PARENT HANDBOOK

NASA Goddard Child Development Center 2022-2023 SY

NASA Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC)

Code 200.9, Building 90

Greenbelt, Maryland 20771

(301) 286-8588

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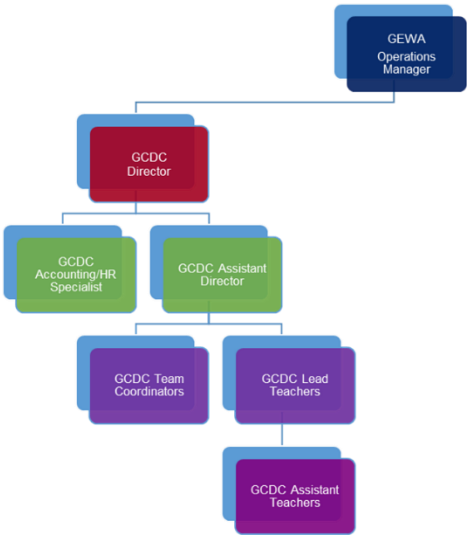
Section 1: About Our Program

Welcome

The Goddard Child Development Center, Inc., (GCDC) opened its doors in June of 1973, committed to the purpose of combining quality childcare with excellence in early childhood education. We are an educational program for children ages 2 to 5 years of age. Located in Building 90 on the Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) campus, GCDC can support 129 children.

For more than forty years, GCDC has been guided by the founding principle that high-quality childcare services should be affordable to all parents. GCDC is committed to satisfying the diverse needs of families within the community with the highest standard of child-inspired, professionally nurtured care, and opportunities for learning.



Nondiscrimination Policy

GCDC is operated on a non-discriminatory basis, according equal treatment, and access to services without regard to race, national origin, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or associational preference. People with disabilities are accorded equal treatment and access to services as long as the program can meet the needs of the child and the parent or family.

Open Door Policy

Typically, enrolled families are welcome to visit GCDC at any time; however, to reduce the spread and risk of COVID-19, families will not be permitted in the center. If you desire to meet with your child's teacher or an administrator, an appointment must be requested in advance. You may call or email the teacher or administrator to set up a time that will work for both of you. Virtual appointments are preferred at this time.

Program Philosophy

GCDC's philosophy is to meet each child's developmental and individual needs by creating a stimulating environment in which they learn, explore, and discover. Acting as facilitators in children's learning, GCDC teachers provide support, encouragement, and individual attention to promote each child's strengths and development.

At GCDC, we believe that children learn to be independent and confident learners when their social-emotional needs are met; therefore, we strive to create an environment where children feel safe, loved, and have a sense of belonging. We support children's social-emotional development through positive interactions with their classmates and teachers.

GCDC Structure

GCDC is a part of the Goddard Employees Welfare Association (GEWA) Exchange. As such, the GCDC Director reports directly to the GEWA Operations Manager.

NASA GCDC Parent Association Committee

The general purpose of the NASA GCDC Parent Association Committee (PAC) is to support the GCDC in all its endeavors. The purpose of the PAC is to:

- Promote and enhance the education of the GCDC students;

- Promote open communication and cooperation between GCDC administration, GCDC parents, and the NASA GSFC GEWA;
- Provide volunteer assistance to teachers and other staff members; and
- Raise funds in support of the goals of the PAC.

GCDC Association Board of Directors

The business and affairs of the NASA GCDC PAC shall be managed under the direction of the Board of Directors. The GCDC Board of Directors shall be responsible, among other duties, for the following:

1. Monitoring the proper running of GCDC by conducting monthly meetings;
2. Ensuring the proper administration of all GCDC policies;
3. Reviewing the equipment needs of GCDC and concurring on the purchase of new equipment within approved budgetary guidelines;
4. Supporting the GEWA Operations Manager when hiring a new Director is required; and
5. Evaluating the performance of the GCDC Director and providing feedback on the performance to the GEWA Operations Manager.

Furthermore, the purpose of the Association Board of Directors is to provide support and advice to the GEWA Operations Manager in overseeing the GCDC. PAC meetings are held monthly and hosted by the President of the Association Board of Directors. All parents are invited to attend. Information about these meetings will be posted at GCDC and shared in the school newsletter.

GEWA Operations Manager
James Debelius
james.m.debelius@nasa.gov
301.286.6871

Section 2: Program Quality

Research tells us that children who attend high-quality childcare programs are more socially and emotionally adjusted than children who do not. Quality programs meet established standards, are regularly evaluated, and seek continuous improvement. There are well-defined systems in place for measuring Early Care and Education (ECE) program quality.

Licensing

GCDC is licensed as a Child Care Center by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Our licensing number is 32975.

Accreditation

Program accreditation is a process by which ECE programs can significantly improve the quality of the services they provide. In this process, a program voluntarily pursues self-study, program improvement, and external program review to achieve and publicly confirm that it meets national or state quality standards. GCDC is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and currently renewing our MSDE accreditation.

Asthma Friendly Designation

An asthma-friendly school supports the health and academic success of students through maximizing asthma management, reducing environmental asthma triggers in the school environment, and building asthma education and awareness programs for students and staff. MSDE designated GCDC as an Asthma-Friendly school in 2014.

Maryland EXCELS

EXCELS is a voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that awards ratings to childcare programs that meet increasingly higher standards of quality in key areas. Similar to a rating system for restaurants (i.e., a five-star restaurant is far better than a one-star restaurant), EXCELS is a rating system for childcare. In Maryland, participating programs are rated on a scale of one check mark to five check marks with five check marks being the highest level awarded. A five-check mark program is considered one of Maryland's highest quality child care programs. GCDC is a leader in the field and has been awarded the highest mark of quality, five check marks for the past six years.

Section 3: Attendance

Students who regularly attend school learn more and are more successful than students who do not. Parents who make regular school attendance a priority help their children learn to accept responsibility. Attendance patterns are formed early in life. Children who develop good attendance habits in the early years are more likely to continue them throughout their school career. School attendance is important because students who are absent from school miss carefully planned sequences of instruction. They forego active learning experiences, classroom participation, and the opportunity to ask questions. They are more likely to fall behind and may eventually drop out of school.

Hours of Operation

GCDC hours of operation for the 2022-2023 school year are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Parents/families are not permitted in the building at this time.

GCDC is closed on all Federal holidays and all other times that GSFC is closed. Parents should refer to the school calendar for other GCDC closing dates, such as staff development days. School calendars are distributed to parents each school year. They may also be downloaded from the GCDC website (www.gcdcnasa.org) and viewed on the GCDC Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100083415727539).

Early Dismissal

If GSFC closes early for any reason, GCDC will close 30 minutes after the closing time announced by the GSFC leadership. For example, if GSFC closes at 3:00 p.m., children must be picked up no later than 3:30 p.m. When early closures are anticipated, it is the parents' responsibility to monitor GSFC closure announcements. Parents must always keep all contact information current so that this information is available in the event of any emergency or early closure. Parents can update emergency contact information via our website at any time. At times GSFC will provide early dismissal before a federal holiday to Civil Servants of GSFC. As a part of the GCDC teacher retention plan this is a benefit we provide to staff to attract and maintain quality staff. Therefore, when GSFC announces an early closure GCDC will close within 30 minutes of the announced end time.

Absences

Parents are asked to call GCDC before 9:00 a.m. on the day of the absence to notify the teacher that their child will not be attending and if you're keeping your child home because they are showing **COVID-19** symptoms. All parents should use the Procare Engage app to notify their child's teacher via message when they know that they will be absent for the day. If your child has been absent three or more days, please contact the GCDC to inform us of the status and condition of your child.

Arrivals and Departures

Children thrive in a well-ordered and predictable environment where daily routines, such as arrivals and departures, mealtimes, nap times, and toileting, are implemented consistently. Policies in this handbook help to preserve your child's daily routine. All children and parents/guardians will be screened upon arrival at the center.

Both adults and children are required to comply with the daily GSFC status pertaining to mask mandates when waiting outside the double entrance/exit doors of the center. All families must socially distance to ensure that children different classrooms do not comingle and void our cohort model of practice. Parents are encouraged to wait in their cars until the entrance is cleared for drop off/pick up.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available at all entry points and throughout the center.

Parents with an appointment to meet with an administrator or teacher should ring the doorbell and wait for an assigned staff person to take their temperature and conduct the daily health screening. Visitors will then

need to sign in on the visitor log. Please note, the door is very sensitive. Pulling or touching the door before being told that the lock has been released will cause an alarm to sound. The doorbell can only be heard in the office. If the administrators are located in another part of the building, there may be a delay in our response to open the door.

Children who can walk independently should be encouraged to walk on their own so that they are in the habit of doing so each day. Children who are carried daily often have difficulty during emergency evacuation procedures.

Parents should assist their child with transitioning from the car to the front door and should apply the first application of sunscreen before arrival. The temperature of the child will be taken and recorded, and the parent will be asked a series of screening questions before the child can be admitted into the facility. Parents must be certain that a GCDC staff member sees and acknowledges the child before the parent leaves. Parents may not leave their children at the front door, without the proper exchange. Parents must always leave children in the custody and care of a GCDC staff member.

Parents are required to log their child into the GCDC attendance system every day using the Procare Engage app. If children are being dropped off by an emergency contact, parents should notify the office beforehand. GCDC prohibits sharing attendance system access codes with anyone.

Child Care Daily Health Screening Policy:
Parents/Guardians must comply with completing the Daily Health Screening process either outside or just inside the main entrance (weather provided). A staff member will then escort the child to their classroom where their teachers will support them with handwashing for a minimum of 20 seconds before going to their cubby to remove outdoor clothing and disinfect any items from home as necessary.

Arrival Procedures for GCDC Staff

Staff are to put on a face covering and **only** enter through the main front entrance/exit to enter the center.

Alcohol-based sanitizer will be available at all entry points and throughout the center.

Distancing Requirements for Staff:

- GCDC staff must practice physical distancing of 6 feet or more when entering the Center.
- Childcare staff should not carpool (even with the use of face coverings), if possible.

Staff Daily Health Screening Policy:

All Staff must complete the Daily Health Screening as per the policy in the morning and when returning from lunch in the afternoon, then immediately wash their hands with soap and water (20 seconds.

Arrival by 9:30 a.m.

Each class at GCDC begins its day with a morning meeting or circle time. Early morning gatherings are one of the few times that teachers engage in large-group, teacher-directed instruction. Teachers establish a climate of trust that allows children to feel important and encourages respectful collaborations of thoughts and ideas. This is optimal learning time. It sets the tone for both the individual child and larger group. During this central time of the day, teachers build schema for the rest of the day by introducing concepts, telling children their goals for each center during play, and reviewing basic concepts such as letters, numbers, letter sounds vocabulary, weather, calendar and much more. A lot happens in this short period! Teachers can then build upon this introductory lesson throughout the day.

We have found that children who are regularly present for morning meeting or circle time have a much better day and learn more throughout the school year than children who do not. When children routinely arrive later in the day, they often miss important concepts. While our teachers work with the students to help them catch up, it's simply not the same as participating in a dynamic morning meeting or circle time with their peers.

It is important to remember that when children's sleep and morning schedules are disrupted resulting in them arriving at school late, they are often more irritable throughout the day because it is difficult for them to get back on schedule with the rest of the class. Disrupted sleep patterns negatively impact their readiness to learn. For this reason, we encourage parents to help their children get the most out of the school year by having them here by 9:30 a.m. each day. Prompt arrivals ensure a less disruptive day for our teachers, better learning opportunities for your child, and better preparation for a traditional school day. For similar reasons, we ask that parents not drop off between the hours of noon and 3:00 p.m.

Departures

Children must remain in the classroom/atrium/playground until parents arrive for pick up. A distinct "turning over of responsibility" is necessary.

Process for Families/Children

Parents/guardians should use the Procare Engage app to message their teachers in advance of picking up their child so the staff can get the child ready for pick up. All children must wash their hands before leaving the childcare center.

Parents/guardians must remain outside the main front entrance until their child is brought outside by center staff and keep away from outdoor play areas.

Because of the rubberized surfacing used on GCDC playgrounds parents should not walk on playground surfacing while wearing high heels. Doing so punctures the surface.

Only one parent can approach the center at one time, others waiting to pick up their children must remain outside or in their vehicles until the parent leaves and is at least 6 feet away from the entrance.

- *Only, if necessary, a parent may enter the atrium at the main front entrance, once cleared by a center staff. If this occurs, they must wear a face covering and the handles (inside and outside) must be sanitized. Upon entry they must use the hand sanitizer on the wall.*

Process for Center Staff

Disinfect all personal belongings with hard surfaces to be taken home, wash hands with soap and water before leaving the center. Staff must take the necessary precautions if using public transportation to protect themselves.

The following steps are ***recommended* for all participants in childcare to complete at the end of each day:

- Wash hands upon arriving at home.
- Remove clothing.
- Wash clothing worn during the day.
- Wash hands (or bathe).
- Change into clean clothing.
- Launder clothing worn during the day.

Communicating with Teachers during Arrival and Departure

Transition times are an important time for everyone. Parents often want to share information with staff or learn about their child's day during this time. We value the importance of communication between parents and staff; however, staff are generally not available for long conversations due to their classroom responsibilities, and licensing ratio requirements. You can chat through messaging services on either the Procare Engage app or the Teaching Strategies Gold website. When you are speaking with a staff person

at pick up/drop off please walk away from the front door to allow for social distancing and other families to safely drop off/pick up.

Custody Agreements

Families must inform GCDC of any custody agreements involving children enrolled at GCDC. A copy of the agreement must be provided at the time of enrollment and with any subsequent change to the agreement. Without a custody agreement on file, GCDC cannot prevent a parent (custodial or non-custodial) from picking up a child.

Denial of Care

GCDC reserves the right to deny care at any time for any reason.

Government Shutdown

In the event of a government shutdown due to furlough or funding issues, GCDC will send an email that provides specific information regarding the impact to GCDC operations.

GCDC parents remain responsible for any tuition due during a government shutdown since we are a non-appropriated fund activity. Parent tuition fully funds our program, and the GCDC requires payments from its patrons to operate, maintain staffing, and pay any debts owed.

In the event the GCDC is not able to use government-funded communication (i.e., email, listservs, and phones), GCDC patrons and employees can find current information via GSFC communications.

Parking

Parents must park legally during pick up and drop off either in the spaces in front of the building or one of the neighboring parking lots. The parking spaces in front of GCDC have a thirty-minute limit to ensure enough space is available for all parents. If parents intend to be longer than thirty minutes, parking in adjacent parking lots is required. When parking at GCDC, please be courteous and do not pull your car up so far that it covers the sidewalk. All engines must be turned off, and no children may be left in a vehicle unattended. As a reminder, the speed limit in front of our school is 15 miles per hour. Parents must adhere to the posted speed limit signs at all times.

Release of Children

If someone other than a parent (or person designated on the emergency card) will be picking up a child, parents must notify us in writing. Phone calls are acceptable only in emergencies. GCDC prohibits sharing attendance system access codes with anyone. Emergency contacts must sign the Visitor's Logbook, which will be with the assigned staff conducting health screens at pick up/departure. GCDC administrators will check the person's identification and compare it to the emergency contacts listed in the child's file.

GCDC will not release children to anyone under the age of sixteen. We will not release children to parents if we suspect they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Unscheduled Closures

In the event of inclement weather, disaster, evacuations, or special events, GCDC follows the GSFC leave policy as indicated below. To determine GSFC's status, call 301-286-NEWS (6397). GCDC's hours correspond to GSFC's operation status codes as follows:

GSFC CODE GREEN or BLUE — GCDC will open as usual
GSFC CODE YELLOW — GCDC will open 30 minutes after GSFC's announced opening of GSFC
GSFC CODE RED — GCDC will be closed

Section 4: Curriculum and Assessment

Children begin learning the moment they are born. Because of this early readiness to learn, high-quality early childhood programs are very important. For young children, everything is a learning experience. Exposing your child to a wide variety of positive experiences leads to lifelong learning. At GCDC, we use age-appropriate activities, such as reading books, playing games, listening to music, dancing, and visiting museums, parks, and playgrounds as the foundation of our teaching.

Our program emphasizes the positive aspects of your child's world while helping her or him learn to cope with negative aspects. We believe that a child wakes up each morning eager to learn and experience new people and new situations, and to be a confident individual, thriving in our complex world. Your child will learn to be self-reliant, observant, and inquisitive.

At GCDC we will help your child use all five senses in learning to discover their world. Each classroom has a variety of materials arranged throughout 12 learning centers (interest areas). The centers include, but are not limited to, dramatic play, blocks, language literacy, library, writing, listening station, science, math, sensory, art, technology and media, manipulatives and music and movement.

Language arts emphasizes sequential pre-reading tasks, phonics materials, such as word-picture cards, charts, and a variety of additional hands-on-materials, which promote the understanding of print concepts. The language development approach emphasizes the understanding of written communication through hearing and discriminating the sound of language.

Mathematics, including counting, sorting, matching, discrimination of size and shape, addition, and subtraction is taught using manipulative materials. Math concepts are connected to all aspects of the learning environment as well as the lesson-planned activities. Children are taught to use logical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Our science and social studies lessons bring the real world to children. Your child's discoveries involving animal behavior, air, water, gardening, the community, and the world's people lend excitement and improved understanding of daily life.

Art, music, and movement education are integral parts of the center's curriculum and help to make a cultural contribution to a well-rounded program.

Preschool and Pre-K Curricula

The most important goals of our preschool curriculum are for children to get along well with others and become enthusiastic learners. We want children to become independent, self-confident, curious, life-long learners who can work well with others. We achieve these goals by creating purposeful and productive play experiences that help children grow in all areas.

GCDC uses The Creative Curriculum in all classrooms. The Creative Curriculum is a research-based curriculum that defines goals in the following areas of development: Social-Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Social Students, and the Arts.

We accomplish our goals through thoughtfully planned activities, carefully orchestrated classroom arrangements, age-appropriate selections of toys and materials, well-established routines, and engaging and meaningful interactions with teachers.

Assessment

Child assessments are defined as the planned and systematic process of observing, recording, and documenting what each child can do and how they do it. The results of assessments are used to adapt and improve the curriculum as well as to develop specific teaching approaches and practices and to refine instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of the children. The results are also used to provide the optimal learning environment and to inform and assess overall program development and improvement.

Assessments may also be used to arrange for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic evaluation for a child when indicated.

Teachers complete informal assessments monthly. These assessments span across the four developmental domains: social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language. Results of assessments are shared with families monthly via a password secured website, Teaching Strategies Gold. We encourage all families to check their child's assessment data and take advantage of opportunities to partner with their child's teacher.

Assessment results are confidential. Information is shared only with those who have a right or a need to know (i.e., the child's parents, school administration, and the child's teachers). GCDC will share assessment data with specialists only with the parents' written permission.

Parents should direct all technical questions about Teaching Strategies Gold to Teaching Strategies by calling 1-866-736-5913 (7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday).

Developmental Delays

GCDC contracts the services of a part-time Child Development Specialist. Parents may request support from the Child Development Specialist via the GCDC Director.

The Director may, at any time, request that families seek professional support so that we may better meet the needs of each child.

Recommendations

On occasion, parents may request letters of recommendation to support applications to other schools. Parents must submit these requests and addressed/stamped envelopes to the office. Once the teacher completes the forms, the forms are mailed directly to the requesting school. Neither the forms nor the copies are given directly to the parents. Please allow two weeks for this process. We understand that families may have several prospective schools for their child, however, we are not able to support more than four requests per child.

Section 5: Financial Matters

GCDC is a small institution that operates on a tight budget mainly derived from tuition payments. It is extremely challenging to operate the school in a fiscally responsible manner if tuition payments are not received when due. Timely payment allows GCDC to offer high-quality services, materials, and supplies, and a well-trained and educated staff.

Deposits

Parents are required to pay a deposit in the amount of two weeks tuition for each enrolled child. Deposits are due at the time of enrollment. Parents must pay the deposit within two business days of accepting a space. GCDC will apply the two-week deposit to the first two weeks of tuition. A non-refundable $50.00 registration fee is collected for administrative purposes (cot sheet, online app registration, etc.).

Donations

GCDC relies on the generosity of parents, grandparents, and friends to support an array of needs at GCDC. Not all contributions need to be financial. Support can take many forms, from volunteering to donating goods and services. Some donations may be tax deductible. Please see the GCDC Business Manager for a receipt for financial and material donations.

Flexible-Spending Accounts

Some employers, including the Federal government, offer flexible-spending accounts as a benefit to employees. These programs allow employees to contribute money from their salary before tax withholdings, and those funds can then be used to reimburse the employee for out-of-pocket dependent care expenses. The GCDC Business Manager can support flexible-spending claims by providing tuition statements and signing required forms.

Fundraising

As in most independent schools, tuition alone does not fully cover the cost of operating our school. GCDC has a variety of fundraising programs intended to bridge the gap between what tuition and fees cover and the funding necessary to fulfill the mission and vision of GCDC. Parent support of these fundraisers is critical to GCDC success.

Volunteer Hours

Parent involvement helps extend teaching outside the classroom, creates a more positive experience for children and helps children perform better when they are in school. It is essential for parents to support the learning that happens in preschool settings at home as well. Families are required to volunteer four hours during the first semester (August-December), four hours during the second semester (January-June), and two hours during the summer months (July-August). GCDC charges $25.00 per unmet volunteer hour by semester's end.

Payments

GCDC uses Tuition Express for all tuition payments. This system is used to process automatic withdrawals from any checking account. Parents must submit a completed Tuition Express Form to the GCDC Business Manager. GCDC also uses the credit card option offered through Tuition Express for payment methods. Families who choose to use the credit card payment method will also absorb the cost to use the credit card service through Tuition Express which is an additional 2.7% added to the total cost of the weekly tuition. (Approximately $25.00)

Late Payments

Tuition is due by the close of business each Wednesday and is collected through Tuition Express via ACH payment. GCDC will charge a $20 late fee to any accounts that are not paid in full by Wednesday of each

week; the fee is collected via Tuition Express as part of the next scheduled tuition payment. Additionally, the cost of the service charge issued by Tuition Express will be added to the account's outstanding balance. GCDC may terminate families with balances exceeding 2 weeks of tuition. (This includes tuition that has bounced more than twice)

If you believe you have been given a late payment notice in error or are unable to make your payment promptly, please contact the GCDC Business Manager to discuss the matter.

Late Pick-Up Fees

GCDC will charge families a late fee if children are picked up after GCDC's closing time. **We do not offer a grace period.** GCDC's regular closing time is 5:00 p.m.; however, closing time can be earlier such as during holiday periods or inclement weather. Each late pick-up is considered an event. For example, the first time a child is picked up late will result in a late fee of $10.00 for every 15 minutes after closing time; the second event will result in a $15.00 charge for every 15 minutes after closing.

GCDC will erase each family's late pick-up record at the beginning of the school year.

Late fees are assessed on a membership basis, not on a per child basis. A member who is late picking up their child(ren) incurs one late pick-up event no matter how many children are being picked up. Parents are also required to sign the Late Pick-up form at arrival. The GCDC Business Manager will bill accounts accordingly. GCDC will deduct late fees from the parents' account with the next regular tuition cycle.

Monthly Statements/Tax Statements

Parents can download monthly statements/tax statements from their MyProcare Portfolio. Instructions for access can be obtained from the GCDC Business Manager or on our website at www.gcdcnasa.org under the enrolled family's MyProcare tab.

Scholarships

A limited number of need-based scholarships are available to qualified families. These scholarships are granted based upon salary guidelines and available funds and are funded by Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) donations. These scholarships are typically small, short-term supplements. To learn more about scholarships and how to apply, please contact the GEWA Operations Manager at james.m.debelius@nasa.gov.

Subsidy/Scholarships/Outside Tuition Support

Families utilizing subsidy, scholarships, and outside tuition supports must submit forms/documentation to the GCDC Business Manager for signature. Please allow 24 business hours for a response.

Termination of Contract/Notice of Withdrawal

Parents who are withdrawing their child from GCDC must submit a withdrawal form two weeks prior to the child's last day at GCDC. In the event a Parent withdraws their child(ren) before the end of a school week (Friday), Parents will be charged for the entire final week. Parents may submit withdrawal forms via our program's website. Parents are responsible for paying any outstanding balances prior to their child's withdrawal.

GCDC will seek the support of GSFC payroll processing to secure any funds due in the event families leave with a balance due. Other steps, as authorized by law, will be taken to secure money owed from families who are not GSFC Civil Servants (i.e., contractors, employees from other agencies, etc.).

GCDC may terminate a child's enrollment by issuing a written notice to the parents if at any time GCDC deems a child's health or pattern of conduct adversely affects the children, staff, or the efforts, efficiency, and mission of GCDC, or if the parents fail to meet their financial obligations to GCDC.

Section 6: Food and Nutrition

It is our goal to ensure each child's nutritional well-being. During the school year, GCDC provides a morning AM snack, and an afternoon PM snack along with milk and juice to the children. GCDC prepares, serves, and stores food according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines, Maryland licensing, and NAEYC accreditation standards for food and nutrition. Parents are required to provide their child with a nutritious lunch as outlined in the USDA guidelines.

Allergies

GCDC works with families and their child's physician to create an allergy action plan. This plan helps to ensure that everyone at GCDC knows about the child's allergies, typical reactions, and plans for responding in the event of an allergic reaction. It is the parent's responsibility to alert both GCDC administration and the child's teachers of any known allergies. Parents must document food allergies on their child's Emergency Form and Health Inventory.

When food allergies are known, parents must submit a physician signed Food Allergy Action Plan; the original allergy plan goes to your child's teacher and a copy to the administration. Teachers will post a copy of the plan in the classroom. The food allergy plan will be posted in the GCDC kitchen. Forms are available in the Administrative Office. Parents must also provide printed copies of our menu indicating which foods their child may not eat.

Choking Hazards

GCDC staff may not offer children younger than four years of age the following foods: hot dogs, whole or sliced into rounds, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, peanut butter, chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. Food served at GCDC must be cut into pieces no larger than ½-inch cubes for toddlers and 2-year-olds, according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability.

Dietary Restrictions

GCDC will honor documented dietary restrictions. Parents are responsible for documenting the foods that your child cannot have on the snack menu and provide an appropriate food substitute when necessary. GCDC may provide substitutions for any snacks that children cannot consume at GCDC due to an allergy. When this is not possible, we may ask families to provide a substitute that meets USDA/CACFP guidelines.

Meal Patterns

All meals served at GCDC must comply with USDA/CACFP guidelines and established meal patterns.

Meal patterns are designed to help adults plan well-balanced, nutritious meals, and snacks for children. Meals and snacks planned with the CACFP meal pattern supply the kinds and amounts of foods that children require to help meet their nutrient and energy needs.

GCDC provides morning and afternoon snacks to all students. Staff members prepare and serve snacks to the children individually. Parents can view our snack menus and corresponding allergy information on our website. Please note menus are subject to change based on supply and stock. Notice of changes will be sent at least 24 hours in advance via email.

GCDC includes the cost of snacks in each family's tuition. Tuition will not be adjusted if families opt not to participate in the snack program.

Modified Diets

If a child requires a modified diet for medical reasons, parents must state the reason on the Emergency Form and Health Inventory. Any dietary changes that occur during the school year must be documented on

the child's Emergency Form and brought to the teacher's attention as soon as possible. GCDC reserves the right to request that families provide all meals for their child if restrictions are cost prohibitive for our program. When this happens, there will be no reduction in tuition.

No Thank You Bite

Because we know young children must be exposed to new foods about fifteen times before developing a taste for it, we teach children always to take a "no thank you bite" at mealtime. The children are expected to at least try everything on their plates. If they do not want to eat all of it, it's okay. They must try at least one bite of the food in question, say "no thank you," and then they can be excused.

Peanut Free Zones

GCDC understands the seriousness of anaphylaxis that may result when children with peanut allergies come in contact with peanuts or peanut products. For that reason, GCDC has designated "peanut free zones" throughout the building. Each classroom has a designated Peanut/Tree Nut Free Zone table within the classroom. Peanut products are never permitted when on a field trip away from the center. Children with Peanut allergies will eat meals daily in the peanut free zone to avoid potential cross contamination.

Special Occasions

Many parents wish to acknowledge and celebrate their child's birthday or other special occasions at GCDC. However, due to COVID-19, parent involvement with the celebrations will not be allowed until further notice.

Parents will be able to schedule celebrations with their child's classroom teacher at least two weeks in advance. This notice is required; we cannot support parties without proper notification. All birthday celebrations are held after an afternoon snack. A cake, cupcakes, or ice cream is appropriate.

For the safety of everyone, **all baked goods brought in to share with your child's classmates must be store bought**. Neither parents nor teachers may serve homemade items to the children. Parents should also check with teachers to learn about any children in the classroom with allergies or special dietary needs. If parents decide to serve food as part of a birthday celebration, it must be accessible to all children, including those with allergies. Excluding children because of allergies is not permissible in our school environment.

Families must provide plates, cutlery, and napkins for their child's birthday celebration. Party favors, balloons, candles, and candy are prohibited. **Classroom celebrations are not a substitute for a home or family birthday party, but a time to recognize each child's birthday within our program.**

If parents wish to invite children to a celebration outside of GCDC, the invitations must be given to the teacher for placement in the child's mailbox. Each child in the class must be given an invitation if GCDC mailboxes are to be used for distribution.

Specialty Milk

GCDC provides 1% milk for all students. We also provide milk alternatives from an MSDE/CACFP approved list. GCDC provides alternative milk for children who have a medically documented need. GCDC cannot honor milk "preferences". Parents must provide alternative milk preferences that maintain compliance with the guidance of USDA/CACFP program. For children with medically documented milk intolerances, we can only serve milk with enough nutritional substance to be approved by MSDE/CACFP. In general, **rice and almond** milk do not offer enough nutritional value to replace milk. Per MSDE/CACFP, we can only serve 1% milk, Lactaid and CACFP approved soy milk.

Section 7: Health Policies

Our goal at GCDC is to maintain a healthy environment where children and staff can thrive. Together, as staff and families, it is our responsibility to ensure that we are protecting children's health and controlling the spread of infectious illness.

Allergies

GCDC works with families and their child's physician to create an allergy action plan. This plan helps to ensure that everyone at GCDC knows about the child's allergies, typical reactions and plans for responding in the event of an allergic reaction. It is the parent's responsibility to alert both GCDC administration and the child's teachers of any known allergies. Parents must document **ALL** allergies on their child's Emergency Form and Health Inventory. This includes seasonal allergies to ragweed, pollen, dust, bees, pet dander, etc.

When allergies are known, parents must submit a physician signed Allergy Action Plan; the original allergy plan goes to your child's teacher and a copy to the administration. The plan should include what to look for, (cough, runny nose, puffy eyes, etc.) and if there is an action to take (change mask when coming inside, wash face, change clothes, etc.). Due to similarities between seasonal allergies and COVID-19 symptoms, if your child is exhibiting any symptoms that appear to be COVID like symptoms and they have an allergy that is not documented your child will not be admitted into care. No Exceptions!

COVID-19 Policies and Procedures

The Goddard Child Development Center (GCDC) is committed to providing full-time in-person learning and quality childcare for families and children. SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, continues to evolve and there are tools available to lessen its severe effects. GCDC will follow the guidance from the CDC, MSDE and GSFC to put in place a core set of infectious disease prevention strategies as a part of our normal operations. The addition and layering of COVID-19 specific prevention strategies will also be tied to COVID-19 Community Levels and other local factors. These policies are built out of emergency use protocol and therefore are subject to change with addition of new information presented and suggested by governing authorities.

Strategies for Everyday Operations

Staying up to date on routine vaccinations is essential to prevent illness from many different infections. For COVID-19, vaccination is the leading public health strategy to prevent severe disease. Not only does it provide individual-level protection, but high vaccination coverage reduces the burden of COVID-19 on the school and larger GSFC community. It is strongly recommended that all eligible Marylanders ages 6 months and older receive all recommended doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, including boosters. Families that are interested in having their child vaccinated should contact your local health department to determine if vaccination is the appropriate path for your child. GCDC requests voluntary submission of documentation of COVID-19 vaccination status from families for enrolled children. The protocol to collect, secure, use and further disclose this information will comply with the current relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the GCDC Confidentiality policy as outlined in the Parent Handbook.

All GCDC staff are currently vaccinated. The current CDC guidelines do not differentiate between vaccinated versus unvaccinated, therefore vaccination status is no longer a factor in determining COVID guidance. For your own protection we encourage everyone to be vaccinated.

Staying Home When Sick

GCDC will not accept any staff/child into care who have symptoms of infectious illnesses such as COVID-19, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and gastrointestinal infections. If your child(ren) are not feeling well or experiencing any symptoms connected to a contagious illness you must keep your child(ren) at home and be tested for COVID-19 if appropriate. Families/Staff must immediately notify the GCDC when they have tested positive for a reportable infectious disease, including COVID-19.

If a child becomes ill during the day while at the GCDC, they will be separated from other children and provided with the appropriate level of safety and supervision until the parent/guardian can pick up the child. The child will have to wear a well-fitted mask while separated and awaiting pick up. Families must pick up the child within 30 minutes of notification. Children separated due to symptoms of COVID-19 must be tested. If the test is negative, they may return when symptoms are resolved. All persons who test positive for COVID-19 or have suspected COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should complete isolation as follows:

- Stay home at least 5 full days from the date of symptom onset if symptomatic or from the date of the positive test if not showing symptoms.
- Day 0 is considered the day symptoms started in symptomatic persons or the day of the positive test (based on the date of testing), if asymptomatic.
- After day 5, if the child has no symptoms or if symptoms are resolved, they may return to the GCDC if they wear a well-fitted mask for an additional 5 days (day 6 through day 10). If they are unable to wear a mask, they may return to GCDC if they have a negative test at day 5 or later with all symptoms resolved; otherwise, they should remain at home for days 6-10.
- A negative test at day 10 or after is not needed to return.
- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html

Safety Procedures for Arrival

Distancing Requirements for Families:

- Parents/guardians waiting to drop their child/ren off must remain at least 6 ft. away from the family working with the GCDC Staff assigned outside to receive children or remain in their vehicle until the person at the screening table has left and the door handles (inside and outside) have been disinfected.
- Parents/guardians **must not** enter the building beyond the Daily Health Screening table.

Parents/guardians must answer all questions asked in the Daily Health Screen, support their child in getting their temperature taken, and cannot leave the child at the site until approved by the screener. Daily records of the screening results will be kept on file.

- **Temperature Checks & Symptom Screening**
    - GCDC Staff will use touchless thermometers to take children's, staff, and visitors' temperatures upon arrival into the GCDC each day.
    - GCDC Staff will ask all entering Visitors, Staff and Parents (on behalf of their children) each day to answer the following Symptom Screening Questions at each entry:
        - 1) Since last here, has anyone in your household had any of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, fever of 100.4^{o}F or higher, chills or shaking chills, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion, or runny nose?

        - 2) Since last here, is anyone in your household waiting for a COVID-19 test result, been diagnosed with COVID-19, or been instructed by any health care provider or the health department to isolate or quarantine? (As an additional layered measure If you answer yes to this question testing is recommended for early detection of COVID. Mask will be required for 10 Full days after last exposure or when household member recovers, if mask cannot be worn then you must stay home for 10 Full days after last exposure.)
    - If the answer to **ALL** of the questions above is **NO**, the child may be admitted into care that day and/or the staff member may be admitted to work for the day.
    - If the answer to any of the symptom's questions is **Yes, your child(ren) will be denied care and staff will be denied entry** until all symptoms have resolved.

******Note: Staff and children with a known history of seasonal allergies displaying COVID-19 like symptoms will only be admitted into care if the allergies are documented in their health file. (Including, but not limited to, coughing, runny nose, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, diarrhea) ******

Drop Off/Pick Up

- GCDC is currently using Procare Engage for daily health screening and check-in and check-out. Parents are required to download the Procare Engage app to their smart phones. Parents should contact the GCDC Associate Business Director, Schanita Mitchell (smitchell@gcdc-nasa.org; 301-286-8588) for assistance with utilizing the Procare Engage system.
- Parents, children, and staff should not linger outside of the building or in the parking lots.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Washing hands can prevent the spread of infectious diseases. GCDC will reinforce proper handwashing to lower the risk of spreading viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19.

- **Handwashing:** Children and adults will wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds at the following times:
    - Upon arrival;
    - Transitioning between mediums where children will use/share materials;
    - Transitioning between mediums in interest areas that include, art, sensory, and science;
    - Before and after preparing food or drinks;
    - Before and after eating or handling food or feeding children;
    - Before and after helping a child put on or adjust their mask;
    - After sneezing, coughing, or blowing nose or helping a child with this process;
    - Before and after administering medication or medical ointment;
    - Before and after diapering a child;
    - After children have been diapered, they will wash hands;
    - After using the bathroom or after helping a child use the bathroom;
    - After having contact with body fluids; and
    - After handling garbage/trash.

If washing hands is not possible, GCDC will provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizers will be stored away, and out of sight and reach of children's independent use. Staff will reinforce support for children to cover coughs and sneezes to help keep individuals from getting and spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

Ventilation

GCDC works closely with Facilities and the GSFC Industrial Hygienist to ensure its ventilation system is working and meeting the requirements to keep fresh air circulating.

- **System is heated using Heat Pumps**. The building will be ventilated as much as possible (i.e., opening of windows/doors).

Cleaning and Disinfection

GCDC cleans high touch surfaces at least once a day to reduce the risk of spreading germs by touching surfaces or more as needed. If a classroom has had a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, the area will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

- Classrooms
  - Rooms will be cleaned daily by teaching staff.
  - High touch areas (tables, chairs, bathrooms, faucets, doorknobs, etc.) will be wiped down regularly. Water fountains will not be used, and instead each child will be asked to bring an individual, clearly labeled water bottle.
  - Tables and chairs will be wiped down after each use.
- Toys & Learning Materials
  - All soft toys and other toys that cannot be properly sanitized have been removed from the classroom.
  - Toys and learning materials will be sanitized regularly.
  - Electronic devices will be sanitized between each use.
- Playground
  - Playground equipment will be wiped down after each cohort use.

COVID-19 Community Levels and Associated Prevention Strategies

Each day GSFC will post a notification of the current Community Level and appropriate prevention strategy. When the COVID-19 Community Level indicates an increase in transmission and disease burden, particularly if the level is high, GCDC reserves the right to add additional layered prevention strategies to support safe, continued in-person learning. Additionally, with decreasing or low COVID-19 Community Levels, GCDC reserves the right to remove prevention strategies one at a time under close monitoring.

Contact Tracing and Quarantine of Close Contacts

When a COVID-19 case has been identified in a staff member or a child/family member, if the GSFC COVID-19 Community Level is high, GCDC will adhere to the following guidance:

- The staff member with COVID-19 or parents of the child with COVID-19 must notify their own close contacts and their child's close contacts.
- GCDC will notify families at the cohort level affected (i.e., classroom, GSFC, MSDE, MDH).

- Staff and children/families who may be close contacts, regardless of their vaccination status, can continue to work and attend care as long as they remain asymptomatic.
    - Everyone should wear a mask for 10 days (day 0 is the last date of exposure unless there is an issue with mask wearing-children under 2).
    - A test after 5 full days after exposure is recommended, especially for those who cannot wear a mask (i.e., children with respiratory issues). Please refer to Appendix A for further guidance for COVID-19 Quarantine periods.
    - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/if-you-were-exposed.html

Mask Use

GCDC requires all staff to wear a well-fitted mask at all times when working in the classroom, except when eating or drinking. Wearing a well-fitting mask consistently and correctly reduces the risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. GCDC requires that all children wear a well-fitted mask throughout the day excluding mealtimes, nap times and outdoor times. Families that opt out of wearing masks are required to put their request in writing prior to drop off for immediate care. Parents must provide clean, labeled masks daily. Supplying multiple disposable masks each day is encouraged. When a mask is not in use they will be segregated in the child's cubby. Please note GCDC will consistently follow the guidance status as outlined by GSFC for the COVID-19 Community Level identified. Therefore, if GSFC is code orange and requires a mask, it is the expectation that all staff, children and families who come to the GCDC will arrive wearing a mask.

******Please note the use of indoor mask wearing can be mandated by the local health departments regardless of COVID-19 Community Levels******

COVID-19 Testing

Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) strongly recommend consistent testing of close contacts, regardless of vaccination status, as a part of a layered prevention approach and screening process to identify infected people who may be contagious, even if they are asymptomatic. This allows for measures to be taken to prevent further transmission. As feasible and as resources allow, diagnostic testing can be performed using point of care rapid antigen tests, RT-PCR tests sent to a laboratory, and/or through use of at-home rapid antigen tests. Diagnostic testing is always recommended regardless of COVID-19 Community Levels.

When on travel it is important for all staff and children to screen through testing prior to returning to the GCDC to support efforts of reducing potential transmission.

GCDC does not perform rapid antigen testing on site. A school or childcare program must have a CLIA certificate of wavier to provide this service.

When using an at home rapid antigen test, it is important that you have a way to capture the date, time and result of the test for proof of return in the event that your child has been sent home due to suspected contagious illness.

Families are required to report a positive at home antigen test through the Maryland COVID-19 Positive At-Home Test Report Portal.

Cohorting

Cohorting is the practice of keeping the same group of people together in a small group and having each group stay together throughout the day, while minimizing contact between cohorts. GCDC uses the cohorting model as another preventive layer in reducing the spread of contagious disease transmission. Classrooms (teachers and students) will maintain separate cohorts. There will not be intermixing of students from different classrooms. Teachers/staff will not move from classroom to classroom. GCDC leadership will continue to reevaluate this, based on staffing and classroom needs, while maintaining health and safety for all.

Outbreaks

GCDC will continue to follow the existing procedures for reporting communicable diseases (COMAR 10.06.01) and immediately notify the local health department, Maryland State Department of Education Licensing Office, National Association for Young Children, and the Goddard Space Flight Center Chief Medical Officer of a COVID-19 outbreak. GCDC will adhere to the immediate recommendations as established by the GSFC Chief Medical Officer. Ultimately, the local health department will recommend control measures in response to the outbreak, including some of the prevention strategies described throughout this section. GCDC reserves the right to make an informed decision during an outbreak to determine if a classroom must be closed down or if an alternative program can be considered, such as test to stay. During an outbreak, other common control measures that may be recommended on a temporary basis include:

- Masking of all enrolled children and families approaching or entering the GCDC regardless of Center Status or Community Levels.
- Testing of staff and students in the classroom affected.
- Increased handwashing with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Rescheduling of planned center wide events (i.e., specials, birthday parties, in-house events).
- Suspension of In-Person Learning or Child Care Operations. The following extenuating circumstances can be considered for temporary suspension of in-person learning:
  - When there is evidence of substantial, uncontrolled transmission in the GCDC.
  - When there are logistical or safety concerns arising from the number of cases and close contacts.
  - When discussed with, and recommended by, local public health and medical professionals. Decisions around the suspension of in-person learning and the duration will be made on a case-by-case basis in coordination with the local health department, childcare licensing specialist and the GSFC Chief Medical Officer's advisement.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures

The reason this policy is important, besides being illegal, child abuse and neglect interfere with healthy child development and later achievement in life. This policy may also be accessed on the GCDC website at www.GCDCNASA.org.

Defining Abuse and Neglect

Maryland statutes define "Abuse" as:

1. The physical or mental injury of a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed; or
2. Sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not.

Maryland statutes define "Neglect" as:

1. "[The] leaving of a child or other failure to give proper care and attention to a child by any parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child under circumstances that indicate: (1) that the child's health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk of harm; or (2) mental injury to the child or a substantial risk of mental injury."

See Md. Code Ann. [Family Law] §5-701

GCDC Posting and Instruction Requirements

In accordance with Maryland Regulation 13A.16.07.02(C), the GCDC Director shall:

1. Instruct the GCDC Staff to monitor all children daily for signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect.
2. Instruct staff about their legal obligations to report suspected child abuse or neglect directly to CPS; and
3. Post, near each telephone in the facility, the telephone number of CPS and GSFC Protective Services Division (for emergencies).

Mandated Reporter Law

Maryland law identifies educators as mandated reporters and requires that educators who have reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect: (1) notify the local department or the appropriate law enforcement agency; and (2) if acting as a staff member of a child care institution, immediately notify and give all information required by Maryland law to the head of the institution or the designee of the head. *See* Md. Code Ann. [Family Law], §5704.

Accordingly, GCDC staff members who have reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, shall: (1) notify the Prince George's County Office of Child Care, Division of Early Childhood Development (CPS), and the GSFC Chief of the Protective Services Division; and (2) notify and give all information regarding the suspected abuse or neglect to the GCDC Director.

Maryland Regulation 13A.16.07.02 explains that when an employee has reason to believe a child has been abused or neglected, the GCDC Director "may not require an employee to report through [the GCDC Director], rather than directly to the local department (CPS) or a law enforcement agency." Thus, GCDC staff members are not required to receive the concurrence of the GCDC Director before notifying CPS and the GSFC Chief of the Protective Services Division who will notify the NASA Office of the Inspector General (OIA).

Parent/Non-Mandated Reporter Law

If a parent suspects that child abuse has occurred, they can notify CPS directly at 301-909-2450. Also, parents are encouraged to notify the GCDC Director so that appropriate administrative actions can be taken at GCDC. If allegations from parents are received electronically by the GCDC Director, the Director

will reply to the email and request that parents contact CPS directly so the parent can complete the CPS intake process.

Parents may be required to give oral and written statements to the appropriate authorities (i.e., CPS, US Attorney, MSDE) as the investigation proceeds. The expectation is that the investigatory entities will communicate with parents and families directly with no involvement from GCDC.

GSFC Procedures

Upon notification of suspected abuse or neglect, the GCDC Director shall immediately report the matter directly to CPS and GFSC Chief of Protective Services Division who will notify the OIG and the Prince George's County Child and Vulnerable Adult Unit.

Also, the GCDC Director shall provide notice of the suspected abuse to the following:

- GEWA Operations Manager
- MSDE Licensing Specialist
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (within 72 hours)

The GEWA Operations Manager shall also provide notification to the GSFC Associate Center Director and GSFC Chief Counsel as soon as possible.

Upon (1) notification from CPS and/or MSDE that a CPS investigation has been or may be initiated; and/or (2) a determination by the GCDC Director that the safety and health of a child and/or GCDC staff member is in danger, the GCDC staff member may be removed from the premises until there is a determination made by the GCDC Director that it is safe for him/her to return in concert with the Chief of the Protective Services. In making this determination (and assuming a CPS investigation was conducted), the GCDC Director must review any closure letter provided by CPS[1] to the GCDC staff member.

Upon (1) notification from CPS and/or MSDE that a CPS investigation has been or may be initiated against the GCDC Director; and/or (2) a determination by the GSFC Associate Center Director that the safety and health of a child and/or GCDC Director is in danger, the GCDC Director shall be removed from the premises until there is a determination made by the GSFC Associate Center Director that it is safe for him/her to return. In making this determination (and assuming a CPS investigation was conducted), the GSFC Associate Center Director must review any closure letter provided by CPS to the GCDC Director.

Reports

Maryland law states that a mandated reporter who provides notice of suspected child abuse or neglect to authorities is required to make both oral and written reports to the appropriate investigative and law enforcement agencies.

These statements will contain information to satisfy the minimum reporting requirements set forth by Maryland law:

1. The name, age, and home address of the child;
2. The name and home address of the child's parent or another person who is responsible for the child's care;
3. The whereabouts of the child;
4. The nature and extent of the abuse or neglect of the child, including any evidence or information available to the reporter concerning possible previous instances of abuse or neglect; and

[1] Closure notices are not provided to GCDC; closure notices are sent only to GCDC staff members who are the subject of the investigation. Note that in some situations, GCDC may not be notified by CPS and/or MSDE that an allegation and/or complaint has been filed.

5. Any other information that would help to determine the cause of the suspected abuse or neglect and the identity of any individual responsible for the abuse or neglect.

See Maryland Code Ann. [Family Law] §5-704(c).

Maryland law requires that educators also provide the statements to the GCDC Director. *See* Maryland Code Ann. [Family Law] §5-704(c). Parents/non-mandated individuals may be asked to report, to the extent possible, the information noted above, either orally or in writing to CPS.

Parent and Staff Communications

Within two business days after (1) notification to CPS of an allegation of suspected abuse by a GCDC staff member; or (2) receiving notification from a staff member or investigatory entity that an allegation of suspected child abuse has been filed with CPS, the GCDC Director will issue an email notifying parents that such an allegation has been made/received. The communication will confirm whether the staff member has been removed from the facility. The email will not provide the identities of the staff member or individual(s) who raised the allegation and will not provide any specific details regarding the nature of the allegation.

Within seven business days of the allegation (or receiving notice of one), the GCDC Director, in coordination with the GSFC Chief of Protective Services, will conduct a meeting with parents of the impacted classroom(s) to provide them additional information about the investigation process.

Investigations of this nature are extremely challenging and complex. To that end, to protect the integrity of the investigation(s), both parents and GCDC staff members are strongly encouraged not to discuss matters relating to the investigative process with anyone except the appropriate investigative authorities. While the safety of GCDC children is of paramount importance, GCDC is not an investigatory authority and therefore will not have information that many parents and staff will seek in these situations.

Communicable Diseases

The Child Care Administration requires both staff and parents to inform GCDC if a child or staff member is infected with or has been exposed to a reportable communicable disease (i.e., conjunctivitis, chickenpox, hand-foot-and-mouth disease, strep throat, ringworm). GCDC cannot admit a child with a contagious disease during the period of communicability. Re-admission to GCDC requires a written note by a licensed health practitioner, such as the child's pediatrician. Please note it is still at the discretion of the GCDC director to allow entry. If your child has a communicable illness and you have received a doctor's note to return, your child will still not be admitted into care until the communicable illness symptoms have resolved without the use of medication.

If a child or staff member has a contagious illness, the child or staff member must be excluded from GCDC for the period defined by the Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Individual information sheets are available that speak to care and exclusion requirements for specific illnesses. Other symptoms of illness that require exclusion from GCDC include a change in bowel habits (i.e., loose stool that occurs more than twice or with other symptoms), vomiting, undiagnosed rashes, and cold symptoms that do not subside. A doctor's note will be needed indicating that the period of contagion has passed if symptoms persist after diagnosis of a communicable illness.

If a child is diagnosed with a contagious illness over the weekend or holiday break, parents should still notify GCDC so that proper parent notification can be processed.

Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization

Parents are required to submit a notarized Emergency Medical Treatment Authorization form upon enrollment.

Hand Washing

Unwashed hands are the primary carriers of bacteria and germs that cause illness. Children and staff are required to wash their hands upon arrival, after using the toilet, before eating, and when soiled.

Health Inventory

Upon enrollment, parents are required to submit a Maryland State Department of Education Health Inventory form for each child enrolled. This form must be updated annually and as immunizations are administered. Failure to update medical forms within 30 days of expiration will result in termination from our program.

Tuberculin skin tests are preferred every two years for all children. However, in the event a skin test is not done, but rather a tuberculin screening, the doctor performing the screening must indicate the date and results of the screening. Lead forms must be completed as part of the health inventory as well.

Immunizations

Families must submit documentation of age-appropriate immunizations as defined by MSDE or provide supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs.

Medications

Code of Maryland Regulation 13A.16.11.04 requires persons who administer medications in public and non-public schools to be trained and certified by the Maryland Board of Nursing as a Certified Nursing Assistant. GCDC has staff members trained to administer medications on an emergency basis **only** (inhaler or epi-pen). GCDC requires a completed Medication Form for all emergency medications. Emergency medication stored at the GCDC must have the original prescription taped to the medication. Refrigerated medicines must be stored in our locked box in the refrigerator in the upper level.

Pediatric First Aid and CPR

All GCDC staff members participate in annual training and hold certifications in pediatric first aid and CPR.

Pets

Other than fish, GCDC has a strict "no pets" policy. Furry or feathered pets are significant causes of allergic responses and can trigger severe asthma symptoms. Skin cells from pet dander can linger in rooms for significant periods; therefore, a strict no pet policy is enforced to assure the childcare areas are free of pet dander.

Reduction of Indoor Asthma Triggers

Some of the most common indoor asthma triggers include environmental tobacco smoke (second-hand smoke), dust mites, mold, cockroaches and other pests, and household pets. GCDC works to reduce the presence of triggers in our program. Parents can learn more about reducing these triggers at home by visiting http://www.epa.gov/asthma/triggers.html.

Sick Children

State childcare administration licensing regulations do not permit the care of sick children at GCDC. When notified of a sick child, parents must pick up the child within one hour. If GCDC cannot reach the parent or guardian, administrative staff will decide whether to notify the emergency contact. Therefore, it is important that emergency forms are always up to date. Please stop by the office to change your child's form when needed. GCDC established these policies for the health and safety of your child as well as the staff and the other children. Please do not ask staff to make exceptions.

If parents have shown negligence regarding the health of a child, the GCDC Director will have specific authority to determine whether the health of a child is suitable for attendance at GCDC. His or her opinion

will take priority over that of a parent. If the GCDC Director deems a child too ill to be in attendance or that a child might infect other children and/or staff, the parent must promptly make other arrangements for the care of their child.

Smoke-Free Facility

GCDC is a smoke-free facility. Due to the acknowledged health threat to young children from exposure to tobacco smoke pollution, it is the policy of this facility to provide a smoke-free environment for staff, children, and parents. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco products and applies to employees, parents, and visitors to the facility. There will be no smoking in any area of the childcare center at any time. This includes both indoor and outdoor areas. Field trips, walks, and all other off-site activities and functions will also be smoke-free.

Sunscreen

Parents are asked to apply their child's sunscreen before bringing them to school in the summer and spring. Sunscreen may be reapplied at GCDC by staff if the appropriate Medication Form for your child is on file. Parents are encouraged to carefully read all sunscreen labels as some sunscreens need to be applied at least a half-hour in advance. If possible, parents should purchase and provide sunscreen that is manufactured for immediate use.

Section 8: Parent Involvement

We firmly believe that families play an integral role in their child's learning and development. We value your participation in our program and rely on your shared input on the growth and development of your child as well as continuous communication and feedback with GCDC to ensure that your family's needs are being met.

Individual Orientation

Each family is given a personal orientation with their teachers prior to the child starting. This is an opportunity to introduce you to the program, the classroom, and the larger GCDC community. Teachers take the time to answer questions and prepare parents for what to expect.

Back-to-School Night

Good first impressions make a difference, and the first open house of the school year gives teachers a chance to gain parents' support. It also allows teachers an opportunity to create a personal connection with parents and establish ways for continued communication throughout the school year. Teachers provide an overview of the curriculum, classroom environment, daily schedule, goals and objectives, guidance and discipline, lunches, snacks, and naps. Parents provide valuable information about their child, and information about their families and bring photos of their families.

Communication

Good two-way communication between families and GCDC is necessary for student success. Not surprisingly, research shows that the more parents and teachers share relevant information about a child, the better equipped both will be to help that child achieve in all areas of development. GCDC will provide contact information for teachers and program administrators upon enrollment and throughout the school year. Parents are encouraged to communicate freely with teachers or administrators at any time.

Teachers in various age groups will use Procare Engage as a means of communicating with families about information included, but not limited to, children's habits, routines, activities and play. You can also send brief messages to the teachers through this app.

Email

GCDC recognizes that email is a valuable communication tool. Staff members are provided with a GCDC email account (firstinitiallastname@gcdc-nasa.org) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication with parents. As a policy, GCDC staff will not respond to emails outside of business hours. If your email is complex, we may request a meeting rather than address multiple issues via email.

Facebook

GCDC maintains a Facebook account. It can be accessed at facebook.com/profile.php?id=100083415727539. GCDC will not post photos of children without written permission from parents; the photo permission authorization is part of the annual registration process. Parents are encouraged to "like" our page as a way to receive regular communication about school events.

GCDC Electronic Mailing List

GCDC communicates with parents via an electronic mailing list. GCDC will automatically add parents to the "Members List" upon submission of a membership application. Upon enrollment, GCDC will automatically add parents to the "Enrolled" list. Each classroom also has a mailing list for communication specific to their classroom. Parents are automatically added to the appropriate classroom mailing list upon enrollment and at transitions. Mailing lists may not be used for personal communications such as mailing invitations to birthday parties.

General Membership Meetings

Once a year, a general meeting of the membership convenes to review the past year's events and accomplishments and the strategic plan for the upcoming school year. Elections for new GCDC Association board members and the next year's Association budget are also voted upon by a quorum of the membership. The Association may schedule special meetings if urgent issues arise.

Information Sharing

Parents with children enrolled in the two-year old classes will receive information about their child's day.

Our newsletter, The Lunchbox Press, is distributed electronically monthly throughout the school year to all GCDC members.

The GCDC Parent Board, located in the atrium, contains information posted to comply with the applicable regulations. Notices for communicable illnesses are also posted for two weeks on this board and throughout GCDC. (We also place this information outside the front door on a portable easel.)

Teachers will share routine information through weekly notes and Procare Engage messages.

Parents are responsible for reading emails, chat messages, newsletters, weekly notes, assessments and taking appropriate action as necessary.

Mailboxes

GCDC mailboxes are to be used for official GCDC business only. Parents requesting to use mailboxes for distribution of materials **of any kind** must give the materials to the classroom teacher; in all cases, enough materials must be provided such that a copy of the information can be provided to the family of every class member. The GCDC Director has final say over what can be placed in the children's mailboxes.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are one-on-one meetings that provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to engage in two-way communication about each child's developmental progress. Due to **COVID-19**, conferences will be virtual. (Some accommodations will be made where possible.)

A formal continuum assessment is completed on each child twice per year for all enrolled children, once in the fall and again in the spring. Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled twice a year with parents to discuss their child's progress and development within the classroom. Conferences focus on the total development of the child, including physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Throughout the year, parents are encouraged to discuss any matter they deem necessary with their child's teacher or the GCDC Director or Assistant Director. Due to student-teacher ratio requirements, if parents will need more than three to five minutes to speak with a teacher during the day, we ask them to schedule a time to meet away from the classroom.

Parental Input

Parents should feel free to contact the GCDC Administrative Staff, the GCDC Board of Directors, or the GCDC Director with questions or suggestions about the operation of GCDC. There is a family suggestion box located on the parent information table in the atrium, the President of the Parent Association Committee (PAC) typically collects suggestions that have been placed in the box quarterly. Since families cannot enter the building at this time, you can email your suggestions to Vice President of the Board of Directors who serves as the Chairperson for the PAC. Parents are asked to complete surveys and questionnaires during each year and upon exit from GCDC. Parents wishing to express concerns may request a conference with a teacher or the GCDC Director. If concerns are not resolved, a meeting with the GEWA Operations Manager may be requested.

Phone Calls

Teachers may call parents to share information about their child's progress or other concerns. When they are in ratio, teachers cannot accept non-emergency phone calls. The best time to call your child's teacher is during naptime between the hours of 1:00 pm-3:00 pm.

Section 9: General Policies

Anti-Bully Policy

GCDC is committed to providing a safe and nurturing school environment that values diversity and commonality. GCDC is also committed to fostering a climate where individuals are valued, and their safety and rights are protected. To that end, GCDC prohibits acts of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or intimidation because they compromise the learning environment and well-being of students, staff, and community. We are an inclusive environment that promotes acceptance and respect for all. Continuous harassment or bullying behavior can result in termination of service.

Babysitting Services

GCDC strongly discourages its staff from babysitting children currently enrolled in our program. We believe this creates a conflict of interest. Should families enter into a babysitting agreement with a GCDC employee outside of business hours, GCDC is not responsible or liable in any way for this private agreement.

Challenging Behavior

When challenging behaviors occur, the GCDC staff will work with parents to identify age-appropriate solutions to the behavior. If children are sent to the office more than three times in a school year, the parent and teacher must develop a contract that identifies expectations and roles for both parties to help the child gain control of his or her behavior in the childcare setting. It is important to note that GCDC must always maintain childcare ratios. If a child's behavior becomes so disruptive that it puts the other children at risk or takes the teacher out of ratio for extended periods, GCDC may request an evaluation from a qualified professional. If parents do not comply with such a request, the child may be excluded from care.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies to all documents and information collected and maintained at GCDC for your child. GCDC will not disclose information concerning an individual child or the child's parents or guardians to a person other than the staff or government officials acting in the course of their duties, unless the parents or guardians grant written permission for the disclosure, except as required by law. GCDC will use its best efforts to maintain children's personally identifiable information secure.

Code of Conduct

At GCDC our goals include teaching and reinforcing care, respect, and responsibility: (i) care for each other and our physical environment; (ii) respect for oneself and others; and, (iii) responsibility for one's behavior. This is a continuous process that is intended to support and sustain all members of the GCDC community. These rules always apply to all parents of the GCDC community, whether at GCDC or interacting within the greater GSFC community.

1. Parents will follow all requirements noted in the Parent Handbook.
2. GCDC holds all parents/guardians to the same standards as GCDC staff in demonstrating respectful communication for or about our GCDC children. Parents and GCDC staff will always communicate and interact with each other politely and respectfully, whether in face-to-face meetings, via email or other forms of communication. These meetings should never be in the presence of children. Therefore, these are not discussions that would occur at pick up/drop off. Respect for one another should be evident in tone and language as well as the content. Unfortunately, email does not convey tone and may cause the message to seem abrupt or confrontational when written in haste or frustration. Moreover, email can be printed or re-circulated and does not ensure confidentiality at times when such may be needed or required. Given these

limitations, please consider scheduling a face-to-face meeting when wishing to discuss issues of significant concern with a staff member.

3. Parents will not attempt to speak to a teacher about GCDC matters when a teacher is conducting personal business at one of the GSFC cafeterias, credit union, gym, or outside of the GSFC campus.

Under extreme circumstances of blatant misconduct by parents/guardians, GCDC reserves the right to terminate a child(ren)'s enrollment. Examples of behavior not tolerated by GCDC include:

1. Disregard for GCDC policies and procedures as outlined in the Parent Handbook;
2. Use of physical, verbal, written, or electronic threats, bullying, cursing or yelling at GCDC staff, children, or other parents;
3. A pattern of escalating and ongoing demeaning or insulting behavior towards GCDC staff, children or other parents;
4. Non-conformance of Covid-19 policy and/or protocols; or
5. Non-payment of tuition.

If a parent/guardian is not abiding by GCDC policies or exhibits behavior that the GCDC Director determines to be unusually disruptive:

1. The GCDC Director will address the parent/guardian directly to convey this concern and the need for improvement.
2. If the behavior continues or if there is a repeat offense, the GCDC Director will provide a written warning to the parent/guardian and provide a copy of that communication to the GCDC Association.
3. If the behavior continues following the issuance of the written warning, or if there is a repeat offense, an in-person meeting will take place attended by the parent/guardian, the GCDC Director and the President and Vice President of the GCDC Association.

Following this meeting, the GCDC Association President and Vice President will make a report and recommendation to all remaining members of the GCDC Association. Based on the report, any written information on the incident(s) provided by both (or all) parties, and the severity of the disruption, the GCDC Association will decide whether the family will have to withdraw from the center; and if so:

1. whether the withdrawal of the child(ren) will be immediate;
2. whether the withdrawal of the child(ren) will be with a two-week notice; or
3. whether the withdrawal of the child(ren) will be with a one-month notice.

A GCDC Association decision leading to a termination of enrollment requires the affirmative vote of a minimum of six (i.e., two-thirds) GCDC Association voting members. The deliberation and vote will occur during a closed session meeting of the GCDC Association.

If the withdrawal is immediate, no tuition will be refunded. If the parent /guardian refuses to attend the meeting without due cause, termination will occur within a week of the original request, without refund of deposit.

A GCDC Association voting member will recuse themselves from this process if:

1. he/she is a member of the family being investigated;
2. has a close personal relationship with the family being investigated; or
3. has a child in the same classroom as the family being investigated.

The GEWA Operations Manager will replace the voting member who has recused themselves from the process. If a second voting member is recused from the process, the GEWA Business Manager will replace the second voting member.

GCDC Association decisions in these matters are final.

Conflict Resolution

Ongoing, two-way communication is the best method for preventing conflict, especially between parents and teachers. When members of the GCDC community disagree, each has a responsibility to consider the other's views respectfully, to act in the best interest of any children involved, and to assume that the other party is doing the same. Parents who have a conflict with any member of the GCDC community should first contact that person directly, respectfully, and expediently and try to resolve the issue. If the issue is not resolved or if it is not feasible to contact the person directly, you may contact the GCDC Director, who will work with both parties to resolve the problem.

GCDC follows all the policies, guidance, and regulations of the GFSC facility. Goddard does not tolerate any instance of harassment, intimidation, bias, or unlawful discrimination and is committed to a violence-free workplace. GSFC is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace environment that encourages and empowers each to perform at his or her best. Parents should treat GCDC employees as GSFC colleagues and always engage in collegial interactions. GCDC employees have resources available to address conflicts just as civil servant and contractors do and may use any of the following to address conflicts.

- Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), 301-286-0482
- Ombudsman, 301-286-4467
- Anti-Harassment Program, 301-286-6582
- Equal Opportunity Programs Office, 301-286-0379

Dress

Play is the child's work. It is important that children come to school appropriately dressed for their work. This work involves painting, gluing, molding, building, climbing, running, and jumping; therefore, washable play clothes are most appropriate. Occasionally, clothing can become stained, as children need to feel free to explore and experiment. Children are required to wear well-fitting, closed-toe shoes on the playground. Loose fitting crocs are not recommended and often result in a higher number of accidents on the playground. Shoes that do not fit well may result in injury.

We suggest sending your child to GCDC in comfortable clothing that you don't mind if it gets an occasional stain or dirt from your child's exploration. During winter months, please remember that appropriate winter garb, such as boots, hats, gloves, and scarves, is required to play in the planned snow activities. Appropriate cold weather gear is required when the temperatures fall below 60 degrees.

All children should have a seasonally appropriate, extra change of clothing at all times. Children should have a full set of clothes to include shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes.

Expulsion

At GCDC, we use prevention and discipline practices which focus on preventing behavioral challenges by supporting children in learning appropriate social skills and emotional responses.

At GCDC, our goal is to promote children's social-emotional and behavioral health and to address and bring resources to challenging behavior appropriately. However, as young children learn to develop social-emotional skills, they may respond to situations with externalized behaviors (i.e., defiance, non-compliance, and aggression). We attempt to create a developmentally appropriate program that meets the needs of each child and precludes the need for children to respond with externalized behaviors that are disruptive to the learning environment. Some of the methods that we use in our program are:

- Consideration of the individual needs of each child: this approach helps us to adapt and respond to individual variation.
- Utilization of positive guidance techniques: desired behavior will be reinforced, and consequences for challenging behavior will be developmentally appropriate and consistent.
- Use of formal and informal screenings and observations: early identification through formal and informal screenings and observations helps match children with the services that benefit them and their families.
- Maintaining appropriate group sizes: compliance with recommended and required teacher/child ratios and group sizes improves outcomes, helps to reduce behavior problems, and improves the early childhood experience.
- Using constructive approaches to redirection: strategies such as class meetings and conflict mediation help to restore balance to the learning environment when young children struggle in large group settings.
- Engaging families: children benefit when families and early childhood programs work together in partnership. Early childhood educators should engage families to understand better the origin of the behaviors and how parents have addressed the behaviors in the home setting. This information is used as part of the decision-making process to support the child.
- Demonstrating cultural responsiveness: intentionally teaching social skills, raising expectations of all children, and recognizing children's positive behaviors in the context of their own culture.
- Accessing developmental, mental health, and other support for children and families: there is a wealth of resources in the state of Maryland that can provide support to the child, family, and program. We work with families to suggest and facilitate the use of a variety of options.
- Balance scheduling: because children benefit from play, our classroom schedules allow children to spend a substantial portion of the day in play (both indoor and outdoor).

Because of the long-term benefits of participation in high-quality early childhood programs, our goal is not to suspend or expel a child from care. Instead, we attempt to collaborate with parents to bring the needed resources and strategies to a situation. We hope that these efforts will result in suspension and expulsion only being used where there are extraordinary circumstances or a determination of a serious safety threat. While we will make efforts to reduce or eliminate such circumstances and threats with the provision of reasonable modifications, we reserve the right to suspend or expel in any situation we deem necessary.

At GCDC our goal is to ensure that all our youngest learners have the tools and experiences they need to thrive.

Field Trip Policy

Due to current Covid-19 restrictions, external field trips are temporarily suspended. However, if/when Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, external field trips will resume, and the following policy will go into effect.

Field trips include walks around GSFC, as well as excursions away from GSFC. Typically, each class will have two field trips away from GSFC each year. Individual classrooms may schedule additional field trips throughout the school year to supplement the program. On field trip days, GCDC is not open for care for children whose class is away on a field trip during the hours of the event, (i.e., bus departure from GCDC until bus returns to GCDC).

Parents of two-year old's must chaperone their children on field trips and are not given volunteer credit time for attending. Parents of children in all other classrooms may chaperone one field trip per school year. GCDC reserves the right to deny parent requests to chaperone.

Prompt arrival for field trips is imperative, as we cannot delay bus departure for late arrivals.

Each child must have a signed permission slip to attend field trips. GCDC provides bus transportation to and from each field trip, but chaperone space may be limited. If you are chaperoning a field trip, you will need to meet with a teacher before the scheduled field trip to review the field trip guidelines, receive the itinerary and pick up the first-aid kit specifically developed for field trips.

Once on the field trip, parents often wish to venture out on their own. We request that you do not separate from the group until the teacher has released you. Our field trips serve as a hands-on learning opportunity to expand the lessons taught in school.

A headcount will take place before departure, upon arrival at the location, before departing the location and upon return to GCDC. For everyone's safety, field trip participants may not use two modes of transportation (i.e., ride the bus to the trip but home with a parent in the car or vice versa). Participants must ride on the same bus on the return trip as they did when going to the field trip site.

When offsite trips are scheduled, parents must provide their own packed lunch. The lunch must be fully disposable and may not contain peanut products.

Guidance and Discipline

One of our teachers' main goals is to facilitate the children's development of responsibility and self-regulation. Teachers set clear, consistent, and fair limits for children's behavior and hold them accountable to standards of acceptable behavior. To the extent that children are able, teachers engage them in developing rules and procedures for the class. Teachers redirect children to more acceptable behavior or activity, or use children's mistakes as learning opportunities, patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed. Teachers listen and acknowledge children's feelings and frustrations, respond with respect, and guide children to resolve conflicts and solve their problems. GCDC will not tolerate physical abuse, verbal abuse, withholding, or the threat to withhold food.

Nap Policy

Naptime is from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. daily. The environment is prepared for naptime by reducing the lights, closing window treatments, and playing soft music to help children relax. Children are allowed to rest on their cot with their blanket and a soft animal or doll. Please note the following:

- Neither pillows nor pillow pets are allowed.
- The children are encouraged to, but not required to, sleep.
- All children must remain on their cot during naptime.
- If a child does not want to sleep, the child may be given a quiet activity to do on his or her cot during naptime.

Cot sheets and blankets are sent home every Friday, when soiled, or the last day of the week that your child is in attendance at GCDC. Please launder all items and bring them back to GCDC upon your return. Licensing Regulation (Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.16.09.04) requires that all children have an adequate supply of clean bedding. If you fail to return your child's cot sheet to GCDC, we will attempt to provide a sheet from our clean used sheets; however, if they are not available, parents will be charged a fee each time that a sheet is not provided or available for your child.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an important and integral part of a high-quality early childhood education curriculum. We ask that parents assist us in ensuring that all children can go outside daily by providing appropriate weather gear for their children. GCDC will not allow children to go outside if they do not have appropriate attire for the weather. Children will go outside on most days, except in rain, extreme cold or when the air quality is in the unhealthy range. Children must have outer garments appropriate for all weather. Mittens or gloves are needed on cold weather days. Boots and snowsuits are needed on snowy days when we go outside and

play. Please bring them on the first day of snow. Please send an extra pair of shoes to wear in the classroom. We try to keep the classroom floors clean and dry (wet floors are slippery and cause accidents). Sneakers or closed-toe shoes are required.

Conditions	Outdoor Play
Below 10 Degrees F	Outdoor playtime will not be permitted. Alternative activities will be available.
Between 10-20 degrees F	Outdoor playtime will be limited to 10-to-15-minute increments. Children without proper attire will not be able to go outside.
Between 20-30 degrees F	Outdoor playtime will be limited to 20-to-30-minute increments. Children without proper attire will not be able to go outside.
30+ degrees F	Outdoor playtime will remain at the regularly scheduled playtime of 45 minutes to 1 hour. Children without proper attire will not be able to go outside.
Code Red	Outdoor playtime will be limited to 10-to-15-minute increments. Sprinkle Time activities will be permitted at the regularly scheduled time.
Code Orange	Outdoor playtime will be limited to 20-minute increments. Sprinkle Time activities will be permitted at the regularly scheduled time.
Code Yellow	Outdoor playtime will be limited to 30-minute increments. Sprinkle Time activities will be permitted at the regularly scheduled time.
Code Green	Outdoor playtime will remain at the regularly scheduled playtime of 45 minutes to 1 hour.
UV Index between 1 and 5*	Outdoor playtime will remain at the regularly scheduled playtime of 45 minutes to 1 hour.
UV Index between 6 and 7*	Outdoor playtime will be limited to before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m. at regularly scheduled playtime of 45 minutes to 1 hour.
UV Index between 8+*	Outdoor playtime will be limited to 20-to-30-minute increments before 10 a.m. and after 4 p.m.

Personal Items Needed for School

Everyday classroom items include:

- A packed lunch, labeled with first & last name, separated by hot & cold items.
- A reusable water bottle, labeled with the child's name.
- A complete set of extra clothing (appropriate for the season) to be kept on hand during the year. Please note if your child has an accident and we do not have a change of clothes for your child, you will receive a telephone call to either bring a change of clothes or pick up your child. If we have spare items available, we will use these items first.
- A small blanket for rest periods.
- A small stuffed animal or soft doll for naptime, (this accommodation is only for transitions).
- A bathing suit, towel, swim shoes, and a spray bottle for water play (summer only).
- A sweater or jacket for chilly days in the classroom. It is also good for outdoor periods in the spring and fall when children might not yet need coats in the morning or afternoon.
- Two-year old room only: Items for diapering (disposable diapers, wipes, creams, etc.) **The use of pull-up diapers is not permitted at GCDC. Bottles, pacifiers, and sippy cups are also not**

permitted in the center at any time. If you use these items for your child, you must leave them in your car or at home. Parents must write the child's first and last name on belongings and clothing items with permanent markers so that they can be returned if misplaced. This is very important with articles of clothing, such as coats, sweaters, mittens, hats, boots, etc. Please check as the seasons change to be sure children have appropriate extra clothes for the season. Remember, children grow. If your child has not used the extra clothes for a while, she or he may have outgrown them.

Potty Training

Children enrolled in the two-year old classrooms are not required to be potty trained but will be assisted in potty training before they transition into the 3-year-old classroom. **Pull-ups are not permitted at GCDC**. With pull-ups, the child does not feel the discomfort of wetness, and the potty-training process is slower. Once the decision has been made to start the potty-training process, children are to arrive at school in underwear. Diapers or other forms of diapers should not return to school. Once you begin the potty-training process you will need to send 2-3 changes of clothes per day including a change of shoes.

Teacher to Child Ratios

GCDC ensures that sufficient staff with primary responsibility for children is available to provide frequent personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and to offer immediate care as needed. The ratio of staff to children varies depending on the age of the children, the type of program activity, the inclusion of children with special needs, the time of day, and other factors. It is GCDC's policy that all children must be appropriately supervised by staff at all times. The following chart summarizes GCDC teacher and child ratios.

Classroom	Teacher: Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
Comets	1:6	15
Little Discoveries	1:6	12
Milky Ways	1:10	17
Little Dippers Second Semester	1:10	15
Satellites	1:10	17
Shooting Stars	1:10	17
Constellations	1:10	20
Rockets	1:10	17

Toys from Home

To support teachers in the classrooms, we ask that families **not allow** children to bring toys from home to school unless teachers have asked the children to bring something to share for share time or to support a learning activity or concept. This policy reduces the tears or conflicts over broken or lost items.

Transitions

Transition is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with a new situation such as moving to a new classroom. Children's classroom transitioning is based on a combination of their birth date and developmental maturity. To ensure an easier and healthier transition for your child, GCDC has developed a transition model that will allow children to feel more comfortable and confident in their new environment.

GCDC typically does not transition children during the school year, but this decision is made based on several different factors and done with the child's development and education at the forefront.

Section 10: Safety and Security

Your child's safety and security are our number one priority. Health and safety policies provide specific guidelines to promote health and safety and prevent the spread of contagious diseases in the childcare setting. Policies include specific guidelines required by licensing or regulations, best practices, and information specific to GCDC.

Badges

GCDC can sponsor/request badges for parents who do not work at GSFC. We will only sponsor **one** badge per family (except when neither parent works for GSFC).

Emergency Evacuations

In the event of an extreme emergency, in which GCDC (Building 90) is to be evacuated, all building 90 occupants will exit the building and proceed across the street to the sidewalk furthest away from our building and proceed to Building 18.

During a shelter in place exercise, parents should **not** leave their building to shelter in place with their child at GCDC. Due to limited space in Building 90, we are unable to accommodate parents during these exercises safely.

GCDC participates in monthly fire drills (even during the winter months) and semi-annual shelter in place drills to ensure the children know the appropriate response to an emergency. As part of this process, children and staff will not take the time to put on winter gear (i.e., coats, hats, gloves, etc.). Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom.

Lockdown Procedures

If the Goddard Security personnel institute a Center-wide lockdown, GCDC will also go on lockdown. GCDC Administrative staff will send an email to enrolled parents with further instructions. If the internet is down, we will contact parents via telephone where possible.

Secure Key Card Access

Building access is currently discontinued due to Covid-19. A key-card access system secures GCDC at all entrances. Upon enrollment, parents employed by GSFC will be given documentation to apply for key card access to GCDC. GCDC will submit this paperwork to GSFC Security. This process may take a few days. Parents who do not work for GSFC will not be issued a key card and must ring the doorbell for entry into GCDC. Parents are asked not to open the door for anyone if you are uncertain of his or her identity. Parents with access to our program are required to use their badge to access our building and should not rely on ringing the bell for access each day.

Video Monitoring

Our building is equipped with a state-of-the-art security system that includes video monitoring. Cameras are located in the common areas (i.e., the atrium, near the front door and on the playgrounds) as well as within the classroom. GSFC Security manages and is responsible for this service; GCDC does not have access to any video recordings.

GCDC Parent Handbook Acknowledgment of Receipt

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the GCDC 2022-2023 Parent Handbook (the “Handbook”). I have read, understand, and will adhere to the terms of the Handbook.

_____

Parent Signature/Date

_____

Printed Name of Parent

Appendix A

MDH/MSDE Guidance for COVID-19 Symptoms, Isolation, and Quarantine

	Guidance for Management
Staff or Student/Child with COVID-19 symptoms	• Staff or student/child should not attend or work in a school or childcare setting • COVID-19 testing is recommended • If test is negative, may return when symptoms have improved, no fever for 24 hours without medication, and applicable criteria in the Communicable Diseases Summary have been met
Positive test for COVID-19, regardless of symptoms	• Staff or student/child must stay home for 5 days from the start of symptoms or from the date of the positive test if no symptoms • After day 5, may return if symptoms have improved and no fever for at least 24 hours without medication • Upon return, must wear a mask for 5 additional days (except while eating, drinking, sleeping or outside) • If unable to wear a mask, may return if they have a negative test at day 5 or later; otherwise, they should remain at home for days 6-10
Close contact with someone with known or suspected COVID-19 but no symptoms	• Staff or student/child can continue to work in or attend school and childcare regardless of vaccination status • Those who can mask should do so for 10 days from the last day of exposure • A test at 5 days after exposure is recommended, especially for those who cannot mask (i.e., children under 2 years of age).