

***RICHMOND COLLEGE
PREP PRESCHOOL***

PARENT HANDBOOK

2014-2015

RICHMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, INC.

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1. Mission

Mission Statement-“To change our community through education, by providing preschool and elementary school academic services, resulting in grade appropriate achievement, cultural enrichment, and positive character”.

The Richmond Elementary School, Inc. is deeply aware that early intervention is the key to success. With that in mind, Richmond College Prep Preschool will foster academic excellence in all areas by ensuring that the educational facilities, materials, tools and resources are of high quality. Richmond College Prep Preschool will offer high- quality researched-based curriculum, a Montessori philosophy.

2. Vision

Richmond College Prep Preschool will provide a developmentally appropriate experience that will enhance the skills and talents of young children. The focus of the curriculum is to develop the “whole child” through a variety of active learning experiences.

The program gives children the opportunity to explore and experiment with a varied and rich array of materials and media at their own developmental level.

Teachers and aides create a child oriented learning environment that consists of variety of workstations to support student learning. Maintaining an orderly, labeled classroom promotes the children’s independence. The staff’s calm demeanor sets a positive emotional tone which makes the environment more conducive to learning.

3. Program Description

Richmond College Prep Preschool is a part-day child development preschool, operating from the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., offering a high quality early childhood program of instruction for the children in our community using the Montessori curriculum. The morning session is scheduled from 8:00 to 11:30am and the afternoon session is scheduled from 12:30pm to 4:00pm Monday through Friday.

Our Program’s mission is to serve local families. No meals will be served, however, you are welcome to provide a daily snack for your child. Richmond College Prep Preschool is a sugar and nut-free campus, including peanut butter. Recommendations for daily snacks you can bring for your child are fruit, raw vegetables (smaller than bite-size pieces) carrots, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, etc.) Sugary drinks and juices are not allowed, milk and water are recommended. Salted chips, Cheetos and cake, candy, brownies, donuts, cookies are not allowed.

Throughout the day the children participate in a variety of activities to develop their social, academic, physical and emotional skills. Teachers, aides and parents work together as a team to support the children’s efforts as they learn together. The instructional staff uses a thematic approach, offering comprehension centered activities that include a menu of program components. Parents are welcome in the classroom as volunteers and they are encouraged by the instructional staff to participate in all aspects of the program. Teachers develop a parent

education plan based on the parents' interests and needs; and are encouraged to also participate in site based parent education activities.

Teachers use a menu of evaluative processes to develop their own classroom program based on the Montessori framework. The instructional team and parents use authentic assessment to evaluate student's progress. Teachers write anecdotes of students and developmental indicators to create a classroom profile. The classroom profile is used by teachers to develop activities based on student needs. Since our program started in January 2005, the students will be evaluated twice a year. The process is based on the authentic assessment. Throughout the year the teachers initially will record and maintain anecdotal records, developmental indicators and develop portfolios for each child with samples of his/her work.

During a regular school year, all students are evaluated in the fall.

4. Background

Maria Montessori, the first woman physician in Italy, began her work with the low-income children of Rome. She firmly believed in the education of the senses by stating that "everything that the hand touches, through the muscular memory, goes to the brain". She realized that the educators at the time were treating children like miniature adults. Her famous phrase: "Follow the child" prompted her to base lessons from the interest of the child. Her method does not consider a teacher always teaching, but rather, a child always learning through the remote preparation of a rich environment and developmentally appropriate apparatus.

The Montessori Method was created to liberate one of the most exploited aspects of humanity; the mind of a child. It was also implemented with the firm conviction that readiness occurs within the child and not at the desire of the adult; that the children possess an inner force that motivates them through the "sensitive periods of learning".

5. Curriculum

The Preschool Program implements the Montessori curriculum which is a developmentally valid framework, designed to meet the needs of the child.

The Montessori goals and objectives are a reflection of the thematic approach to curriculum.

The Curriculum areas include:

- Montessori
- Practical Life
- Sensorial
- Language
- Mathematics
- Sciences
- Geography, History and Multicultural Area
- Music

Art

Our curriculum is based on an anti-bias, multi-cultural approach that provides a variety of materials with which all children can identify. Families are encouraged to share their culture and traditions by volunteering in classrooms.

6. Eligibility

Richmond College Prep Preschool serves eligible 4 year old children and their families. Eligibility is determined by factors that vary based on the specific program being considered.

Eligibility factors include child's age, family income, current childhood immunization and other documentation. Enrollment policies guarantee non-discrimination concerning gender, race, religion or disability in accordance with state and federal law, including full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Our program makes available to eligible families of children with disabilities, directly or in cooperation with other agencies, services in the least restrictive environment in accordance with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

For questions regarding eligibility requirements, please contact the Preschool office.

7. Daily Routine

The daily routine for the Montessori program consists of a SSR (sustained silent reading) circle, work time, outside time, story time, special projects, nap and meal time. The combination of these components reflects a balance between staff-directed and child-initiated activities that include individual and small group activities.

8. Parent Education and Involvement

Richmond College Prep Preschool emphasizes the importance of becoming involved in your child's education and increasing your skills as you watch your child grow. You are your child's first and most important teacher! We offer many enjoyable and interesting opportunities for you to make decisions that help design the program and participate in activities that are of importance to your family. Through your participation, you will:

- Show your child you care about him/her.
- Discover how children learn and grow.
- Increase your skills and knowledge.
- Locate community agencies that can assist your family.
- Aid the program in providing responsive, quality services.

We depend on parent involvement! Whenever parents work in the classroom, attend meetings, prepare materials at home, provide transportation or contribute items to the program, they earn "in-kind" *contributions* which help the county meet its funding requirements. You will be asked to document your participation or contribution.

In order to provide opportunities for parent education and involvement in the preschool program throughout the course of the year, the teachers will conduct a yearly Parent Interest Survey.

Parent Education meetings will be conducted on various topics of interest based on the responses to the Parent Interest Survey every three months. Parents will have the opportunity to participate in the program in a variety of ways i.e., present a special activity, participate in field trips, participate in parent group activities, assist at holiday parties, and volunteer to assist the teacher for a class session.

In a regular school year, Parent conferences are held in the fall and spring, usually in May and November.

Teachers provide parents with ideas of activities to do at home to support student learning. Parents are invited to provide teachers with feedback on their child's progress.

9. Attendance

Parents are required to notify the preschool promptly when their child is absent or late.

The following are considered excused (all others are unexcused):

1. Child is ill (state nature of illness). A doctor's note is required before returning to class if a child is absent due to illness for more than 3 consecutive days. Parents must notify the preschool immediately if their child has contracted a communicable disease.
2. Parent is ill.
3. Child's medical/dental appointment.
4. Family Emergency: death in family illness, court appearance, and others at discretion of the program.
5. Lack of transportation. On occasion the Family Advocate will arrange transportation.
6. Absences found in the "best interest" of the child, such as time spent with a parent or relative as required by a court of law, are limited to ten (10) days per year.

Parents will be asked to sign a receipt acknowledging that you have received a copy of the program's attendance policy, that you have read it, and that you fully understand it. Parents are responsible for indicating the reason for each day the child is absent from the preschool. In cases of long-term illness or absences resulting from special family circumstances, we will initiate appropriate procedures, which may include home visits and direct contact with the parent. In circumstances where it does not seem feasible to include the child in the same program, other program options will be recommended.

10. Late Arrival and Late Pick Up

Children are expected to be at the preschool based on their contract hours for the child development programs. Class hours begin at 8:00am sharp! If your student arrives later than 8:15am, or in for the afternoon session later than 12:45pm, your child may not be admitted to the classroom. You are required to come to the Preschool administrative office, next door, at 1014 Florida Avenue. Your student will be accepted late only 3 times per school year. After which,

your student may not be permitted to attend class until further action from the Preschool administration.

Parents are considered late when their child is not picked up by the agreed upon time.

11. Closing Time

If a parent is late and staff is not notified, every effort will be made to find an authorized person to pick up the child. If no one can be located, the Site Director will determine a plan of action, which may include calling the local police department. A note will be posted on the front door of the preschool to let the parent know where their child can be located after the preschool has closed.

The following procedures are implemented for late pick up:

First Time: The staff will verbally inform the parent of the importance of picking up their child on time. This will be documented in the child's file at the preschool.

Second time: The staff will give a "Late Child" notice to the parent. A copy will be kept in the child's file at the preschool.

Third Time: The staff will give a second "Late Child" notice to the parent. A copy will be kept in the child's file at the preschool.

Fourth Time: The Site Director will inform the parent that the child may be suspended for one (1 week). If all attempts have failed, the child may be dropped from the program.

12. Signing in and Signing Out

Parents are required to bring their child to school *on time* and sign their child in and out of the program daily. You must sign your full name, rather than your initials, and the exact time of arrival and departure, when bringing and picking your child up from the preschool. If you are unable to escort your child to the preschool, you may authorize, in writing, a person who is at least eighteen years of age.

13. Daily Inspection

Richmond College Prep Preschool requires daily health checks for each child. The Children are checked when greeted by a designated person. If there is doubt about the child's health, head lice or other signs of illness, as outlined by the program's sick policy, the teachers will question the parent about the child's health. If the teachers suspect the child has an illness, parents will be informed that the child will not be admitted into the preschool.

14. Change of Clothing

We request a change of clothing for each child for emergency needs. Parents should properly label the change of clothing with their child's first and last name.

15. Parents and Personal Rights

Parents are given copies of their rights upon enrollment and are requested to sign for receipt of the Parents Rights and Personal Rights information as required by the Community Care Licensing Agency.

16. Enrollment Requirements

First, we must determine eligibility. Second, we require an initial home visit by the Family Advocate to determine the specific needs of the family. Third, the Parents must submit the following paperwork:

- birth certificate;
- proof of income and residence
- emergency information;
- consent for emergency medical treatment; (*asthma plan, nebulizer form, medication form, etc. if applicable.*)
- health history;
- *current* physical examination and tuberculosis test with risk results;(*current within 1 year*)and a *completed and signed copy of the health history form.*
- *current* immunization records and other specific required forms;
- a signed copy of the Admission Agreement;
- signed copy of the acknowledgement form that you have read and understand the Parent Handbook and its policies including, late pick-up and discipline policies.

17. Medication Administration

All medications, both over-the-counter and prescription require a signed consent from the parent. Please make sure that the teacher in charge is aware of any medication your child has been prescribed. Here are some specifics regarding our policy:

Over the counter medications: these include things like sunscreen, ointment and Tylenol. These items must be labeled with the child's name and can only be used as directed on the label. Any other use must be authorized by a physician, in writing.

Prescription Medications (including samples): Must have a prescription label indicating the name of the child, dosage and frequency, how the medication is administered (ex: orally), expiration date of the medication, and the name and phone number of the physician. A medication log is used to document administration and is always available to parents. Copies are available upon request at any time.

18. Shelter-in-Place

The county has an emergency warning system to alert residents of potential emergency situations in which the air may be unsafe to breathe due to industrial accidents or other hazards. When you hear the safety sirens, please:

- Go inside immediately.
- Take pets, if this can be done quickly.
- Close and lock all doors and windows.

- Turns off all heaters air conditioners and fans.
- Close or cover any vents to outside air.
- If not using fireplace, close the damper.
- Cracks around doors and windows can be sealed with tape or damp towels.
- Tune your radio to KCBS 740 AM for further information and instructions.
- Stay off your phone. Do not call 9-1-1 unless you have a life-threatening emergency.

These are the “Shelter-in Place” guidelines provided by the Contra Costa County Health Services Department. The sirens are tested the first Wednesday of each month at 11:00A.M. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD FROM THE PRESCHOOL WHEN WE ARE IN “SHELTER-IN-PLACE” MODE. WE CANNOT RELEASE YOUR CHILD UNTIL THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT HAS DETERMINED THAT IT IS SAFE.

19. Nutrition

A. Nutrition Education

Richmond College Prep Preschool incorporates nutrition into the curriculum. Cooking experiences for the children are regularly integrated into the menu planning. The children also learn about how food is grown, how it gets to consumers and sanitary food preparation. A Nutrition Advisory Meeting is held regularly. You are encouraged to attend. Subjects on the agenda include nutrition information, menus cooking project and ways to reinforce healthy eating habits.

Food Guide

Foods that are not permitted at Richmond College Prep:

- Sugary drinks(soda, fruit drinks, sports drinks, some juices,etc.)
- Sweet foods (cake, candy, cookies, donuts, brownies,etc.)
- Salty foods(potato chips, corn chips, pork skins/crackling,)

B. Food Safety:

Home-prepared food may not be served at Richmond College Prep Preschool, in the classroom or at program sponsored functions. When foods are brought from home, we have no way of monitoring the preparation, appropriate storage or refrigeration. **Please do not bring food for your child to eat in class.** This disrupts the classroom.

Leftover foods from classroom meals may not be sent home with families. We are very concerned about food safety and want to avoid the chance of food poisoning, which can occur when foods are not stored safely.

20. Field Trips and In House Guests

During the year, Richmond College Prep Preschool plans various ways to enhance the children's learning experiences. Parent and community members are always welcome to share family traditions, hobbies, demonstrations and information with children and staff. These sharing times should be arranged in advance with Richmond College Prep Preschool staff.

Field trips are either within safe walking distance of the preschool or within 15-20 minutes one-way driving distance. The number of walking field trips will vary. Parent Volunteers must be present to assist the teaching staff on both walking and bussed field trips. These volunteers may not bring other children with them on the trip.

Field trips and in-house guests are planned around:

- The development level of the children, and
- The children's current interests and experiences.

For some children, preparing for a field trip and actually riding or walking to a different environment can be very stressful and tiring. Children's tolerance levels vary according to their ability to wait, walk, or ride with a large group for an extended period of time; to follow directions and to positively respond to new things. In some cases, remaining in the preschool environment allows for a greater sensitivity and flexibility in responding to each child's needs. For this reason, in house-guest are preferred.

21. Celebrations

The preschool encourages the celebration of life and friendship all through the year. The emphasis, however, must be on developmentally appropriate activities that support and nurture every child. These events are based on children's interests rather than commercialized holidays. Parents will not be asked by staff to contribute money or food for special events.

Food policy for celebrations

In March 1993, in an effort to reduce childhood obesity, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Contra Costa County Food Policy developed by the Contra Costa County Food and Nutrition Policy Consortium. Richmond College Prep Preschool actively subscribes to this policy. The policy states that food at staff meetings, parties, and other types of social events shall include choices that meet U.S. Dietary Guidelines and whenever food is served to people or provided through food assistance programs, it must reflect the current standard of good nutrition. Sweets (cake, cookies, candy) are to be avoided and healthy snacks provided.

22. Behavior Management

The social emotional climate of the classroom is a priority for all teachers. All children have the right to be treated with respect and to play and learn in a safe, caring and nurturing environment. The teaching staff utilizes positive guidance techniques and developmentally appropriate practices in managing children's behavior. Undesirable behavior is discouraged or redirected. The following strategies are used for responding to inappropriate behaviors:

- Anticipate/eliminate potential problems

- Redirect child away from conflict or negative events to more positive activity
- Offer choices to the child
- Assist child to learn logical/natural consequences to their actions
- Encourage respect for the feeling/right of others.

Teachers also talk to children about why they are behaving a certain way, let the children know what is expected and why, and model and encourage acceptable behavior. Corporal and punitive types of discipline are not used.

There are a few basic classroom rules which help the children feel secure and enhance learning. The teaching staff does not allow behavior to continue if it appears that a child will hurt him/herself, someone else, or damage property. To ensure that the program provides an environment that fosters the development of a positive self-image and self-control, and in accordance with Section #1012221 of the Licensing Code, the program adheres to a four step Child Discipline Code. The policy defines a protocol that ensures that every effort is made to identify strategies to reduce the likelihood of recurring disciplinary problems or hurtful behavior by the following four step process:

1. on-going communication with the parent,
2. evaluating classroom environment for possible adaptations,
3. strategizing with parent to identify needed resources,
4. ensure that appropriate referrals are made.

In the event the defined steps of the policy prove to be ineffective, the parent will be asked to remove the child from the preschool with two weeks of written notice. During that period, the parent will be provided assistance in reviewing alternative referral services.

23. Termination of Child Care Services

Richmond College Prep Preschool will terminate services for any of the following reasons:

1. Failure to maintain income or need eligibility in our full day programs.
2. Failure to inform Site Director of change in eligibility status.
3. Failure to recertify in a timely manner for our full-day programs
4. Violation of the program's Late Pick Up Policy
5. Multiple unexcused absences of the child
6. Verbal or physical abuse of any child, staff of other parent
7. Failure to keep immunizations current
8. The preschool determines that it is unable to meet the needs of the child
9. Failure of the parent or guardian to follow rules of the program
10. Failure of the child to adjust to a group experience
11. Child becoming an endangerment to himself or others

24. Volunteer Policy

Richmond College Prep Preschool values the role that the preschool plays in its neighborhood and local community. We encourage members of the community to volunteer in our classrooms. In order to ensure the safety of our children and staff, all prospective volunteers, must receive a

clear fingerprint record, child abuse index check, and tuberculosis (TB) test and results, prior to participation in any classroom activities.

25. Richmond College Prep Preschool Confidentiality Pledge to You and Your Child

We respect each family's right to privacy and confidentiality. Staff members will secure the parent or guardian's written consent before disclosing information to other agencies and professionals. Information will be shared for reasons that will enhance the family and ensure that services are provided in the most efficient and effective manner. In cases such as threats of suicide, harm to others or suspected child abuse, staff will consult with supervisors and outside professionals for assistance. (See Child Abuse Reporting Law) Written records on individual children and their families are kept in locked cabinets at each site. Access to records is limited to the staff necessary to provide comprehensive services. Families always have access to all of their children's records including information in confidential files.

The representative/parent/guardian has the right to be informed of the appropriate licensing agency to contact regarding complaints, which is:

Community Care Licensing
1515 Clay Street, #1102
Oakland, CA. 94612

26. Child Abuse Reporting Law

In California, certain professionals are required by law to report known or suspected child abuse (California Penal Code 11165-11174). All staff members are considered "mandated reporters" of child abuse. **The primary intent of the reporters law is to protect the child and to provide help for the family.** Mandated reporters must file a report when the victim is a child under the age of 18. The types of abuse or suspected abuse that must be reported include physical abuse, sexual assault and exploitation, willful cruelty and unjustifiable punishment, neglect and unlawful corporal punishment or injury or mental suffering. Mandated reporters must make a report immediately. A written report must be forwarded within 36 hours to Child Protective Services or to a local law enforcement agency.

27. Resolution of Problems

Parents and staff must work closely together to provide a healthy and nurturing environment for the child's development. Dealing with problems effectively is part of "good" parenting and "good" teaching. Communication between the home and school are essential to the development of healthy, happy children.

If you have a concern about your child or worry about your child's care, please discuss it with the teacher in charge, immediately. Do not let the problem grow. The teacher in charge will be happy to work with you to resolve the problem.

If after working with the teacher in charge you are not able to resolve a problem, see the Site Director for help.

28. Non- discriminatory Policy

Richmond College Prep Preschool prohibits discrimination or harassment in its programs and activities on the basis of gender, race, color, ancestry, religious creed, sexual orientations, national origin, disability (including HIV and AIDS), medical condition, marital status, or political beliefs. We pledge that the treatment of our clients and employees will be free from such discrimination or harassment.

29. Political Prohibition

At no time during the preschool's posted hours of operation will facilities or staff time be used for political purposes, sponsoring or conducting candidate's meetings, nor for publicity or propaganda purposes designed to support or defeat legislation pending before federal, state or local government.

30. Smoking Prohibition

Out of concern for the health and welfare of our children and staff, the preschool maintains a smoke-free environment. Smoking is prohibited within 100 feet of any facility.

31. Religious Prohibition

There shall be no religious worship, instruction, celebrations, or proselytizing as part of, or in connection with Richmond College Prep Preschool

32. Certification Regarding a Drug Free Workplace

For your safety, Richmond College Prep Preschool is committed to providing a drug-free workplace. All employees are notified that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace.

33. Parent Acknowledgment

I have carefully read the foregoing Parent Acknowledgement and I understand its contents:

Parent Signature

Parent Name (please print)

(Print your Child's Name)

Date