

2023-2024
Parent Handbook





Welcome to the Otter Learning family of schools!

At Otter Learning ("The Company"), we are a community focused network of early childhood education schools focused on social and academic success. **Our Mission** is simple, achievable and focused: Be Safe, Be Kind - Let's Grow Together.

Our Vision is to be the leader in providing community focused early childhood education for children from all backgrounds. We will be known for our exceptional educational programs, talented teams, and community relationships. We will always take pride in our unique blend of fun and learning in a safe and nurturing environment.

Our Values:

- Growth & Innovation - We will continue in our efforts to promote education, constantly improve our services, and nurture top talent to provide a unique and exciting environment for everyone in the Otter Learning family.
- Partnership - We believe in working together as a team and community.
- Quality - We will offer an environment that fosters development, facilitates success, and encourages integrity.
- Inclusion – All children, families and team members are welcome.
- Safety – We will deliver a safe setting for our students, team and community.

We understand that all children have different interests, abilities, and learning styles, so our approach to education considers each child's individuality. We strive to offer a compelling learning environment filled with activities that are both challenging and fun. It is our belief that a quality education encompasses a broad spectrum of opportunities in and out of the classroom.

We recognize that choosing an early education program is an extremely important decision for both you and your child. We are thankful that you have come to us and strongly feel that you have made the right choice.

Our staff is what really makes the difference. They consist of experienced, certified and continually trained educators. We will care for your child like no other institution. All teachers and staff are required to meet or exceed all licensing requirements including staff credentials, continued professional development, and thorough background checks at state and federal levels. We recognize that quality staff members make a good program GREAT and we are committed to continuously improving the service we provide to your family!

This Handbook provides an overview of the program policies and procedures when enrolled. We ask that you take time to thoroughly read this handbook and ask any questions as they arise.

We are excited to welcome you and your student to the Otter Learning family!
Sincerely,

Your Otter Learning Team



Why Otters?

The Otter is a smart and engaging animal, overflowing with confident energy. They are positive, eminently lovable and display highly developed social skills. Otters mix easily with a diverse range of personalities.

We think the same should be true of children.

Our History

Otter Learning was established to provide a community oriented early childhood education environment that is more than just a “daycare” for children. At an Otter Learning school, we offer opportunities for children of all backgrounds to develop skills early in life that will prepare them to be future leaders in the communities that we serve. We are committed to offering children and their families the highest quality environment to prepare them for the 21st Century.

Our goal is for each student to discover incredible adventures on their way to becoming responsible, respectful citizens of the community. We understand that all children have different interests, abilities, and learning styles, so our approach to education considers each child's individuality. Our teachers are trained to help children develop emotional skills, encourage engagement and promote curiosity. We are result-oriented and focused on ensuring all children are properly prepared for their next phase in their social development.

Our facilities are staffed by experienced, dedicated individuals, teachers and tireless support staff, who foster a love of learning and exploring in every child. Their goal is to ensure your child's well-being and guide them on their educational journey every day.

Each of our schools is licensed by the state where it operates. In addition, each school adheres to the highest standards of safety, security, cleanliness, teaching, and care. Every Otter Learning school operates the way any good neighborhood business does. We know our community and we understand how best to serve the parents and children who live there.

As a leader in early education, we are committed to fulfilling our mission with honesty, trust, excellence, and the same passion for learning we instill in our students.



Purpose of This Handbook

This handbook was developed to answer many of the commonly asked questions that children and families may have during the school year. The handbook contains information about child privileges and responsibilities as well as parent and guardian responsibilities. Therefore, families and children are responsible for knowing its contents. Please become familiar with the handbook and keep it accessible for your use. It can be a valuable reference during the school year and a means to avoid confusion and misunderstandings when questions arise.

The school reserves the right to interpret or change the content of the handbook, including the rules and regulations governing the conduct of students and parents. This handbook is not a contract, nor is it intended to be construed as such. Otter Learning reserves the right to modify and/or amend the content of this handbook at any time during the year as we deem appropriate or necessary.

If you have any questions about the handbook or any of its policies, please contact the Director via ProCare or email.

Equal Opportunity

Otter Learning schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, citizenship, handicap or disability or any other legally protected status in regard to admissions or in the administration of its educational policies and administered programs.

This school makes its programs and services accessible to individuals with disabilities. The school welcomes requests for accommodation. The school will attempt to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified students with mental or physical disabilities, to the extent that such a request does not cause a fundamental alteration to the school's programs/curriculum and to the extent that it does not create an undue hardship for the school's daily operations.

The first step in requesting an accommodation is to provide the Director with documentation of the condition from a qualified professional, such as a physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist. Upon receipt of such documentation and recommendations, we will communicate with the family in an interactive process to obtain additional information or discuss the circumstances related to the request.

Communication

We welcome family input and encourage you to visit your child's classroom and speak with your child's teacher. We have an open-door policy at our school and families are encouraged to get involved in their child's classroom.

All Otter Learning schools are powered by ProCare, the leading early education platform which helps transform the education experience. ProCare allows our staff and administration to provide daily updates, photos, videos, curriculum, feeding schedules, secure check in/out and online tuition payments.

All parent teacher communication must be transmitted in ProCare or in-person. Verbal messages from children on behalf of parents and correspondence to staff's personal cell phones will not be accepted as a means of communication.



On a regular basis, please check your child's ProCare account and be sure to read any electronic correspondences that are sent through the app or distributed physically at the front desk. Also, be sure to check your child's cubby and classroom folder daily for messages, daily reports and classwork.

Role of Families or Other Caregivers: Our General Expectations of You

The relationship between families and staff is vital to the success of a child's experience. A partnership must be formed the first day, with open communication and understanding that the development and the growth of the child is our top priority.

Families can assist and help ensure a smooth transition by adhering to the following:

- Sign children in and out via our front desk Kiosk and then escort them to their designated class.
- Always supervise your children while escorting them inside the school and in the parking area.
- Drive safely through the parking area.
- Complete and update forms as needed and when changes occur (i.e., new phone number, vaccinations, address, etc.).
- Keep staff informed of special needs or changes that might affect your child's behavior.
- Notify the school if your child is ill, absent or tardy.
- Ensure tuition payments are made on time.
- Notify the school if you will be later than usual picking up your child.
- Provide two changes of clothes and undergarments marked with your child's name (for all ages). Our school is not responsible for lost clothing. Please change clothing seasonally to accommodate the changes in weather and the growth of your child.
- Ensure child is dressed properly for weather and play.
- Do not allow children to bring in toys. (This rule does not include special transition toys such as a blanket or other security items to which your child is significantly attached and is approved). The school will not be responsible for any lost or damaged toys.
- Participate in the school's special activities.
- Attend scheduled family meetings and conferences.

Concerns with Your Child's Classroom or Teacher

We encourage you to speak directly with the teacher. Our preference is for teachers and families to maintain open communication and work together to solve issues. If you are unable to resolve your concern, please speak to the Assistant Director or Director.

Classroom Experience

Curriculum:

Educational priorities are well-defined at our schools. Our comprehensive curriculum materials are designed specifically for each age group and stage of development. Our curriculum establishes a solid foundation for educational growth beginning with a child's first day. Each of our programs is research-based and includes developmentally appropriate activities. We continue to focus on educating children through the early childhood years and beyond with play based, academically stimulating, hands-on units. We provide teachers with the curriculum materials needed to create a positive learning environment that will challenge children and move them toward mastering new skills.



Infants:

Infants do more than eat, sleep, and play. Behind these misleadingly simplistic actions occurs an awe-inspiring process of development through which infants make sense of, and learn how to interact with, the world around them. The possibilities for enhancing children are limitless.

At the youngest stage of development, infants begin to observe their environment. Babies enjoy being held, cuddled, and nurtured by our loving staff. Our infants engage in several stimulating activities throughout the day that are catered towards their own developmental progress such as discovery of the five senses, exploring textures, colors and learning a variety of words and sounds.

The next stage of development includes patterns of eating, being alert and sleeping which are clearly regulated. Our babies are introduced to new foods, sitting up, recognizing their name, crawling, pulling up, and exploring their environment. Our trained and dedicated staff delicately work with our parents to aid children through the various stages of development. Parents and/or guardians will always be part of each room transition decision and will receive daily ProCare updates and reports to track progress.

Toddlers:

Many exciting developmental milestones occur in our toddler classrooms. The children are reading picture books, drawing, painting, climbing, jumping, and exploring everything around them. We believe that a toddler's environment should offer age-related appropriate activities and the opportunity to interact and play alone or in small groups. By allowing our children to learn in small groups, it gives them the opportunity to get more one-on-one attention. Our professionally trained teachers will give you the peace of mind knowing that your child is in a loving and nurturing atmosphere.

During the toddler years, children make steady gains in all areas of development. They are struggling with their feelings of independence versus dependence. They want to do everything by themselves, yet they also realize that they need love and attention to accomplish these goals.

We offer a program to meet the busy lifestyle of your toddler. We provide a variety of techniques to help your child move toward independence, problem solving, understanding abstract concepts, and sharing with other children. We focus on appropriate developmental outcomes that are based on your child's individual needs. Reading, sorting, counting, and identifying shapes are a primary objective for improving your child's language skills and are all covered in-depth.

We recognize that physical separation for toddler and family is always difficult. Our school strives to help families and children experience a calm transition of physical and emotional separation through our safe and loving environment. We encourage families to take the time they need to make this separation as smooth as possible and to let us know how we can support in the process.

Junior Preschool / Preschool:

Preschool children are very inquisitive, and their confidence is growing daily. Because preschoolers are eager to learn, they need the opportunity to develop in an environment that is based upon their unique development and learning styles. This type of learning is referred to as "Developmentally Appropriate Practices." Our preschool program is based on this very important concept and considers each child's strengths, interests, and needs. The curriculum is designed to challenge our preschoolers including hands-on math, science, art, music, cooking and physical



fitness activities. This well-rounded program offers something for each child. Fine motor skills are an important part of the learning process as children are introduced to basic printing. We also focus on successfully completing potty training in this age cohort to establish routine and good habits early on.

Pre-Kindergarten:

This classroom is truly designed to do just what the name suggests: prepare your child for kindergarten. Children are expected to know more than ever these days. We provide a school-like setting, enhanced with a balance of activities geared to encourage and promote children to be the best they can be.

Your child will be given the time and attention required to provide a solid foundation for a lifetime of continued learning. Our teachers use their experience and training to ensure that each child's day is balanced with creative activities that help to develop thinking, reasoning, problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Pre-K students are assessed with an ongoing customized program and enjoy the benefits of oversight by our Pre-K specialists. Students cruise way past typical kindergarten entrance requirements, mastering language and math concepts well into elementary school levels. You will be amazed by what can be accomplished during this special year. In addition, the use of a daily schedule helps children feel secure and independent as they anticipate activities and the opportunity of making choices on an individual basis.

Kindergarten through 12 years:

A select few of our schools offer high quality Elementary School services. High quality, low ratio elementary school can benefit your child during the early introduction to formal education and long afterward. Research indicates that effective elementary school programs can improve school attendance, classroom behavior, and academic aspirations. These characteristics bolster academic success through high school and well into college.

High quality after school care can also benefit your child in elementary school and long afterward. Research indicates that effective after school care programs can improve school attendance, classroom behavior, and academic aspirations. Spending time in after school programs also lays the foundation for healthy lifestyles. When children are surrounded by opportunities to make good choices in positive and supportive environments, they are more likely to make better choices for the rest of their lives. As part of our after-school program, students will have access to tutors for homework assistance and educational enrichment, exciting field trips during planned school closures and summer break, healthy snacks, large indoor and outdoor play spaces with fun and engaging games and transportation to and from our partner schools. Families are welcome to make alternative transportation plans as necessary.

Extracurricular Activities:

Some schools offer a variety of extracurricular activities including dance, art classes, soccer and other exciting seasonal activities. Please speak with the Director to receive more detailed information regarding the available programming.

Enrollment Process

Families are encouraged to have their children with them the first time they visit or tour the school. It is important that the child and parents feel comfortable with our staff and the facility.



To reserve space in our program, parents must submit a completed application and a **non-refundable registration fee**. Amounts of all fees are found on the school's fee schedule, which can be provided by the Director upon a successful tour of the school. In addition to a registration fee, a one-week tuition deposit is required at the time of enrollment. The deposit will be credited toward your last-week tuition, as long as a **two-week, written notice** is given.

All children must be observed by the school prior to admission to assure that our program can effectively meet their needs.

Your First Day

On your child's first day of school, the following forms must be completed, signed and reviewed by the administrative staff:

- Enrollment Application
- Immunization Report and Physical
- Health and Emergency Form
- Emergency Information Card
- Tuition Agreement
- Acknowledgement of Receipt of Parent Handbook
- Other Local and State Specific Forms
- School Transportation Form (if applicable)

No child may continue enrollment for more than 30 days without a current immunization report. Please let the administrative staff know of any allergies or special dietary requirements prior to your child's first day. Please also see the school's *Medication Policy* detailed further in this handbook.

If the information in these forms change during the child's enrollment, families are responsible for notifying the administration in writing of the changes. This includes, but is not limited to, phone numbers, emergency contacts, work locations, or child's physician.

If a family does not provide two weeks' written notice, they will be responsible for an additional two weeks of tuition and authorize Otter Learning to continue processing automated payments for two weeks from the checking, savings, or credit card account indicated on their 'Automated Payment Processing' form. If Otter Learning finds it necessary to submit a family's account for collections, any and all fees associated with collections will be added to their balance. Finally, if a family decides to unenroll for any reason, and the family has an outstanding balance, all past due tuition and fees will need to be paid in full prior to re-enrollment.

Parental Custody and Court Ordered Visitation

At the time of enrollment, it is the custodial parent's responsibility to notify the Director of any custody terms or disputes involving children enrolled at an Otter Learning school. If there are court ordered restrictions to the visitation of one or more of the child's parents, a certified copy of the court order must be provided to the Director before the child's first day at school. All school documents regarding the child are the property of Otter Learning.

Otter Learning will to the best of our ability, uphold the court's orders as outlined in the certified copy. If a parent becomes concerned about the wellbeing of a child in our care, the parent should notify the Director immediately and come pick the child up as soon as possible. If



upholding the courts orders becomes disruptive or endangers other children, the family will be asked to remove the child until the matter is settled.

Tuition Policy

Tuition Payments:

Tuition payments should be viewed as an annual school year obligation which is paid by families weekly or monthly depending on your desired payment plan. There are no deductions for absence due to illness, accident, holidays, teacher workdays, mandatory quarantine, days the school is closed for inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances. If our school must close due to unexpected circumstances, such as inclement weather, state regulation, illness or other unforeseen events, full payment of tuition is required. We reserve the right to close any additional days needed and full tuition payment is expected to be paid in full.

Our philosophy behind this policy stems from our goal to be able to support the school day-to-day (pay our highly trained teachers, purchase supplies, ensure safety of building and facilities) and provide the necessary resources for the school.

Tuition payments are due every Friday for the next week of service for weekly plans or the first of each month for monthly billing plans. Tuition is due and payable on Friday for the upcoming week. Tuition is considered delinquent if remaining unpaid by 5:00pm on Friday afternoon. If a batch ACH or Credit Card payment fails, there will be a \$35 failed payment fee per occurrence. After a failed payment notification, payment is required at the front desk / point-of-sale ("POS") before the next day of attendance. A late payment fee of \$20 will be assessed each day a payment is delinquent. Additionally, if a batch payment fails on more than one occurrence, the school will require that account to be paid via POS payment on Fridays at drop off. You understand and agree that any discounts or promotions you may be eligible for will not be applied if tuition is delinquent. Should your account remain delinquent as of 7:00 pm Wednesday, you understand that you will be asked to withdraw your child until payment in full is made. If Otter Learning finds it necessary to submit your account for collections to an affiliated collections agency, all fees associated with collections will be added to your balance.

We understand the commitment of sending your child to school, but we also have an obligation to operating our school safely and ensuring our teachers are compensated for all the work they do when services are rendered.

If you do decide to unenroll in order to avoid paying tuition for a few weeks, the school will require a registration fee upon re-enrollment and cannot guarantee that your child's space will be available upon return due to waitlist demand. Some exceptions will be allowed for educators during the summer break months on a case-by-case basis. To receive this benefit an employment verification is required and the Teacher Addendum must be signed.

When a child has transitioned full time into an older classroom, the new tuition rate corresponding to that classroom will become effective on the Friday before starting in the new room. This rate change will be based on classroom advancement, not by date of birth.

We reserve the right to change tuition and/or program fees due to unforeseen increases in expenses. Families will be notified of any changes in tuition within four weeks of the change. Any additional services such as late pick-up, field trips, etc. must be paid the same day the services are rendered.



No portion of your weekly paid tuition will be refunded or canceled in the event of absence, withdrawal or dismissal from the school or unscheduled school closure. Should it become necessary to withdraw your child for any reason, a two-week written notice must be given to the administration. If the notice ends on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, tuition for the entire week is due. We reserve the right to dismiss any student at the discretion of the school's Director or Administration consistent with our expulsion policy.

Payment Method / ProCare:

All tuition must be paid via the school's ProCare software. **The school does not accept checks or cash as a form of payment.** This policy helps create a safer environment for staff and allows our teachers and administration to spend more time with students and families.

ProCare accepts most major credit and debit cards. In addition, families have the option to link a bank account to automatically draft tuition payments each week for convenience. In order to encourage the option to link your bank account to our software, we absorb all charges if you decide on that option. Otherwise, there is a 3% administrative fee charged to process non-ACH transactions.

Registration and Tuition Deposit:

A non-refundable registration fee is due after the student has been officially accepted based on admission requirements. This fee is due upon notification of the child's acceptance and prior to beginning the program. This fee is an annual fee and must be paid according to the Otter Learning Registration fee schedule. These fees serve to ensure your child's placement in addition to covering the costs of processing the application for admission, supplies and educational materials. If the student is enrolled in June or July, the registration fee is waived for the upcoming year. Annual registration fees for re-enrolling families are billed every September 15th if they are starting enrollment at the beginning of the school year. For families that are enrolling after the start of the school year, the Registration fee is due before the student's first day of attendance. If space is not available at the time of registration, your child will be placed on our waiting list. We will contact you when space becomes available. Registration fees guarantee that your child's spot will be reserved for up to two weeks.

At time of enrollment, families are also required to pay a one-week tuition deposit which will be credited to their last week of attendance if a two-week written notice is provided to the Director upon unenrollment.

School Ager / After School Fees:

Tuition for school age children and before/after school care is due each week regardless of attendance. The school reserves and guarantees students' spots on our transportation vehicles and therefore tuition is due each week due to high demand and limited space. However, school age tuition is not due when local public schools are closed and we are not picking up at local partner schools (example: Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, Spring Break). If school age students attend the school during the weeks of public-school closure, the school age weekly tuition rate will be applied to your statement balance. School age children are not eligible for vacation discounts per the below policy.

Discounts:

We offer sibling discounts of 10% discount to the child with the lowest weekly tuition for a family of two or more. We also offer military discounts of 5% off total tuition with a current valid I.D. **Only**



one discount will be allowed on a parent account at any given time. Discounts may not be stacked or combined with any other discounts, offers, or promotions. If you are a current full-time staff member of an Otter Learning school, you will receive a 50% discount for each child's weekly tuition.

Withdrawal:

Families are responsible for initiating the child withdrawal process. A two-week written notice is required, and tuition is expected to be paid in full for those weeks. Your tuition deposit will be attributed to your account for the final week of attendance (if applicable). If a two-week notice is not submitted, tuition is still due for those two weeks. Families will need to speak to the Director who will start the required paperwork process for withdrawal. Once written notice is properly shared and verified, the family must ensure that any school property in the possession of the child or child's family is returned, and any outstanding financial obligations are met.

Dismissals

The staff will work with each child to meet the needs of that child and every effort will be made to provide a positive learning experience. However, the administration reserves the right to ask families to make alternative arrangements for care if it is determined that a child's needs cannot be met, or the child has not adjusted to group care provided by the school. In the event behavior becomes disruptive to the program or poses an unsafe situation for the child or other children in the school, alternative arrangements may be required. This may include offering families the option of finding and paying for a qualified and dedicated caregiver to support their child in the school or pursuing alternative care at another facility.

A dismissal will only be considered after careful consideration. If the administration determines that the program is not a successful match, families will be given referral information to assist in the transition to a program better suited to the family's needs.

If you, the parent, are uncooperative in completing and returning forms, fail to pay your tuition on time, fail to follow any state or county regulations, or fail to follow any of the procedures outlined throughout this handbook, it may be necessary to dismiss your child from our school.

School Closures

The school will be closed on the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the following day
- Christmas Eve and Christmas
- One school chosen day off (Good Friday, Presidents Day or Veterans Day) to be communicated by School Administration
- 2 In-service days per year (Fall / Spring) to be communicated by School Administration



If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, it may be observed on a Friday or Monday. After school and school age students will be permitted to stay on public school closure days and will be required to pay the full-time daily rate for the number of days attending.

In addition, the school may be required to close due to inclement weather. The school takes into consideration several factors when making a judgment as to whether we will open late or close early due to inclement weather including assessing local authorities' recommendations, local road conditions and forecasted temperatures. Please call the school, check ProCare, listen to the radio or watch television for announcements about closings due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

Attendance

School Hours:

This school is open Monday through Friday, 12 months per year. Please see above for predetermined Holiday Closings. Since we are licensed only for specific hours of operation, no early drop-off or late pick-up can be allowed. Please speak with the Director for exact hours of operation as they vary by location.

Arrival:

We recommend all children arrive by their classroom's morning group time. Morning activities usually begin at this time and this will help your child to be a fully participating group member. Children must be clocked in and out by their parent/guardians or individuals authorized on the emergency card everyday using ProCare at the entry way kiosk. No child may be left at the school without completing the sign-in process. Please do not leave your child unattended or unsupervised for any reason. All children must be escorted into a classroom by an adult. Upon arrival into the classroom, we ask that you wash your hands as well as your child's hands. This will help us minimize the spread of illness. Your child's arrival must be acknowledged by the classroom teacher before you can leave your child. Please note that if your child arrives after breakfast time, we will not be able to provide this service.

Departure:

To pick up a child from our school, an adult must come into the building, sign the child out and ensure the teacher is aware of their presence and escort the child out of the building. The family or guardian must always supervise their child after leaving the classroom, both inside the building and in the parking area. If someone other than a family member is picking up a child and is not an approved pickup in ProCare, they will be asked for a picture ID to match the person to the name given by the family.

Only a guardian or other individual listed as an emergency contact will provide student transportation. Siblings under the age of 18 years may not transport or sign out a student. Under NO circumstances will any student under the age of 4 (four) years be released to any individual who does not have a child safety seat in their car. The director or staff members will not allow any child to leave the building with an adult whose faculties appear to be compromised for any reason including but not limited to the use of drugs or alcohol. In such cases, other individuals listed on the emergency pick up card or the police will be contacted to assure the child is taken home safely.

Late Pick-up and Fees:



We expect parents to respect and abide by our hours of operation. We recognize that it is not always possible to pick up your child by closing time. Per company policy, our staff may not take your child home with them or make other baby-sitting arrangements. We ask that you call us NO LATER than 30 minutes prior to closure so we can tell your child when to expect you, so they do not worry in addition to determining our staffing needs. There will be an automatic charge of \$20.00 per late pickup and \$1 per minute late per occurrence and child. This will be charged to the parent account in Procure. If you have not contacted us by 30 minutes after closure our first assumption is that something accidental in nature has occurred. In this case, we will make every effort possible to contact parents, guardians, or other adults who have permission to pick up a child. If we are not successful in contacting anyone, we are obligated to first contact the police and request that they attempt to determine if something accidental has occurred and to assist us in locating a guardian who has permission to take custody of your child. Only as a last resort, we will contact the state licensing agency to take custody of your child. We are not licensed for after-hours care. The state has a special license for this, and our employees are not allowed to take custody of your child by removing them from the premises. If there are two or more incidents within one quarter, your child will no longer be allowed to return without the Directors permission and a new registration fee.

Health and Safety

General Safety Statement:

All the policies, rules and regulations presented in this handbook are designed to make the time your child spends at our school safe and rewarding. We have taken several steps to promote the safety and protection of your child while in our care. They are as follows:

- All exits and entrances are locked and only accessible by code entry or key.
- Secure check in/out tablet with individual pin codes to determine precisely who is accessing the school.
- Frequent observations of the classrooms are performed by the administration.
- Daily professional cleaning and sanitizing of the entire school.

Smoke-Free and Weapon Free Environments

All facilities, grounds, and vehicles of Otter Learning are smoke-free and weapon-free environments. Smoking is prohibited on all company property including company grounds, parking lots, and inside of a personal vehicle while it is on company grounds. To ensure a safe environment free of violence, all employees, clients, vendors, contractor workers and all other visitors are strictly prohibited from possessing any dangerous weapons while on company property including company vehicles. Dangerous weapons include but are not limited to firearms, knives, and explosives. Otter Learning reserves the right to search all company owned property and any personal property of those entering a facility for the purpose of determining if a dangerous weapon has been brought into the premises in violation of this policy.

Classroom Safety:

Our school provides equipment and furnishings that are child-sized, sturdy, safe and in good repair. Individual teachers are responsible for the set-up of their classroom. It is part of their daily routine to wash and sanitize toys and furniture and to watch for and eliminate any hazards present in the classroom. Teachers are provided with guidelines as to what equipment and toys should exist in each classroom.

Playground Safety:



Safe, age-appropriate outdoor environments are provided for our children. The following rules are enforced for indoor and outdoor play areas:

- When a class has outdoor time, all children must stay with their class.
- Teachers supervise the children on the playground at all times.
- In case of an accident, one teacher may bring a child in for first aid.
- At no time will the class be left on the playground without appropriate supervision.
- The administration and the teachers will inspect the playground daily and report any unsafe conditions immediately.

Illness Policies

Our ultimate goal is to provide a place where your child can learn, develop and have fun in a safe and healthy environment. The school is not equipped with the staff or facilities to care for sick children for an extended period of time. Our schools adhere to the local licensing and Health Department requirements. We also review all recommendations from The American Academy of Pediatrics, and The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for guidelines regarding communicable diseases in early childhood education. As partners in education, we depend on you to ensure care when your child has become ill. The following guidelines for excluding children help us to keep many communicable illnesses out of our facility thereby maintaining regular attendance for the majority of the children and staff. It is your responsibility to report to the school any infectious or communicable disease for which your child is diagnosed.

It is very important that every family have a back-up care plan for their child. Children between the ages of 6 weeks to 6 years are at a higher risk of developing colds and infections due to immature immune systems. Child illness is a natural part of developing a strong immune system. However, our illness management policies are in place to reduce the risk, limit exposure, and reduce the frequency that your child may become ill. Preventative measures at school and at home are very important, such as frequent and proper hand washing, proper nutrition, proper rest, and timely student immunization. These and other practices, in conjunction with our policy to remove ill children from the school environment, all play a key part in our Health Safety Plan. We will notify the child's parent/guardian if the child is acting unusually tired, cranky or cries for a prolonged period of time for an unknown reason. Any child at school who displays one of the symptoms listed below will be sent home immediately. It is important that each family does their part to follow the illness policy, to reduce the spread of contagious illnesses among the school population.

General Health Plan

Please note that each licensing body and Health Department has varied policies that we must follow. These may differ slightly by location and it is your responsibility to ensure you have a copy of your school's illness policy.

A child will not be allowed admission if they have a temperature of 100.4° or higher. If a child is sent home with a fever, the student may not return to school until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without medication.

If a student presents a fever over 100.4°, parents will be notified by a phone call and ProCare message to pick up their child immediately. If the parents are not available, we will start calling the alternate contacts that are listed in the files. We will continue calling until we speak to a contact. Children with fevers over 100.4° degrees will not be allowed to stay at the school. They must be picked up and cared for by a parent or emergency contact. If we cannot establish



contact with a parent or alternate contact, we may at our discretion transport the child to emergency medical care if we believe medical attention is necessary.

In addition, a child will be excluded from the classroom by a member of our administration while the family members are contacted to pick up within one hour in the event of:

- COVID-19 exposure or diagnosis
- Diarrhea episodes of more than two in a day
- Skin rashes that are not diagnosed by a physician's note
- Vomiting episodes of more than one a day
- Nose drainage that is thick and green or excessive for the comfort of the child
- Eye drainage of any type accompanied by red eyes or mucus crusted around the eyes
- Pink eye or symptoms similar to those of pink eye
- Chicken pox or measles sores are suspected
- Scabies infection is suspected
- Respiratory problems including uneven breathing or severe coughing with wheezing or croup
- Sore throat, especially if swollen glands are suspected
- Strep throat symptoms are suspected
- Head lice are found and visible
- Appearance or behavior is unusual, and the teachers agree that the child is not feeling well enough to participate with the rest of the class including lack of appetite, confused or irritable
- Unusual color is noticed in the child such as jaundiced eyes or skin, pale in the face, stool or urine is an unusual color

All these conditions (except fever) will require 24-hour treatment or a doctor's note for the child to resume their normal attendance schedule. Children must be completely fever-free for 24 hours without the aid of medication before returning to the school.

If your child becomes ill at the school, we will contact you and isolate your child from other children until the student is picked up from School. If your child is absent, please contact us and let us know the reason. We will need this information to prevent the spread of contagious disease in the facility.

Medication Policy

Medication for students must be directed to the front office and managed by the School Director or Assistant Director. All medications must be kept in a cabinet, drawer, or refrigerator out of the reach of children. All medication must be clearly marked with child's first and last name. Sunscreen, bug spray or diaper creams must be clearly labeled as well and must be directed to the School Director for administering.

Medication Policy

Otter Learning schools are **not** required to administer medications. We do this as a courtesy for our families and students. It is incredibly important that the following procedures are followed. Otherwise, the administration will decline to administer medication to your student.

All families must provide a signed Medication Authorization Form including administration and dosage procedures for each medication to be administered. Any potential adverse reaction to the



medication must be listed on the authorization so that the child can be properly monitored, and families notified accordingly. Additional procedures include:

- Prescription medication must be in its original container bearing the pharmacist's label.
- Written authorization from the child's family and written doctor's authorization and instructions stating:
 - The child's full name
 - The name of the medication or the prescription number
 - The amount and frequency of dosage
 - The name of the prescribing physician
 - The date the instructions were signed by the physician
- We will not administer any medication after its expiration date or for non-medicated reasons, such as to induce sleep.
- We will not accept a Medication Authorization Form that states the medication is to be given "as needed."
 - Parents must indicate the exact conditions under which the medication should be given.
- Only **ONE** medication can be listed on each Medication Authorization Form.
- All medications must be dropped off and picked up at the front desk, each day. These medications will be stored in a locked secure area inaccessible to the children. Medication may not be transported to the classroom by families.
- Children are not allowed to bring any type of medication to the school to administer themselves.
- **NO MEDICATION MAY BE PLACED IN THE CHILD'S BAG OR TAKEN INTO THE CLASSROOM FOR ANY REASON.**
- All medication must be taken home daily to ensure proper family control.
 - Exceptions to this rule are life-saving medications such as breathing treatments. Any child needing these types of medications administered will be placed on a "Care Plan" developed by the child's family, a medical expert, and the administration. Any "Care Plan" currently in use will remain so until renewal time (at least every 6 months).

Emergency Medical Care:

Upon enrollment each child must have emergency care information on file. It is the family's responsibility to keep this information current. In the case of a medical emergency, you will be notified immediately.

If warranted, emergency medical personnel will be contacted to provide transportations to the nearest hospital specified on the Health and Emergency Information form. If possible, a member of the school administration or the child's teacher will accompany the child.

Immunizations:

The school must have on file the Immunization Records and latest physical for each child with specific dates recorded. These forms are obtained from a private physician or the local Health Department. The immunizations must include:

- Series of 5 DPT doses (age appropriate)
- 4 doses of polio (OPV)
- 2 doses of measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) (age appropriate)
- Completed 3-shot hepatitis series
- Varicella (chicken pox) shot



- All forms must be dated and signed by a physician before the child's first day of school

Accident Reports

Staff members may apply simple first aid at the school for minor injuries such as cuts, abrasions, bruises, and insect bites. If any of these occur and first aid is administered, an accident/incident report will be completed in addition to a ProCare notification (when appropriate). This report will state the nature of the injury, the cause, and the treatment. It will be signed by the teacher who completed the report, a member of administration and the family. The administration will then file the log into the child's file. If an accident is caused by or involves another child, that child's name cannot be given out and will not appear on the report. Families will be notified immediately if a child receives any injury other than a minor one.

Reporting Abuse and Neglect

Our staff is trained annually on reporting suspected abuse or neglect of a child. In the event a trained staff member feels a child has been abused or neglected, that staff member has the responsibility to report their suspicion to the school's administration. If the administration then feels that the suspicion is founded, they will contact social services to begin a formal investigation. All activity will be documented, including the initial report by the staff member. The staff member may choose to remain anonymous.

All allegations of abuse or neglect will be received by the state agency overseeing early childhood education. The county department of social services will determine if an investigation is needed within 24 hours of the complaint.

All 50 states have laws stating that those who work with children are mandated to report suspected abuse or neglect to authorities. We take our responsibilities to report suspected child abuse, neglect, and abandonment seriously and will cooperate with governmental authorities in connection with their investigations. If you have any questions regarding the school's mandatory reporting obligations, please consult the administration.

Reporting of Accidents and Hazards

All accidents, including those which do not involve serious injury, must be reported immediately to the administration by a staff member. Only through full knowledge of accidents can we strive to maintain a safe and healthy environment.

Immediately report any unsafe conditions, defective equipment, or other hazards to the administration. Children are expected to assist in maintaining safe conditions. Safety is a state of mind and requires constant vigilance and common sense. Safety is everyone's responsibility.

Emergency Procedures

If an emergency develops such as severe weather, fire, physical problems with the building, or power failure, the children's safety is our first concern. Each school has emergency preparedness plans to be prepared to respond to most emergencies. In addition, evacuation route diagrams are posted throughout the facility.

The school is equipped with a fire alarm system, a sprinkler system and fire extinguishers throughout the facility.

Fire drills are performed monthly and all staff members are instructed on evacuations. In the event of a natural disaster such as a hurricane, tornado, snowstorm, etc., the families will be



notified as soon as possible to pick up their child. If the family cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called (this person must be local to the school).

Child Behavior & PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)

Basic Expectations:

Our discipline policy is built around our understanding of child development and the guidance of The Center of Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports ([Center on PBIS | Early Childhood PBIS](#)). Our goal is to allow each child to find and develop their own personal self-management skills. As teachers and staff, we offer children choices, so they feel powerful in their ability to gain self-control. We use positive behavior management techniques such as positive phrasing and “I” statements as ways to further develop self-discipline. In situations where children are having a challenging time managing negative emotions, they may be removed from the over-stimulating environment to a quiet area where a teacher or member of the administrative staff can work one-on-one to resolve the situation. Families will always be informed if a situation such as this has occurred.

Early childhood PBIS refers to PBIS implementation within early childhood settings – The Pyramid Model. The Pyramid Model is a multi-tiered framework with a continuum of evidence-based practices to promote expected behavior, prevent problem behavior, and intervene when students need more support. This model addresses the needs and contexts unique to programs serving infants, toddlers and preschoolers, including children in public school early childhood classrooms. It includes the practices, procedures, and data collection measures appropriate for young children and their families.

The Pyramid Model ensures programs attend to both the implementation of evidence-based practices and develop the infrastructure to sustain these efforts. Children have better social skills and less problem behavior in Pyramid Model classrooms. Practitioners can implement Pyramid Model practices better when they receive training and practice-based coaching.

Discipline:

We aim to minimize disciplinary issues and to help students learn to self-regulate. Our educators are expected to present and model age-appropriate behavior and guidelines. We also use reflective communication to encourage students to convey their emotions. Our educators encourage self-control, self-direction, accountability and cooperation. Consequences that are practical, safe, logical and natural are utilized when necessary. Behavior Reports are utilized, along with parent conferences, messages, calls, attendance modifications and other tiered plans, as appropriate.

Our educators receive training in positive guidance (Conscious Discipline, Effective Communication, Relationship Building, Communication, and Mindfulness). Positive guidance focuses on pointing students to what they should do (as opposed to focusing on what they should not do). An example of this would be: “Walk inside the classroom.” vs. “No running!” Depending on the age of the student, kind words, hugs, words of encouragement and specific praise (“You walked carefully while carrying that jug” vs ‘Good job carrying the jug’) are used so the student will identify their positive choices and want to repeat them. We never use physical discipline and will not use it, even at a parent’s request. We also will not use physical rewards to manage children’s behavior. Such rewards undermine the student’s development of intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the desire to do what is good and right for its own sake rather

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Commented [DM1]: @Chase Begor @Spencer Kushner
@Olivia Murray I made BIG BIG changes here - PLEASE
REVIEW for alignment!

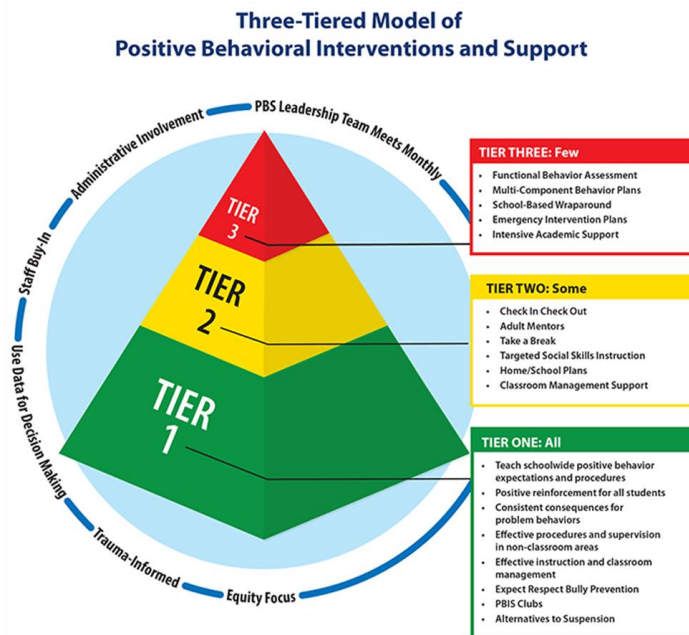
Commented [OM2R1]: Looks good to me....like the
changes you did with PBIS alot.



than out of fear of punishment or expectation of reward. Natural rewards should be highlighted. For example, 'You tidied up the classroom so quickly! Now we have more time to play outside'. Or 'Look at her face! You shared the truck with her and now she looks so happy!' This philosophy of positive guidance is in accordance with our belief that students learn best in an environment where love, constructive feedback and encouragement promote the development of self-esteem and that the best learning happens in the context of responsive and trusting relationships.

Physically aggressive behavior (fighting, biting, etc.) including but not limited to aggression toward other children or a staff member, offensive language, destructive behavior toward property, and disruption of activities for the entire class, etc. is unacceptable. In such instances, our educators will intervene immediately to protect others in the learning community, to prevent further aggressive behavior, and to encourage more appropriate and positive behavior.

Students in our care will be shown positive alternatives rather than being told "no". If certain difficult behaviors occur frequently, teachers or other designated staff will complete guided observation of the student, seeking to identify contexts in which the student is successful. Instead of asking, 'Why can't this student focus?' we will ask 'When, where and with whom can this student focus?' Instead of asking 'Why can't this child be gentle?' we will ask 'When, where and with whom can this child be gentle?'. These observations will be used by the teacher and a school admin to identify the student's strengths and to determine what changes to the environment, curriculum and interactions can be made to set the student up for success.



Tier 2 & 3 - Challenging Behaviors



Children will be immediately subject to Tier 2 (or above) PBIS action up to and including immediate dismissal for the below behaviors:

- Abuse or damage of school property
- Bullying/Harassment/Hazing
- Committing a serious breach of conduct inside or outside of the school
- Fighting
- Lewd or obscene behavior
- Possession or sale of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or drug related items
- Possession or use of a weapon, among other things
- Profanity or vulgarity
- Sexual or other misconduct
- Stealing
- Threatening behavior
- Physical assault
- Inappropriate use of the internet

Biting:

The school understands that occasional displays of aggression, like biting, are typical in young children who are unable to communicate their feelings and are part of normal early childhood development. Repeated incidents of biting will not be tolerated and could result in dismissal from the school if the behavior persists. If your child is struggling with biting, we will work with you to discuss a plan to help support your child to reduce biting incidents. We will not release your child's name to the family of the child bitten. Our objective is to ensure that our school maintains the highest level of safety within our environment and our staff members respond appropriately to aggressive behaviors. We understand that seeing a bite mark on your child can be upsetting, please know that we are taking steps to reduce and to discourage biting. If your child is bitten, we will notify you of the incident and the care your child received.

Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy:

Our school is dedicated to fostering an environment that promotes kindness and acceptance and embraces differences among individuals. Therefore, we will not tolerate any type of harassment, bullying or hazing.

Harassment includes but is not limited to slurs, jokes, and other verbal, graphic, or offensive conduct relating to race, religion, color, sex, national origin, citizenship, disability, and any other protected status.

Bullying includes but is not limited to physical or verbal aggression (hitting, kicking, taunting, name-calling, teasing, threatening, ridiculing, etc.), relational aggression (harming or threatening to harm relationships or acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion), and emotional aggression (teasing, threatening, intimidating others). The school also prohibits cyber-bullying (creating websites, instant messaging, e-mails, text messaging, using camera phones or other forms of technology to engage in harassment or bullying).

Any of these types of offensive conduct can create an uncomfortable learning environment. All concerns relating to harassment, bullying, or hazing should be reported immediately to the administration. When the school administration becomes aware of harassment, bullying or hazing, the situation will be promptly investigated. Any child found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including immediate dismissal from school. No retaliation



or adverse action will be taken against any person who makes a good faith report of harassment, bullying or hazing.

Family Cooperation:

A positive and constructive working relationship between the school and its families is essential to the fulfillment of the school's educational purpose. Thus, the school reserves the right not to extend the privilege of enrollment or re-enrollment to a child if the school concludes that the actions of the child's family make such a positive and constructive relationship impossible or otherwise seriously interferes with the school's accomplishment of its educational purpose. Moreover, the school reserves the right to expel a child at any time if, in the judgment of the administration, conduct of anyone directly associated with the child, including but not limited to the child's family, in or out of the school, is not in keeping with the school's accepted standards, principles, and policies. There will be no refund of tuition where such enforced withdrawal occurs, and any unpaid balance is payable in full according to the terms of the child's enrollment contract.

Other General Policies & Procedures

Diapering:

Children are checked at scheduled intervals throughout the day and changed at the first sign of wetness or soiling. No child is knowingly left in wet or soiled clothing. For children who wear diapers or toilet training pants, each family must provide an ample supply for each day/week. We do not supply these items and families will be notified if a child is running low on supplies.

Naptime:

All younger children are required to have a quiet time following lunch and are encouraged to sleep during this time. Children who are five years of age and older are not expected to nap (unless required under state regulations) but are provided with quiet time. Children who fall asleep will be allowed to sleep until the end of the rest period, as designated by the daily schedule. Children may bring a small item to comfort them and help them rest. The item, including pillows, must be small enough to fit into their cubby. We are not able to accept any requests to force your child to NOT fall asleep during rest time.

Toilet Training

When you believe that your child is ready to begin toilet training, please discuss this with your child's teacher and the administration. We will assist by encouraging your child to visit the toilet between diaper changes. With the first signs of success, we will recommend that you send your child to school in training pants. Because toilet training can result in many soiled clothing items at school, please be sure your child comes to school with several (two to three) changes of clothing each day. Be sure extra clothes are appropriate to the present season and are labeled with your child's full name. All soiled clothing will be sent home the same day for laundering. The school is prohibited from laundering any child's soiled clothing within the school's laundry.

Field Trips:

Classes for children 5 years and older (school aged) may plan field trips during the year to acquaint children with community resources and to provide educational experiences that will enhance classroom-learning activities. A signed participation and release form is mandatory for field trips. A child will be unable to attend a field trip unless a signed field trip form is received from a designated family member or guardian. An information sheet and participation and



release form will be sent home for each field trip the child is scheduled to attend. Families are encouraged to contact their child's teacher to see if additional chaperones are needed.

A child may be checked out from a field trip as long as the family has signed a release form. This policy is to help the staff keep an accurate count of the children. Classes will use the school's bus or vans for trips unless another means of transportation is authorized by the administration.

Lost and Found:

All items turned in to the Lost and Found will be held for 30 days. If not claimed, they will be discarded or donated to a charitable organization.

Celebrations and Holidays

Celebrating various holidays and occasions such as birthdays can bring both a sense of connection between families and school as well as a sense of joy in the celebrating. Otter Learning strives to respect each families wishes concerning holidays. Through regular communication, families will be aware of celebrations in their children's classroom as well as school-wide celebrations.

While not required or expected, some families choose to bring a small treat to share with the other students in their child's classroom. If you choose to share a treat with your child's classroom, we ask that the treat is one that is store-bought with a label of ingredients and possible allergens. This is to maintain the health and safety of all children and staff at our school.

Meals and/or Snacks:

Some of our schools offer nutritious meals and snacks every day. Meals and snacks served at our school comply with the meal patterns for children in early education standards which are based on the recommended nutrient intake judged by the National Research Council to be adequate for maintaining good nutrition. For more information about your child's school, please reach out to the Director.

Otter Learning does not provide food or snacks for infants and toddler children that are unable to eat solid foods. This is largely due to parental preference and child specific requirements. We require that parents of children this age provide their own food and snacks with specific instructions to maintain a healthy diet for your child(ren).

Allergies and Special Diets:

A weekly menu is posted in the school including all food that will be served for snacks and meals. Since we follow the recommendations of the USDA, any special diets for food allergies not available by the school must be provided by the family and accompanied with a physician's note and need to meet the recommendations for required nutritional components. This includes children who prefer water or juice instead of milk during meals. If your child requires a special diet, a special diet plan will be created to ensure that your child is receiving adequate nutrition in a manner to meet their needs. No tuition discount is given for food brought in by families. No food shall be brought in for your child or the class without prior approval from the administration.

All Otter Learning schools are nut-free facilities to protect those with nut allergies or sensitivities.

Personal Belongings:

Upon enrollment in our program, you should plan to bring the following for your child:



- At least two (2) complete changes of clothing appropriate for the weather with each item labeled with the child's name, including socks and underwear.
- A supply of disposable diapers and baby wipes for children who are not yet toilet-trained. Otter Learning does not provide either of these items for children due to parental preference and child specific requirements.
- You may bring a crib-size lightweight blanket or soft toy for rest time that is labeled with the child's full name.
- All items must fit in your child's cubby. Large pillows, large blankets and pillow-pets that do not fit in the cubby are not permitted. We encourage travel size pillows.
- Any prepared food for infants or toddlers who are not yet able to eat items listed on the weekly menu must be labeled with first and last name.
- All children will be outside during the day, weather permitting. Please make sure your child has adequate clothing for outside play. (This includes closed-toe shoes preferably. Flip flops or sandals will be allowed only if snug to the foot and rubber soled).
- If your child is too sick to go outside, a physician's note explaining the reason should accompany the child before the exclusion is accepted.

Pets:

Because of health and safety concerns, pets may not be brought to School without the Owner's advance consent. When picking up or dropping off your child, please keep pets in the vehicle.

Classmate Information:

To set up play dates or send party invitations, etc., families often ask for the phone numbers and/or addresses of other children in the school. We will happily pass notes or messages from you, but we cannot release confidential contact information.

Prohibited Items:

The following items should not be brought to the school by children:

- Tablets, iPads, handheld gaming systems and similar items
- Cameras and video cameras
- Skateboards
- Electronic games (unless approved by administration)
- Inappropriate reading material
- Any other items that would distract from learning
- Chewing gum or candy

Telephones:

Children are allowed to use the office phones for an emergency with a note from a teacher. Cell phones may only be used with the permission of administration.

Toys:

The school provides many toys for the educational benefit of each child. Therefore, we request that toys not be brought from home. Please note this does not include special transition objects such as blankets or other security items to which your child is significantly attached.

Transportation:

Transportation is provided only with parental permission. The transportation forms must be signed once a year. Field trip forms must be signed before each trip. If we take your child to school in the morning, then we will pick up your child at dismissal time unless otherwise



notified. If we did not take your child to school, then we assume that the student is absent and we will not expect to pick up your child unless it is agreed upon in advance that you will provide morning transportation and we will provide afternoon transportation.

You must notify us each time your child does not need transportation to or from school when we normally provide this service to you. If we are not notified that your child does not need transportation from school to the school in the afternoon before the bus leaves our facility, a \$25 fee will be charged.

Visitors and Volunteers:

Otter Learning schools have an open-door policy which allows parents and guardians to call the school or to visit their children in our facilities any time they wish. We do ask parents and guardians to be mindful of the classroom routine, to avoid disturbing classroom schedules and activities. Families and visitors are welcome at the school during school hours while their child is present. Families and visitors must first report to the staff at the front desk before visiting any class or any other location on school property during school hours. Families who want to help in the classroom, playground or during field trips are asked not to bring siblings or other children with them. Former families, children or guests of children must receive approval from the Director to enter the facility during school hours.

On some occasions, there are outside visitors in the building during school hours such as early intervention or other therapeutic services. Any person that has any interaction with children has been properly screened before being granted entrance to the school.

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding mothers, including employees, shall be provided a private and sanitary place to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area will have an electrical outlet, comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water.

Photo Release Policy:

Upon review of this handbook, you will receive a copy of our Photo Release Policy to read and sign. In order to receive individual and group photos via Procare Engage, we require parents to sign the attached Photo Release form.

Many pictures will be taken in your child's class and throughout the time that your child is attending our school and from time to time these pictures will be shared to you via ProCare, which is a PCI Level I secure application (highest standard rating). Other families and teachers may take snapshots of parties and special events within the program. If for any reason you do not want your child photographed, please let the director know in writing as soon as possible.

Confidentiality and Release of Information:

We place the highest priority on your child's safety and your right to privacy, therefore, information pertaining to all health, personal records and information concerning you or your child enrolled at the school and the staff employed at the school is considered confidential.

Information concerning your child will only be released to parent/guardians and/or authorities as required by law. Confidentiality applies to all families enrolled in our school. Please refrain from discussing other children or their families with other parent/guardians or with people outside of the school.



Staff Babysitting

Otter Learning prohibits staff from baby-sitting for families enrolled in our program. We ask that families understand that baby-sitting is a conflict of interest and in acknowledging this handbook agree not to solicit the services of school staff.

Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct:

At Otter Learning, partnerships with parents/guardians are vital to high quality early childhood education experiences and children's learning success. Our goal is that every interaction with parents/guardians is respectful, informative and supportive. It is expected that parents/guardians will strive for respectful interactions with staff as well. Unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated and will be handled accordingly.

The following, while not all encompassing, are examples of unacceptable behavior:

- **All Forms of Bullying:** This includes physical, verbal, emotional, social or cyber-bullying including comments, actions or visual displays that are intentional, hurtful and repetitive (i.e., hitting, pushing, name-calling, mocking, excluding someone, spreading rumors or gossip either in person or by using social networking internet sites).
- **Harassment:** Behavior that degrades, demeans, humiliates or embarrasses someone (i.e., touching, name-calling, offensive jokes, yelling, etc.).
- **All Forms of Abuse:** Sexual, physical, or psychological (including verbally, in writing or otherwise).
- **Discrimination:** This includes against any person or group because of their race, color, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, ethnic background, religion, age, sex, gender-determined characteristics, sexual orientation, marital or family status, source of income, political belief, and physical and mental disabilities.

Actions That Put Another Person at Risk of Harm: This includes violent or attempted violent physical acts (with or without a weapon) and threatening someone; and the inappropriate use of technology, including e-mail, the internet and other technology.



PLEASE INITIAL THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS GRANTING PERMISSION OF POLICIES

____ I give permission to Otter Learning to make whatever emergency measures are judged necessary for the care and supervision of my child.

____ In the case of a medical emergency, I understand that my child will be transported to the nearest hospital by the local emergency medical services (EMS) for treatment, if the EMS personnel deem it necessary.

____ It is also understood that in some medical situations the staff will need to contact the EMS before consulting with the parent, child's physician and/or another adult acting on the child's behalf. I understand that payment for emergency medical treatment will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian (regardless of insurance requirements).

____ I provide permission to Otter Learning to administer pre-approved prescription medication to my child only consistent with the school's Medication Policy outlined in the Parent Handbook.

____ I acknowledge that I have received the Tuition Agreement and agree to all terms outlined therein.

____ In the event that I, or someone designated to pick up my child, arrive in a condition that might put my child at risk of danger, I authorize the school staff to care for my child until someone else on the list or another responsible person can be contacted to pick them up.

____ I agree to keep my child(ren) shot records current in accordance with the Department of Health guidelines. Failure to turn updated shots to Otter Learning within 5 days will result in disenrollment from the school.



Acknowledgement and Receipt of Parent Handbook

The registration of a child is considered an acceptance, on his/her part and on the part of his/her families or guardians, of the terms and conditions of the Parent Handbook and all of our school's rules and regulations, including the school's tuition policies and judgment on disciplinary sanctions or dismissal of a child.

The rules and regulations contained in this Handbook are not meant to be comprehensive. Rather, they presuppose the goodwill and judgment of a child in all circumstances in which the student may find himself/herself and are subject to the school's ultimate discretion, judgment and interpretation.

Children and families or guardians are asked to familiarize themselves with all of the information contained in this Parent Handbook and to sign this form to acknowledge adherence to these policies.

I have read, understood, and agree to abide by and honor all statements and provisions set forth in the Parent Handbook or as they may be changed from time to time by the school. Below, I have placed my initials to acknowledge that I have read and agree to the following policies of Otter Learning.

_____ **Tuition Agreement (includes billing, late fees, processing fees, refunds, etc.)**

_____ **Medication Policy**

_____ **Photo Release Form**

_____ **Child Conduct**

_____ **Parent Code of Conduct**

Child Name(s)

DOB

Child Name(s)

DOB

Child Name(s)

DOB

Signature of Parent / Guardian

Relationship

Date



Photo/Video Release

I, _____, the parent or legal guardian of _____ grant the below permission to use photos/videos of my child.

_____ I give permission for my child(ren)'s image to be used by Otter Learning for the purpose of promoting early childhood education services. I give permission for my child(ren)'s image to be used by Otter Learning for the purpose of promoting early childhood education services, and agree to the following:

- I understand that my child(ren), may be photographed at the school during normal hours, field trips or activities.
- I understand that these photographs/videos may be used in promoting early childhood education services in various channels including but not limited to print and the internet.
- With my signature below I grant permission for my child to be photographed and their images recorded for print or electronic use in promoting the school's services.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to update this form in the event that I no longer wish to authorize the above uses.
- I agree that this form will remain in effect during the term of my child's enrollment.
- I understand that there will be no payment for me or my child's participation in this release.

_____ I do not give permission for my child's image to be used for any media purposes by Otter Learning or any other organization,

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME _____

CHILD'S NAME _____

DATE _____