the following month. Lunch money is due at the end of the month for the following month. This is a separate cost from tuition and must be paid to the office or through Tuition Express. The price for hot lunch is \$3.50 per day and is subject to change. Remember to pack a lunch on Monday!

Little Scholars does not have any food restrictions. It is important to make teachers aware of any allergies or special diet that your child may have at the enrollment meeting or when something is developed. At that time, we will determine if we need to have a food restriction in the classroom. A food restriction is subject to change at any time and families in the classroom will be notified.

We refrigerate food and drinks for the infant and toddler classes only. Bottles and cups that require refrigeration in the infant classroom **MUST** have a cover for sanitary purposes. All food that is placed in one of our refrigerators **MUST** have a name and a date.

All other students need to have ice packs with any perishable foods or drinks. Lunches can be heated up in any class, provided it is sent in a microwave – safe container, ready to heat. For children under 3, food items such as whole grapes, hot dogs or sausages must be cut to reduce the risk of choking. In addition, chips, hard pretzels, popcorn, raw vegetables and nuts will not be served to a child under 3.

### **Nap Time | Rest Time**

All children need a time of quiet and rest during the day. As required by state regulations, each child will have a nap or rest period during the day. Rest time will be anywhere from 45 minutes to 2 hours. If your child does not typically sleep they will be asked to rest and have quiet activities provided for them during that time. Parents must provide appropriate bedding for rest at all ages. All sleep items must be labeled with your child's name. Bedding will be sent home for laundering on the last day of your child's care each week and returned the following week.

Infants sleep in a designated crib or pack n play. A mini crib or pack n play sheet must be supplied and must fit snugly on the mattress. While in a crib, a child can only use a sleep sack during rest. If your child uses a pacifier, it must not be attached to anything. Children may not sleep elevated unless given a Doctor's Note.

Toddlers, Preschool and K4 sleep on a cot or a mat. A crib-size sheet and blanket must be supplied. Again, the sheet and blanket must be labeled with your child's name.

### **Parent Visitation**

We have an open door policy. Parents are welcome to stop in and see their child at anytime. Please feel free to call at any point in the day to check in on your child.

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### **Ongoing Student Evaluation**

Evaluation of each child's progress is important to the teaching of the individual child. Little Scholars uses a developmental checklist that the teacher monitors for each child to see what goals to work on with them. Another tool the teacher uses is a progress report that monitors their learning.

The progress reports and developmental checklists are completed 3 times a year for children older than 18 months in September, January and t in June. Developmental checklists are also completed prior to transitioning into a new classroom. For children under 18 months, a teacher completes a developmental checklist every 2 months following the child's well-child check up schedule.

Progress Reports are given to parents at Parent conferences are held in October after the first 6 weeks of school and midway through the school year in March. The final reports are sent home in June at the end of the school year. A copy of the progress report also remains in the student files. Parents may also request a meeting with the children's teacher outside of the classroom.

### **Child Guidance Policy**

Little Scholars believes that all children are one of a kind, God-designed masterpieces! Each child is a gift to their parents, and we have the privilege to care for their greatest gifts! The responsibility is taken very seriously. Little Scholars is committed to help each child be the best they can be! Teachers are strategic and intentional in what is said, what is done, and how they act. Each behavior is viewed as a teachable moment where teachers are able to speak into the child's life and help them to learn self-control and how to manage and navigate their emotions through self-regulation.

### **How do we do this?**

- Consistent, clear, age-appropriate rules
- Positive Guidance
- Cause and effect – engaging in an action will create a result positive or negative outcome

Our desire is to encourage each child to be the best they can be! We want each child to embrace who God made them, put forth their best effort and to be proud of their accomplishments!

### **When behaviors are present**

When a concerning behavior is observed in the class, the teacher will notify the parent within 30 minutes of the incident. The conversation will consist of questions to make sure their basic needs are being met (are they tired, not feeling well, hungry). We believe these conversations will help to identify the cause of the behavior before it becomes recurrent. At this point, the teacher will make adjustments in the classroom to help meet the needs of the child to prevent

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further behaviors (this may be added classroom support, changing lunch or nap time, or having some quiet time). Teachers will monitor the child's behavior closely during the day. There may be times when the child is not in the appropriate state to be part of the classroom. If the behavior has not stopped within 2 hours, a parent will be notified to pick up their child for the day.

We understand that some behaviors stay around for a little while. Children act out and test limits at all stages of development. The behavior will pass as long as we are all consistent. We are determined to work with parents to teach appropriate behaviors. Teachers will document concerning behaviors and what has been done in the classroom to help prevent the continuation of these behaviors.

### **How do we prevent or shape behaviors**

Concerning behaviors can often be prevented when classroom structure and engaging activities are put in place. Teachers also use observation and evaluation tools and may seek advice from the director.

Ongoing parent/teacher communication is important when an action plan is made and carried out. Adjustments may need to be made and we want everyone to be on the same page for the child to be successful.

### **Individual Child's Behavior Plan**

When a child engages in continuous behavior in the classroom that is either hurting themselves or other children the teacher will also notify the director to will create a plan to work with the child to decrease the behavior in the classroom and will notify the parent of the plan. The teacher will evaluate and modify the plan as needed over 30 days, unless another time is decided upon during the parent meeting, there will be a scheduled follow up meeting with the family to discuss the progress. The director can also contact a consultant to observe the classroom who can make suggestions for the teacher to support the teacher and the classroom to reduce behaviors.

### **Referral Service**

If a teacher has a concern in regards to the child's development, health and/or behavior that they feel the child needs further help with, the teacher will discuss the developmental checklist and any observation records with the Little Scholars director. At that time, the teacher and director will schedule a time to discuss with the parent or guardian. The content of the meeting will be to discuss the observations of the teacher and the concerns that they have for the child. If needed, the director will present resources and next steps to the families, including information to discuss with the child's pediatrician, early intervention or school district. When appropriate, the director will notify the appropriate special education administration or Early Intervention services. For Early Intervention referral, the director along with the teacher will complete a referral form to email or fax to Thom Pentucket Area Early Intervention Program.

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For the School Age Children over 2.9 years, the director will make an initial contact to the school district and complete a form for parents to contact their school district. The Early Intervention form will have the following information: child's name, dob, sex, address, phone numbers, primary language, reason for referral, if mom or dad are aware of referral, pediatrician's name, and insurance information if available.

Little Scholars staff will exhaust every option available to continue care of all children, including children with challenging behaviors, to maintain consistency in the care and education of the child. If a parent or guardian is not willing to take steps to seek additional support for their child, Little Scholars will give the family two weeks to find alternate care for their child.

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<b>Referral Services</b>	
Early Intervention	Thom Pentucket Area Early Intervention Program Director Linda Schaeffer 320 Main Street PO Box 956 West Newbury, MA 01985 Phone: 978-363-5553 Fax: 978-363-2435
Haverhill Special Education Department	4 Summer St Room 104 Haverhill, MA Phone: 978-374-3435 Fax: 978-374-3413
Mental Health and Behavioral Services	NFI Massachusetts - Haverhill Clinic 76 Winter Street Haverhill, MA 01830 Phone: 978-373-1181 Fax: 978-374-7605
Social Resources	Arbor Counseling 116 Summer Street Haverhill, MA 01830 Phone: 978-373-7010
Behavioral and Educational Services	South Bay Community Services 360 Merrimack Street, Building 9 Lawrence, MA 01843 Phone: 978-688-4830
ABA Services	Beacon Services Corporate Offices 321 Fortune Blvd #202 Milford, MA 01757 Phone: 508-478-0207
Urgent Care	MedExpress Urgent Care 296 Main St Haverhill, MA 01830 Phone: 978-372-1382
Pediatrician	Children's Health Care 600 Primrose Street Haverhill, MA 01830 Phone: 978-373-6557 Pentucket Medical Paula Boulanger, MD 1 Park Way Haverhill, MA 01830 Phone: 978-521-3200

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### **Transition Plan**

Transitioning children from one classroom to another is a critical and important time. There is a partnership between the child's family, the sending teachers and the receiving teachers that must be in place to afford an effective and smooth transition. The sending teacher and the new teacher will have on-going conversations leading up to the transition to discuss the readiness of the child as well as to pass along the child's information sheet and portfolio; that includes their developmental checklist and/or progress reports.

A transition calendar is created 2-3 months prior to the month of transition (or the start of the school year). Each family will receive a transition letter and schedule for the transition one month prior to transition date.

It is also important that the child has ample time to adjust to the new class. A transition plan will be completed that lists the dates and times the child will visit the new classroom. Teachers will begin the visitation period with a few short visits into the classroom with the small group transitioning into their class. Then they will add lunchtime, followed by naptime, until they are fully transitioned into the program. The schedule is flexible and can be longer or shorter depending on the needs of the child.

We know that during transition time there are often many questions. The staff at Little Scholars will support parents by answering questions and by scheduling a tour or conference with the new teachers. We also invite a parent, family member, or sibling to join the class for lunch in the new classroom during the first week.

### **Confidentiality**

Here at Little Scholars, the safety of our students and families is a standard that we hold ourselves to very highly. Our staff is committed to keeping your family safe and offering an enjoyable experience during your time here at Little Scholars. All information that is sensitive and confidential will only be shared with the employees of the center and office staff who are the primary caregivers of your child(ren). Our licensing authorities must be given authorization to access files that Little Scholars provides, as well as any updated information on your family. Information may be released to the appropriate authorities in an emergency situation or when reporting child abuse or neglect. Family members will be asked to notify the center immediately when something in their file needs to be noted as confidential.

Little Scholars will not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without the written consent of the child's parent(s). The center will notify parent(s) if a child's record is subpoenaed. The child's parents shall have access to their child's records at reasonable times. In no event will such access be delayed more than two business days after the initial request without the consent of the child's parent(s). The entire record will be made available, regardless of the physical location of its parts.

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### **Transfer of Records**

When a child is no longer in care, upon written request of the parent(s), the center will transfer the child's records to the parent(s) or any other person the parent(s) identifies within a reasonable amount of time.

### **Communication**

Little Scholars is committed to loving your family like our own and that is why communication is so important to us. We strive to have open communication with families and to build a strong relationship between parents and staff to provide the best care for the child!

Our office staff can be reached via phone, email or appointment Monday-Friday during operating hours. The office is able to accommodate a variety of needs and requests - please feel free to reach out regarding any of the topics listed below:

- \*Lunch Program
- \*Parent Complaints
- \*Absences
- \*Schedule Changes
- \*Tuition
- \*Payments
- \*Prayer Requests
- \*Referrals
- \*Calendar
- \*Teacher Complaints
- \*State Billing
- \*Attendance

We know it can be hard to leave your child for the day, but we want to make it a little easier by keeping you in the loop. Here are some ways we create an environment for you to feel more connected to us throughout your day.

- Facebook Groups: Each classroom teacher has the decision to operate a private Facebook group throughout the school year. This group acts as an outlet for parents to connect with their child's teacher and other families within the classroom. Teachers will use this page to post pictures, updates, newsletters and information that could be useful for the families of their classroom.
- Daily Sheets: Depending on the age group of a child, teachers will provide parents with a daily sheet covering the daily events and happenings. Feeding/changing times and notes will be present on this sheet as well as overall notes about your child's day.
- Emails: Emails are a way the office staff is able to communicate with families covering a multitude of topics, from school closings to tuition questions. The office staff will be able to have a two-way street of communication where parents can engage.
- Texts: Text messages can be used for teachers to communicate with parents throughout the day. Teachers are able to send pictures, updates and answer questions you may

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have about your child. Text messages are also used for center wide alerts (when we have the cell provider on file).

- Newsletters: Teachers will send out a classroom newsletter with information about the upcoming month in the classroom! A center newsletter is often sent out in order to communicate monthly happenings, curriculum and need-to-know information.
- Bulletin Boards: Bulletin boards are used by both teachers and the LS staff in order to communicate monthly happenings, monthly themes or events happening around the center.
- Family Nights, Family Parties, Field Trips & Plays: These events allow the LS staff and families to come together under one roof and develop a sense of community. Families are encouraged to come to these events and celebrate all that is happening within their child's school year.
- Family Visits (Open Door Policy): Our center operates under an open door policy – you are able to drop in to visit your child without any fear of disrupting your child's daily schedule.

There are times that teachers may transition within the program and sometimes they transition out of the program. When this occurs, the office staff will issue communication to staff and then to parents. We always try our best to make every transition smooth, especially with teachers!

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### Health and Safety

The health and safety of our students, families and staff is our top priority during operating hours. Starting with the keypads on our front door to our emergency procedures that are put into place, we have developed an extensive plan to ensure the well-being and safety to all during the day.

### Hand-Washing Policy

Proper hand washing is critical to maintaining health and hygiene in the center. All staff, teachers, aides and volunteers are responsible for following proper hand washing procedures. Teachers and aides are responsible for teaching children when and how to wash their hands.

Procedure:

1. Signs are posted at each sink explaining the proper hand-washing procedure.
2. Staff will remind and assist a child to wash their hands using warm water and soap, working up a good lather and washing for 20 seconds:
  - Before and after eating
  - After coughing and sneezing
  - After touching animals
  - After using the restroom
  - After diaper changes
  - After blowing one's nose

### Diapering

Proper diapering is critical for maintaining health, hygiene and safety of the children in the center. All staff, teachers, assistants and volunteers are responsible for following proper diaper procedures.

Diapers are changed when needed or every 2 hours following the Little Scholars diapering procedure. Children and staffs hands are washed with soap and warm water. The changing table is disinfected with a Lysol or bleach solution after each change. The staff will record the time, date and consistency in the child's diaper on the daily sheet. If the child's clothes are soiled, they will be sent home at the end of the day.

### Potty Training Policy

Potty training is a team effort and will only be started when the parent, teacher and child are all ready to take on the task together. A plan will be developed between parent and teacher that will work for the child. We often begin potty training in the 2-year-old classroom, however we may begin earlier if a child is showing signs or a parent would like to begin earlier.

Children become interested as they see other children using the potty! Our first step in our 2-year-old classroom is to encourage the child to try to sit on the potty during diaper change. This

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begins to teach them the process of potty training. Once they begin using the potty, the teachers will speak with parents and implement a training process.

**Typical training process is as follows:** process is subject to change depending on child and parents needs.

- Child comes in with underwear or pull up that is provided by parents
- Timer or reminder is set to every 30 of 40 minutes then child attempts the bathroom
- Wears a Pull-up for nap time
- Child moves on to under wear when parent or child is ready

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### Little Scholars Sick Policy

We do everything we can do to evaluate each child's potential sickness with love and understanding. Our staff monitors the children from the start of the day to the end of the day. If they notice the child's behavior is off or that they are exhibiting any symptoms, we always communicate to families. We understand that children can't always say what is wrong, so we believe that over-communicating during these times is the best way to help the child!

If a child has a temperature of 101 (taken on the forehead), has vomited, had diarrhea repeatedly, has an unexplained rash, trouble breathing or coughing uncontrollably this can indicate that the child is fighting off an illness. If a child becomes sick with any of the above during school hours, parents will be called and expected to pick up their child within an hour and keep them home until they are symptom-free for a minimum of 24 hours. (Current work and home phone numbers should be on file. Please notify the office of any changes.) If the child has mild symptoms, the teachers will accommodate the child's need for additional rest, comfort and water. If needed, the child may rest in the office with the director until the child is ready to return to the class or is picked up.

Children absent from Little Scholars with a contagious illness cannot return without a signed statement from a physician indicating that the child is no longer contagious. Our recommendation is that any time you visit your doctor for a sick visit; you bring a doctor's note back with you. Little Scholars staff will notify parents of a contagious disease by posting notices in the center as well as sending home fact to the parents in the classroom with direct contact. When Little Scholars is notified of a disease that is listed as reportable, Little Scholars will report to the appropriate authorities including EEC and DPH.

During times of widespread illness, Little Scholars staff will increase the required time to stay home up to 48 hours symptom free to prevent the further spread of illness.

### **LITTLE SCHOLARS RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE ANY CHILD INTO THE DAYCARE FOR ILLNESS UNTIL A PHYSICIAN'S NOTE CAN BE OBTAINED.**

There are times when a child has a chronic medical condition (including allergies) that requires specific plans and treatments ordered by their primary care doctor. These conditions will be discussed at the time of enrollment or when a condition is developed while already enrolled in the program. A medical plan must be submitted to the director and teacher. The medical plan and any rescue medicine will be kept in the classroom emergency bag that remains with the teacher at all times. This plan must be updated annually or if symptoms change. Parents will meet with the classroom teacher and director to review the plan to determine any changes needed and to be train on the plan as needed.

There are also times when a child has a chronic medical condition that does not require a specific plan, however, they may exhibit symptoms that could make it appear as if they are sick.

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If a symptom (such as vomiting due to acid reflux) is chronic and has been treated by a doctor, we will require a doctor's note describing the medical condition and possible symptoms that occur. This is so that teachers are aware and do not send home children who are affected by such a condition. This plan must be updated annually or if symptoms change.

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### **Medication**

Medication will be administered upon request. The doctor must complete a physician's authorization form before any medication, prescribed or over the counter, can be administered. Also, a medicine chart must be signed by the parent each day medicine is to be administered. It must state the child's name, the name of the medication, dosage and time to be given. All medicine must be in its original container, must be clearly labeled with the child's name and type of medication for over the counter medicine, or in the container labeled by the pharmacy. No medication shall be added to a child's drink or food at the center unless otherwise noted on the prescription. Items included in this policy are also prescription diaper cream and prescription formula.

### **Emergency Treatment**

In the event of an emergency, the center will administer first aid, CPR or obtain emergency medical treatment in the child's best interest. Authorization is given to the center in the enrollment agreement packet. The parent agrees to pay all expenses incurred due to an emergency involving their child.

### **First Aid Procedure**

A staff member trained in first aid procedures will assess the child's injuries and administer first aid treatment as needed. If necessary, parents will be called to inform them of the injury and to have them decide on further treatment unless it is deemed necessary to call an ambulance immediately.

### **Transportation for Emergency Procedures**

In the event that the staff at Little Scholars feels it necessary to immediately seek further treatment, the teacher will follow this procedure:

1. Ambulance is called. The responding teacher will stay with the child to continue to administer first aid until the ambulance arrives. The director will assist in the situation and coordinate coverage for the classroom. The other teacher will remove children from the space of incident.
2. Staff notifies parent to meet ambulance, child, and staff at hospital. One staff member accompanies the child to hospital while other staff members are in charge of the classes. The staff member brings the authorization forms from the child's file to the hospital so that treatment may be started immediately.
3. Accident report is filed by the teacher(s) involved. The original is kept in the accident report binder. A copy is sent to the parents. The child-licensing bureau will be properly notified.
4. A child may return to the program only if he or she has a written doctor's note stating it is safe to do so.

### **Emergency Procedures if Parents Cannot Be Contacted**

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Staff will contact emergency names on the list of people to be contacted if parents cannot be reached. The parent(s) are continually called until reached. Staff will follow the same procedures stated above.

### **Emergency Procedures When Off the Premises**

A cell phone is always with staff on field trips when taking students off of the premises. Emergency authorization copies and a small first aid kit, including any necessary medications for the children, are brought along. The same procedures will be followed as above.

Off premises activities including: walks off the premises, field trips, and participation at off-site facilities.

### **Procedures for Informing Parents, when First Aid is Administered to Their Child**

An accident report noting the time, date, description of the injury and an explanation of the way the injury occurred is completed by the staff person who witnessed the injury or provided first aid. A copy of the accident report for each incident is maintained in the accident report binder. Parents will receive a call for head injuries and other concerning injuries.

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### **Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)**

In case of an emergency, there are several protocols outlined in our emergency operations plan to ensure the safety of our children and staff. The director, assistant director or assigned lead teacher will assume the emergency point person role for any emergencies that arise.

All classrooms keep their classroom attendance clipboards as well as an emergency bag with them at all times. The classroom attendance clipboards include up-to-date attendance sheet for children and staff, emergency information sheet for each child and any medical treatment forms for children and teachers in their classroom. The emergency bags include: a first aid kit and any medicine a child or teacher in the classroom needs.

The center maintains an emergency supply kit that includes an emergency binder (including a copy of the emergency plan, emergency information with child's picture for every staff and student in our center, as well as action plans for children with medical conditions or disabilities and emergency telephone numbers for the area), as well as supplies for 72 hours of care.

### **Evacuation**

To safely evacuate our infants for a fire in the building, a gas leak or another hazardous situation, Salem will have infant evacuation cribs available and Haverhill will have Safe Baby aprons in our Salem location will be required. Office and support staff as well as any church staff will come to the aid of the classrooms to assist in removing children from classrooms.

Each classroom has its own evacuation plan posted in classrooms to indicate the emergency exit. Drills are conducted monthly to practice evacuating from the classroom and making improvements to get out as quickly as possible.

Attendance is taken at the meeting location and the teacher will hold up a green card to indicate that all the staff and children are accounted for. The teacher will hold up a red card indicating that there is a child or teacher missing from their group. If a child is missing, the director and assistant director or designated lead teacher will immediately give the information to the responding emergency team.

In the event of poor weather, staff may use their vehicles to keep children safe from the elements.

Documentation of each drill is recorded. We ask that parents do not pick up their children during the drill until the staff is given the all clear. If you are in the building during a drill (or real fire) please remain with your child's class until the all clear is given.

In the event that we will not be cleared to re-enter the building, the director will communicate to the center to move into the parsonage on property until we can re-enter. If we have to leave the property, staff may transport children in their own vehicle or a church vehicle to specified

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evacuation location. The Incident Commander (Director, Assistant Director, Lead Teacher) will notify parents through email, text alert system or phone calls in the event the children have to be relocated. Children at the Haverhill center will be escorted to Brookridge Community Church in Haverhill until parents can pick up.

There may come a time where we need to stay safe in our building with a shelter in place or lockdown. There are many things that can trigger these emergency plans, including a natural disaster (such as a tornado, hurricane or blizzard) or an intruder or other attack (nearby or at our location).

If a lockdown is issued teachers will close and lock all windows and doors of their classroom, shut off lights and hide in a corner or closet. They will remain quiet until they are notified. Director and office staff will ensure the exterior doors are secured. Authorities will be notified. Parents will be notified as quickly as possible.

If a shelter in place is issued, windows and exterior doors will be locked and ventilation and windows will be covered. The children and staff will be instructed to go to a safe room inside the building and await further instruction. The emergency supply kit will be brought to the room.

In the event of an earthquake or tornado, the teacher will instruct the children to “drop, cover and hold” to remain safe. They may be instructed to huddle in a group or under a protective surface.

In the event of a natural disaster or building hazards, the director may deem necessary to close the school if the building is not operational. The director will work with the churches building supervisor to get the building working as quickly as possible. If the building remains closed for several days, an alternative plan for care may be issued.

In the event children are playing outside and there is a threat (storm or physical danger), teachers will call “Reverse Evacuation”. The children will enter the building quickly and orderly and meet at a safe location inside the building (Salem gym or Haverhill auditorium or individual classroom). Teachers will take attendance and report the incident to the director.

#### **Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)**

In the event of a natural disaster or loss of power, heat or hot water, the Director may deem necessary to close the school if the building is not operational. The Director will work with the churches Building Supervisor to get the building working as quickly as possible. If the center needs to close parents will be notified through email, emergency text and phone calls. If the building remains closed for several days, an alternative plan for care maybe issued.

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### **Alternative Space**

In the event that we are not permitted to use our building for any reason at all, the director will set up an alternative meeting space and communicate to families. In Salem, we are able to use the Boys and Girls Club in Salem during the day between 830a and 2p. In Haverhill, we will be able to accommodate the children in our Salem location.

### **Reunification to Parents**

In the event of an emergency, procedures are in place to reunite parents with their children. The director and staff will use all communication avenues to reach parents. This includes a text alert, an email through our system, an update on our closed parent Facebook Page or a text or phone call from the teachers. If the parents are unable to be reached, the staff will begin calling emergency contacts.

When picking up, parents and emergency pick up persons will need to have their ID with them. The child will then be released to the parent and signed out of our care.

If the parent or emergency contact person cannot be reached, the staff will stay with the child as long as possible. If staff is not able to remain with the child, the emergency persons on site will take responsibility and follow protocol for the child to reunite with parents.

### **Missing Children**

The safety of our children is our number one priority! In order to avoid missing children, staff will take a count of children in their care every 10-15 minutes as well as take a name to face count at every doorway they pass.

If a child is missing, the teacher will immediately locate the director to begin a search of the building. If a full search is done and the child is not located, the authorities will be notified. The director will pull a teacher to continue to search inside the building and the director will begin to look outside the building. The parents will be notified after 15 minutes.

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### **Mandated Reporting**

School employees in all states are mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the proper authority. In New Hampshire, that authority is the New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). In Massachusetts, the authority is the Department of Social Services. As a Child Care Center in Massachusetts we must also report to EEC.

Teachers often become the people to whom a child initially discloses because they are a stable and continuous adult influence in their life. Because of these factors, the appropriate and timely response of teachers when child abuse and/or neglect is suspected cannot be underscored.

Beyond reporting, teachers may have the opportunity to continue communicating with a caseworker regarding a child's emotional and educational progress. A teacher can also play an important role in facilitating the abused child's growth by helping to improve his or her self-image and capacity to express emotions, get along with others, and properly communicate their needs.

If there is a suspicion of abuse or neglect, staff may discuss their concerns with the parent to inform that a report has been made if circumstances are appropriate. This decision will be made on an individual case basis, taking into account the safety of the child, family members and/or staff. Decisions on whether or not to inform parents will be made in conjunction with a supervisor.

Parents will be offered parent education and/or training opportunities to assist in the prevention of child abuse and neglect such as child development, positive guidance, stress management and health and safety trainings. Teachers can play an important role in helping that family move beyond the situation that caused the report and help that family learn to keep their children safe at home.

The center will cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect, including:

- Identifying parents of children currently or previously enrolled in the program
- Providing consent for disclosure to EEC of information from
- Allowing EEC to disclose information to, any person and/or agency that EEC may specify as necessary to the investigation of allegations and protection of children.

Failure to cooperate may be grounds for suspension, revocation, or refusal to issue or renew the center's license.

### **Abuse of a Child**

If a staff member is suspected of child abuse or neglect towards a child in the program, the Director will immediately meet with the staff member to discuss the situation. The staff member will be removed from the classroom until the investigation is complete. If the

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allegation is found to be accurate, the staff member will be suspended or terminated. If a staff member is suspected to have caused intentional harm to his or her own child, the staff member will be terminated.

The director will notify the Parents of the child that was involved, EEC as well as DSS immediately after a report is filed alleging abuse or neglect of a child while in the care of Little Scholars. DSS and EEC will also be notified immediately upon learning that a report has been made naming an employee of Little Scholars as an alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect of any child.

**Thank you for choosing Little Scholars!! We are committed to giving you the best experience for your child!! We will love and care for your child, and give them many opportunities for fun and learning!**