

**Touching Hearts,
Changing Lives Together.**



Family Handbook

2023- 2024 School Year

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Dear Families,

Welcome new families and welcome back returning families! It is an exciting time as your child begins the new school year. We are providing this Family Handbook as a guide of what you and your child can expect in the 2023-2024 school year. All of us here are looking forward to a wonderful year ahead.

At VCLC, we use a curriculum that meets each learner's needs and is compatible with the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards. You will receive more details about the curriculum, classroom management strategies and the classroom schedule at Back-to-School Night.

All campuses will provide full in-person learning for center-based students. **Remote learning will be limited to occasions where there is a school closure due to inclement weather or other emergency and a remote day is used to avoid loss of any instructional time.** If a student is absent from school due to illness or vacation, remote instruction will not be available to the student, and they will be marked absent.

If a student does not have access to a computer, families can contact Diana Juravlea (djuravlea@vclc.org) to request a school Chromebook. Our Chromebooks are pre-programmed, providing access only to classroom learning applications. You will be contacted to arrange for pickup of your Chromebook. At the end of each year, students leaving VCLC must return their Chromebook, while returning students may keep theirs for the following school year.



In 2016, VCLC was selected to be part of Cohort 1 to implement the Pyramid Model, a positive behavior support system which focuses on social/emotional development, problem solving and building relationships. This model provides a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices to promote young children's social-emotional competence. VCLC is committed to supporting the Pyramid Model. Our Leadership team has developed program-wide expectations that will promote relationships, shared expectations, and a safe environment for all. You will see these expectations posted throughout the buildings: BE SAFE, BE RESPECTFUL, BE RESPONSIBLE. Your children may come home and talk about them, as well as our school mascots, Roary, the lion and his friend, Squeaky, the mouse. All staff, as well as the children, are embracing these expectations. We hope that you can adopt them at home as well.

Each child's social/emotional development is critical, particularly after the COVID pandemic. Relationships with significant adults, caregivers, and peers are important to children's developmental growth. OCFS, one of our regulatory agencies, requires that parents receive their brochure entitled ACEs, Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences, which is included in this packet. If you have any questions about this information, please contact your social worker.

VCLC offers a Family Association (like a PTA), organized by our Social Workers. This is a wonderful opportunity to engage with other families, share input and to support VCLC in numerous ways including special events and fundraisers. Please watch your child's backpack, VCLC's website and messages on Alert Now for details.

Your child's attendance at school is important. A copy of the school calendar for 2023-2024 school year is included in this handbook. It is important that students arrive on time and stay for the entire day. Lateness and early dismissal may impact your child's related services. We also ask that you consider the calendar when planning any vacations.

VCLC's Family Handbook includes essential information about VCLC and its policies and procedures. It is important that you read the handbook and become familiar with its content. If you have any questions or seek further clarification, please contact your social worker.

We are looking forward to working with you and your child in the coming year. Together, we hope to make a significant difference in your child's growth and development.

Anna Ciccíari
Principal, Syosset

Corey Leín
Principal, Levittown

María Freeman
Director of Family Services

Stacey Trotti
Assistant Director, Family Services



Vision

VCLC is committed to providing high quality programs for young children with disabilities and their families that focus on the educational, social-emotional, and physical growth of the children, and home/school collaboration.

We believe all children can learn. Our programs respect each child's individuality. The staff is responsible for developing relationships with each child and his/her family. Decisions about programs and interventions must be based on the needs of the children. Always ask "Whose needs are being met?"

Mission Statement

We are a variety of families coming together in a loving, diverse, and safe community, learning and growing along the early childhood journey.



2023-2024 SCHOOL CALENDAR

(Syosset, Gallow, Karopczyc SCIS)

| JULY 2023 | | | | | AUGUST 2023 | | | | | SEPTEMBER 2023 | | | | |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|---------------|----|----|----|----|----------------|----|----|----|----|
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| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 31 | | | | | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| OCTOBER 2023 | | | | | NOVEMBER 2023 | | | | | DECEMBER 2023 | | | | |
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| JANUARY 2024 | | | | | FEBRUARY 2024 | | | | | MARCH 2024 | | | | |
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| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| APRIL 2024 | | | | | MAY 2024 | | | | | JUNE 2024 | | | | |
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| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
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CODE: = SCHOOL CLOSED = SCHOOL CLOSED, STAFF IN = EMERGENCY CLOSING "GIVE BACK" DAY

OPENINGS / CLOSINGS

2023
 July 3 – First Day of Summer Program
 July 4 – Independence Day
 August 11 – Last Day of Summer Program
 September 4 – Labor Day
 September 5 – Staff Conference Day
 September 6 – First Day of School
 September 25 – Yom Kippur
 October 9 – Columbus Day
 November 7 – Staff Conference Day
 November 10 – Veterans' Day
 November 23 & 24 – Thanksgiving Recess
 December 25-29 – Holiday Recess

2024
 January 1 – Last Day of Holiday Recess
 January 15 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
 February 19-23 – Winter Recess
 March 28-29 – Spring Recess #1
 April 22-26 – Spring Recess #2
 May 27 – Memorial Day
 June 19 – Juneteenth
 June 26 – Last Day of School
 June 27-28 – School Closed
 July 1 – First Day of Summer Program
 July 4 – Independence Day
 August 9 – Last Day of Summer Program

This calendar has been developed by Administration following SED requirements for the number of school days. Administration has the right to change the calendar if emergency closings during the school year require additional days.

SCHOOL HOURS: MONDAY – FRIDAY

Preschool 8:30 AM – 2:30 PM
 School Age 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

SEPTEMBER 2023 – JUNE 2024

There are four (4) snow/emergency closing days built into this calendar. If any days are not used, school will be closed on June 26th, 25th, 24th and May 24th in that order. Please plan on school being open and do not schedule a vacation for those days. If additional days are needed, they will be taken from Spring Recess #2 in this order: April 26th and 25th.

El and evaluations are provided, when possible, during the entire year. Related services and SEIT are provided according to the calendar per the child's IEP.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS ON INTERNET, TV AND RADIO:

VCLC (www.vclc.org); **Optimum Channel 12** (news12.com); **Radio:** 94.3 The Shark; WALK 97.5 FM; KJOY 98.3; WBAB 102.3; 103.1 MAX FM; WBLI 106.1; WHLI 1100 AM / 104.7 FM. You will receive an Alert Message about closings via phone, text and/or email if you have enrolled in our Alert Now System.

Variety Child Learning Center

ISLAND TREES UPK CHILDREN ONLY

AT KAROPCZYC & SPARKE

2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

| JUL 2023 | | | | | | |
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| AUG 2023 | | | | | | |
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| SEP 2023 | | | | | | |
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| OCT 2023 | | | | | | |
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| NOV 2023 | | | | | | |
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| DEC 2023 | | | | | | |
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| 31 | | | | | | |

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| JULY | |
| 4 | Independence Day Observed |
| AUGUST | |
| 30 | Conference Day |
| 31 | Conference Day |
| SEPTEMBER | |
| 1 | No School |
| 4 | Labor Day |
| 5 | FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL |
| 25 | Yom Kippur |
| OCTOBER | |
| 9 | Columbus Day |
| NOVEMBER | |
| 7 | Conference Day/Election Day |
| 10 | Veterans Day |
| 22-24 | Thanksgiving Recess |
| DECEMBER | |
| 25 | First Day of Holiday Recess |
| JANUARY | |
| 1 | Last Day of Holiday Recess |
| 15 | Martin Luther King Jr. Day |
| FEBRUARY | |
| 19 | First Day of Winter Recess |
| 23 | Last Day of Winter Recess |
| MARCH | |
| 27 | First Day of Spring Recess #1** |
| APRIL | |
| 1 | Last Day of Spring Recess #1 |
| 22 | First Day of Spring Recess #2 |
| 30 | Last Day of Spring Recess #2*** |
| MAY | |
| 24 | Memorial Day Recess* |
| 27 | Memorial Day |
| JUNE | |
| 17 | Regents Rating Day #1 |
| 19 | Juneteenth |
| 26 | Regents Rating Day #2 |
| 26 | LAST DAY OF SCHOOL |

| JAN 2024 | | | | | | |
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| FEB 2024 | | | | | | |
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| MAR 2024 | | | | | | |
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| APR 2024 | | | | | | |
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| MAY 2024 | | | | | | |
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| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
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| JUN 2024 | | | | | | |
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This calendar has 179 instruction days and 3 conference days listed.

*If there is one inclement weather day, school will be in session on Friday, May 24.

**If there are two inclement weather days, school will be in session on Wednesday, March 27.

***If there are three inclement weather days, school will be in session on Tuesday, April 30.

Please note the entire calendar and recess periods are subject to change given a catastrophic event.

BOE Approved: January 18, 2023

VARIETY CHILD LEARNING CENTER



Variety Child Learning Center (VCLC) is a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) agency that provides programs and services for young children (birth to 7 years) with learning, language, social and behavior disabilities, including autism, and support services to families. Judith Bloch founded the school in 1966 based on the beliefs that early identification, early intervention and partnerships with families make a difference in the outcomes for young children. These beliefs continue to be the cornerstones of VCLC's philosophy and programs. Opportunities for Home/School Collaboration are key in our work.

VCLC is chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. Its programs are regulated by the New York State Education Department (SED), Department of Health (DOH), Bureau of Early Intervention and Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). The Sunday and Vacation Respite Programs are regulated by the New York State Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and Medicaid. Students must meet OPWDD eligibility to be considered for enrollment in the program.

Each regulatory agency has requirements that affect VCLC's daily operations. SED, DOH, OCFS and Medicaid require that VCLC adhere to health and safety standards, specific classroom ratios and paperwork requirements. Parents will also be required to complete paperwork periodically throughout the year. You will find information about mandatory paperwork and timetables throughout this handbook.

VCLC offers an array of programs for children and families. Families have no out-of-pocket expenses but are responsible for the fees/costs associated with childcare and/or VCLC's fee-for-service enrichment programs.

The tuition dollars received for the programs and services your child receives cover his/her IEP services. VCLC relies on fundraising to enhance your child's school experience. Over the years, these funds have been used for items such as playgrounds, technology, indoor play equipment for the gyms and classroom renovations.

During the school year, VCLC hopes that you will support the Family Association's and VCLC's fundraising drives and events. Watch your mail, our website and your child's backpack for information about our fundraisers. We hope you will join us and support VCLC!

SUCCESSFUL BEGINNINGS



The beginning of each school year can be both exciting and challenging at the same time. Parents may feel anxious about this new experience, wondering how their child will separate from them or their caregivers. Will school staff understand and accept our child? Can we trust them to take care of our child?

New or returning students, moving into a new classroom with a new teacher and peers, are facing adjustment. Some adapt easily, while others have a more difficult time. Your child may protest loudly, become clingy or cranky, or just walk into the new situation without looking back. Some children adapt easily at first but may react weeks later. They may not want to separate from you, or their behaviors may become challenging. Staff are aware of the separation process and are available to work with you and your child to ease the situation.

Here are a few readiness activities you can try prior to the start of school:

- Visit the school with your child shortly before school begins. You can show and use the playground.
- Point out minibuses as you are riding in the car or walking in the neighborhood.
- If you have a toy school bus at home, play with it and talk about how your child will be taking the bus to school and coming home to his/her family.
- Help your child choose an object that may be comforting for him/her to hold while on the bus (e.g., a stuffed animal, picture of a family member or pet) and will fit easily into the backpack. No toys from home can be brought into the classroom.
- Talk about favorite activities your child does at home that he/she may do at school such as looking at books, playing with toys, or going outside.
- Show your child the picture of their teacher.

Separation is an important early learning experience. Working through this adjustment leads to other successful school experiences. If you are concerned about your child's school adjustment and/or separation, please contact your social worker and/or teacher and together a plan can be developed to ease the process.

CONFIDENTIALITY



As a parent/guardian of a child attending VCLC, it is important for you to know that we are aware and respectful of your need for privacy and confidentiality. Confidentiality ensures privacy and protection against disclosure of personal information and is required by FERPA, the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. It is also a principal factor in establishing trust between our staff and our families, which is of utmost importance to us.

Please help us follow our policy and be mindful of where and when you talk about your child with staff. You can schedule an appointment with your social worker to discuss personal and confidential issues.

- All staff are trained in our confidentiality policy and practices.
- We do not share full names and telephone numbers of the children and their families without written permission.
- We will only discuss your child with you and cannot disclose any information about another child or family.
- We request that parents only observe and comment about their child.
- We request that parents only take pictures/videos of their child.
- Taking pictures/videos of other children is not permitted.
- We ask parents not to post pictures/videos on any social networking sites including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok or any other.

Student Records

- All children's records are kept in locked files and are available to professional staff who have a legitimate educational interest or "need to know" for the specific purpose of appropriate planning of programs and activities for your child. These staff include teachers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, psychologists, social workers, school nurse, adaptive physical education teacher, behavior specialists and VCLC Administrators (CEO and CFO).
- School districts for CPSE and CSE students and VCLC's regulatory agencies such as the New York State Education Department, Department of Health, Medicaid and Office of Children and Family Services have the right to access a student's file.
- Copies of reports and evaluations generated in this program will be provided to and shared with families.
- VCLC must have written permission from the parent or eligible student to release any information from a student's education record to anyone other than authorized individuals. However, FERPA allows VCLC to discuss educational records without consent to:
 - School officials with legitimate educational interest
 - Other schools to which a student is transferring
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
 - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
 - Accrediting organizations
 - Comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoenas
 - Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
 - State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law.

- VCLC and your county and/or school district.
- VCLC is regulated by the New York State Department of Health, Education Department and Office of Children and Family Services and has contracts/agreements with your county, school district and the New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Early Intervention to provide your child's educational program according to his/her IFSP or IEP. Therefore, as stated above, your child's county and/or school district has access to his/her educational records and all reports generated by VCLC.
- Parents may add an amendment to their child's record and the amendment will be labeled on the specific material and maintained along with the child's record.
- If a parent with a child receiving Early Intervention (EI) services wants to amend the record, the parent must notify the OSC (Ongoing Service Coordinator) or EIOD (Early Intervention Official Designee) in writing:
 - Nassau County: EIO, Director, Office of Children with Special Needs, DOH, 60 Charles Lindbergh Blvd., Suite 100, Uniondale, NY 11553-3783, 516-227-8661.
 - Suffolk County: EIO, Director, Office of Children with Special Needs, DOH, 50 Laser Court, Hauppauge, NY 11788, 631-853-3100.
 - If the municipality decides not to amend the record as requested, you are informed of this decision in writing and you have the right to a hearing.
 - The information in the record found to be inaccurate will be amended, and you will be informed in writing by the municipality.
- Parents and eligible students may request copies of the materials in the student's record.
- Parents may have a representative review their child's record upon presentation of parent's written authorization to do so.
- The above-mentioned rights pertain to all parents, except in the case of a custodial situation where the custodial parent may be required to give permission. Request forms are available in the Family Service Department. All requests must be in writing.



School District and County Notifications

As required by the above authorities, VCLC staff are required to notify VCLC Administration as well as your school district and/or your county when:

- A student's residency changes.
- Required prescriptions for OT and PT services are not received.
- A student is absent for more than 5 days.
- A student misses more than five (5) related services (Speech, OT, PT, psychological counseling).

GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION

VCLC has two main campuses: Syosset and Gallow and satellite sites at Sparke Elementary School in Levittown and Karopczyc in Levittown. Policies and procedures stated in this handbook apply to all sites.

Important Building Information

Syosset

47 Humphrey Drive, Syosset, NY 11791
PH: (516) 921-7171 Fax: (516) 921-8130

Gallow

72 Farmedge Road, Levittown, NY 11756
PH: (516) 490-3301 Fax: (516) 490-3303



Offsite Locations

Karopczyc School

74 Farmedge Road, Levittown, NY 11756
PH: 516-368-9100 Fax: (516) 490-3303

Sparke Elementary School

100 Robin Place, Levittown, NY 11756
PH: (516) 490-3301 Fax: (516) 490-3303

School Hours

Syosset

Full-day Preschool Classes: 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Gallow

Childcare: 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM

Full-day Preschool Classes: 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Preschool SCIS Classes: 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

School-age Classes: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Off-Site Classes

Karopczyc UPK/SCIS: 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Sparke UPK: 8:15 AM to 2:15 PM & 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM
Based on classroom assignment.

Name Tags

Please place the enclosed nametag on the back of your child's shirt for the first few weeks of school to ensure your child's safety. Remember to fill in your child's name and teacher's name. The tag already includes VCLC's address and phone number.

| |
|--|
| VARIETY CHILD LEARNING CENTER 47 Humphrey Drive • Syosset, NY 11791 516-921-7171 |
| Child's Name: _____ |
| Teacher's Name: _____ |
| PLEASE ATTACH TO THE BACK OF YOUR CHILD'S SHIRT FOR THE FIRST FEW WEEKS OF SCHOOL |

Student Absences



VCLC policy requires that families call the attendance office (516-921-7171, press 3 and follow the prompts) whenever your child will be late or not attending school because of illness or any other reason. Please call by 7:00 AM for all classes. When leaving a message, please state your child's name, teacher's name, and the reason for the absence. Please see VCLC's Health Policy for details when a doctor's note is required for return to school.

If your child does not come to school and there is no message on the attendance line, the attendance office, nurse, or your social worker will call you to check on your child. Your child's safety is important, and we want to make sure that we account for each child enrolled at school.

Please note: Please review the school calendar when planning any vacation or extended family visits. If your child will not be in school for a planned occasion, please be sure to let your teacher know in advance so we can appropriately record the absence. If your child is absent for more than five consecutive days/sessions of school or related therapies, VCLC must notify your county and school district of your child's absence.

Alert Now System

Timely communication is a top priority at VCLC. We use the ALERTNOW Notification Service, which lets us send a telephone, email, or text message about emergency or important school information including weather-related closings, delayed openings, or early dismissals.

School Closures



School is in session according to the established calendar included in this handbook. Unpredictable and inclement weather can create many problems. Our primary concern is for the safety of the children, families, and staff in deciding when the school should be closed, remain open, delay opening or dismissed early. Road conditions may vary throughout the region. SED has given schools the option to declare a snow/weather emergency day as school

closed with no services or a remote learning day. Our Alert Now message will state what kind of day it will be.

Nassau and Suffolk Counties decide if there is transportation for preschool students. Swissport is the contracted preschool transportation provider for both Nassau and Suffolk Counties. They have presented the following guidelines for transportation in inclement weather:

- To ensure the safety of children receiving transportation services, ***transportation will not be provided under the following conditions:***
 - ***The school district (in which a child’s designated pick-up is located) is reported closed.***
 - ***The local school district in which a Provider site is located is reported closed.***

Even if VCLC is open, Swissport will not provide transportation in the above cases.

- Swissport will not provide transportation if VCLC has a delayed opening. ***Swissport “cannot provide transportation for a delayed opening schedule. If the provider school is open with no transportation and the parent/guardian transports their child to school on adverse weather days, the parent/guardian must also provide transportation for their child home. THERE WILL BE NO BUS SERVICE.”***

School districts decide if there is transportation for the school age children from their district. This is not a decision made by VCLC.

In severe weather, VCLC will use our ALERTNOW Notification System to notify you of the school’s open, closed\remote learning status. **You must be enrolled in the system to receive notification.** If you need an enrollment form, please contact the Education Department in the Syosset or Gallow building to request a form.

In addition, closings, delayed openings or early dismissals will also be on www.vclc.org, Optimum Channel 12 (news12.com), radio 94.3 The Shark, WALK 97.5 FM, KJOY 98.3, WBAB 102.3, 103.1 MAX FM, WBLI 106.1 and WHLI 1100 AM / 104.7 FM. VCLC has no control when the media posts the school’s status.

Clothing

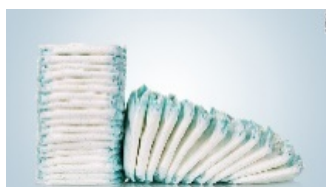


Children should be dressed comfortably with appropriate clothing and shoes for outdoor and indoor play. We strongly suggest that your child wear sneakers to school.

Please send in a complete change of clothing plus an extra set of underwear and socks. All clothing must be labelled with your child’s name. You should put your child’s clothing in a clear plastic closeable bin, or a large Ziploc plastic bag labelled with your child’s name.



Diapers



For children who wear diapers or pull-ups, please note that the family/caregiver is responsible for sending in a sufficient supply of diapers on an ongoing basis. These must be put in a separate large clear sealable Ziploc bag labelled with your child’s name. **VCLC does not have a supply of diapers.**

In addition, please send in an ongoing supply of baby wipes. If your child needs diaper ointment or cream, you must supply these items in the original container labelled with your child’s name.

Please make sure the expiration dates on the ointment or cream are current. Staff will apply the ointment or cream if you have completed and returned the consent form to apply diaper ointment. If you need another copy of this form, please contact your social worker or classroom teacher.

Food

Please send your child to school each day with a snack and lunch in a lunchbox labelled with his/her name. All full-day classes have two snacks and lunch each day. Your child's teacher will share the classroom schedule and how much food to send to school each day.



Snacks and lunches should be healthy, nutritious and include a drink. Please label all personal items sent to school including sippy cups, thermoses, lunch boxes and utensils with your child's first and last name.

Staff is aware that children have their favorite foods and sometimes they will only eat specific items. However, staff cannot prepare or heat any food. Cooking and preparation of your child's food must be done at home. Please pack foods that must be served warm in thermos containers to maintain the proper temperature.

PLEASE NOTE: VCLC makes all attempts to maintain a "nut or nut product free school." No peanut butter, peanut-based food, nuts of any kind or foods prepared on machinery that may process foods with nuts are permitted in the classroom or offices. Please check the packaging labels on all foods sent into school.

Please be aware that certain foods have the potential to be a choking hazard and are not allowed to be brought to school. These include, but are not limited to: raisins, seeds, carrot sticks, lollipops, hot dogs with the casing on, chunks of meat or cheese, sticky hard sucking candy, small pieces of candy, grapes, chocolate kisses, chewing gum, gummy bears, skittles, marshmallows, fruit gushers and mini fruit gels. The school nurse will send home a more comprehensive list. If you are unsure whether a food is a choking hazard, please contact the school nurse.

Sleeping/Naptime



Students in Preschool Special Education classes do not have a regularly scheduled naptime. The children's instructional day includes time for related therapies as per their IEPs. If a child falls asleep, a mat is made available. A child who usually does not fall asleep or whose parent(s) have not indicated that the child had difficulty sleeping the night before will be brought to the school nurse to rule out illness. Please refer to VCLC's Sleep Policy.

Classroom Supplies

Your child's teacher will send home a supply request monthly to include much needed supplies, such as paper plates, paper towels, napkins, tissues, etc. The needs of each class differ month to month. Thank you in advance for your contributions.

Photo Releases

Photographs (including videos) of children fill a variety of important needs. In the classroom, they support learning with opportunities to increase self-awareness and recognition of their peers and teachers. They are a curriculum aid in the classroom and therapy areas. Photos assist in the acquisition of social, cognitive and language skills.

The photos and videos of the children also help the agency. They tell stories about our children and the work we do to educate the community about the value of early identification, early intervention, special education, and the critical need to continue funding programs like VCLC.

Each family receives a photo release, which provides you with options to decide if your child can be photographed and how the photos are used. Consent is voluntary. If you choose not to sign the full release, please consider signing the limited release so that your child's photo can be used for classroom learning. If you need another copy of the photo release, please contact your social worker.

Photo Release Form

Please be advised that your child may be photographed or video taped at various school sponsored events. If you would like your child's photo to appear in our class website or newsletters, please sign and return this form.

Please sign and return this form.

Yes, I give permission for my child's photograph and/or video to be posted on our class website.

No, my child's photograph and/or video may not be posted on the website.

(Signature) (Date)

(Student's First and Last Name)

Holiday Celebrations



VCLC's goal is for the children to gain an understanding of the wide range of holidays observed by various cultures and to become aware of the customs and symbols associated with different holidays and cultural celebrations. In school, the teachers create an environment where children can begin to expand their understanding of these special days. By acknowledging some of these holidays and traditions at school, the children can learn about traditions, diversity, and commonality. Holidays are discussed in the context of seasonal changes, integrating holiday activities, keeping them relevant and meaningful to the children's age and developmental levels. Religion does not play a role.

Each teacher will send home a form at the beginning of the school year regarding holidays and cultural celebrations and activities. If you would like to share your celebrations or if you are concerned about these celebrations, please contact your social worker or your child's teacher to discuss this.

Medicaid in Education

VCLC's contracts with Nassau and Suffolk Counties, school districts and New York City require us to collect Medicaid information about each child at the beginning of the school year and each time there is a change in your child's IEP. **Families must complete the Medicaid Consent for Release of Information form whether or not your child is Medicaid eligible.** It is essential that you complete this form each time it is sent home. Your social worker will contact you if the form is not received.

SCHOOL SECURITY



VCLC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all children in accordance with regulations provided by the New York State Office of Children and Families, Education Department and Department of Health, Bureau of Early Intervention. Today, the world around us can be chaotic and frightening. VCLC views building security and the safety of the children, staff, and families very seriously.

In accordance with SED's guidelines, VCLC established policies and procedures to ensure the safety of all. We ask for your cooperation in following these policies and procedures as outlined below. **VCLC limits**

building access to staff and essential visitors.

Entering and Exiting the Building

Entrance and exit from the building are through the front main door. All outside doors that lead into the building are locked and alarmed. Children who ride the bus to and from school will enter the school through the bus doors, which are locked and alarmed before and after busing. When children are coming into the building, a staff member monitors the door. Only the staff involved in busing, and the children can use the door. The door is locked immediately after busing is complete. **Please do not try to come into the building during this time through the busing door. Staff will stop you and redirect you to the main front entrance. Please do not ask staff to open a locked door for you.**

Building Visitors

VCLC's concern about the safety of all supports OCFS regulations that all visitors, including family members, be buzzed into the building and sign the visitor log. The receptionist will ask the visitor the purpose of the visit and the person they want to see. He/she/they will also ask to see an official photo ID, such as a driver's license, to verify identity. The visitor will be buzzed into the lobby as soon as this information is verified. No one will be allowed to enter the building without proper identification. All visitors must sign in and be buzzed into the lobby area.

Emergency Drills

SED and OCFS regulations require schools to have emergency drills throughout the school year. There are three types of drills:

- Evacuation drills
- Lockdown Drills
- Lockout Drills

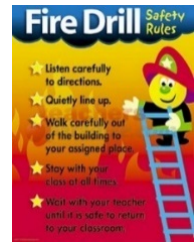
VCLC has a fire alarm system that is linked to the fire department. VCLC notifies the fire department when a drill is scheduled. Throughout the year, teachers spend time discussing all emergency drills with the children so they can be prepared and feel safe.

It is essential that all staff and visitors to the building follow procedures and directions from emergency personnel and administrators.

All drills are recorded and reviewed by SED and OCFS.

Evacuation drills

During an evacuation drill, everyone in the building must evacuate through the nearest exit and move away from the building. SED requires eight evacuation drills between September 1st and December 31st and at least four (4) more during the rest of the school year. Two additional drills are required if the school is in session in the summer. OCFS requires one evacuation drill per month.



Each classroom has an evacuation map showing the location of the room and two routes to exit the building. Drills take place throughout the year so that the children and the staff practice exiting the building through different routes as well as at various times of the day.



LOCKDOWN

Lockdown Drills

A **Lockdown** occurs when there is an imminent threat within the building. This means that there is no movement within the building. Everyone stays and remains where they are currently located. SED requires that there be four (4) lockdown/lockout drills during the school year. OCFS requires two (2) "shelter-in-place" (lockdown/lockout) drills annually.

The following procedures must be followed by everyone in the building:

- Lockdown will be announced by intercom, public address system or other approved communication system.
- 911 will immediately be notified to report the situation.
- Staff will immediately gather students and visitors from hallways and other areas near their room, classroom or office and bring them inside. This includes all common areas and restrooms immediately adjacent to your location.
- LOCKDOWN WILL END ONLY WHEN EMERGENCY RESPONDERS OR OTHER AUTHORITIES UNLOCK YOUR ROOM AND YOU ARE PHYSICALLY RELEASED TO MOVE ON.



LOCKOUT

Lockout Drills

A **Lockout** occurs when there is a threat outside of the building. This means that all exterior doors are locked, with limited entry and exit from the building. Administration will let staff know if normal activity can be continued. No one will be allowed on the playground.

The following procedures must be followed by everyone in the building:

- Lockout will be announced by intercom, public address system or other approved communication system.
- Designated staff will call 911 and report the situation.
- If the school is in lockout because of notification by the police or other emergency personnel, 911 does not have to be called.
- All exterior doors and windows will be locked.
- All outside activities are terminated immediately. Children will be brought back into the building through the nearest door.
- The lockout is lifted when the external threat is resolved. Notification of the end of the lockout will be made by administration and/or emergency personnel through the intercom or public address system or by other approved communication systems.



SHELTER

Off-Site Evacuation

There may be situations where it might be unsafe for anyone to be in the building. If this occurs, children, staff and any visitors in the building will be immediately evacuated to an off-site location. Families will be informed of the evacuation through VCLC's Alert Now System and will be told the location of the reunification site.

SCHOOL VISITS



Home/school collaboration is an important cornerstone of VCLC's programs. Parental involvement in your child's education is a key component of our program. You can be involved by participating in parent-teacher conferences and parent education groups, meeting with your social worker and joining the Family Association. You and your social worker can discuss and plan your involvement in a way that supports you, your child and your family.

VCLC is aware that you may have outside teachers, therapists and consultants working with your child. If you would like VCLC staff to talk with non-VCLC staff, please sign a consent form that gives VCLC staff permission to share and discuss your child's learning strengths and needs, interventions and goals.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents can choose whether their child takes a bus to school, or they drive their child. Either way, arrival and dismissal times can be hectic as all buses and cars get to school within a brief time period. Egress in and out of the building can be congested. During arrival and dismissal time, VCLC asks parents and staff to be aware of what is going on around them. Hold children's hands in the parking lot and be aware of moving buses and cars.

Your school district will discuss transportation with you at your child's initial and/or annual review meeting with your school district. **The district is responsible for informing you about your transportation options, completing the paperwork and indicating the mode of transportation on your child's IEP.** They are also responsible for forwarding bus transportation paperwork to the county and/or **Swissport. Swissport makes the bus routes, not VCLC.** If there is a question /concern about your child's route, please contact Swissport.

If someone else will be getting your child off the bus other than the designated person on your bus form, you must let your child's teacher and the transportation office know in writing (email or note is fine.) The matron on the bus will ask for ID. **The ID and name you gave in writing must match exactly (no nicknames), otherwise your child will not be released.**

Parents Who Drive Their Child to School

Many parents drive their children round trip or one-way to or from school. If you drive your child to school, you may be eligible for reimbursement from your county of residence. Please contact your district's CPSE chairperson to enroll in the reimbursement program. **VCLC does not control this reimbursement.** Our only role is to verify your child's attendance for the county. If you have any questions about your reimbursement, please contact your school district or county's Department of Health, Office of Children with Special Needs.



Syosset:

Families that drive their children to/from school will park in an available parking spot and walk their child to the lobby area. The receptionist will call your child's teacher and a staff member from the class will come to meet your child in the lobby and walk them to the classroom. At dismissal, please check in with the receptionist and wait for classroom staff to bring your child to the lobby.

Gallow and Karopczyc Schools

Prior to the first day of school, you will receive information about drop-off and pick-up procedures. This will be included in the packet mailed to you the week before school begins. You will also receive a name card to put in the front window of your car. Parents should follow the designated route. Staff will come to your car and ask you to take your child out of his/her/their car seat. Make sure that you say good-bye to your child before the staff escorts him/her/them into the building.

| |
|--|
|  <small>PLEASE STAPLE TO THE BACK OF THE CARD & PUT IN YOUR WINDOW PROMPTLY BEFORE THE BUS ARRIVES TO YOUR HOME.</small> |
| CHILD'S NAME: _____ |
| TEACHER'S NAME: _____ |

Parents will follow the designated route and wait in line at dismissal time. A staff member will check you in and call the classroom to bring your child to your car. It is your responsibility to buckle your child into his/her/their car seat. Please stay in line until staff direct you to move.

There may be times when someone other than the parent will be picking up your child from school. To maintain a safe environment, **you must inform VCLC in writing that someone other than you will be picking up your child from school.** The note should be sent to the teacher indicating when your child will be picked up and the name of the person who will pick up your child. This person will have to show a valid picture ID before the child is released. **The name you give for pick up must match exactly with the person's ID.**

Parents Who Use Bus Transportation

VCLC does not operate or control bus transportation. Bus transportation is provided by your county of residence. The counties have contracts with Swissport who establish routes and assign the drivers and driver assistants to the buses. The bus company will notify you of your child's bus route and approximate pick-up time and drop-off time. If you have not heard from the bus company five days prior to the start of school in September or July, please contact:



Nassau County Preschool Children

Bus Company: We (Towne) Transport, Inc.
Contact Swissport – Nassau County
(516) 433-4500

Suffolk County Preschool Children

Bus Company: We (Towne) Transport, Inc.
Contact Swissport, LLC – Suffolk County
(631) 737-0600

School Age Children

Bus Company: Assigned by individual school district
Contact: Transportation department at your home school district

VCLC's Transportation Policy

VCLC has no responsibility for oversight and assignment of bus transportation. The municipalities and school districts arrange for and administer transportation for each child when transportation is authorized on the IEP. Once the child is on the bus, transportation companies, the municipalities and/or the school districts are responsible for the child.

VCLC is informed if there is a transportation issue or an accident.

If the bus arrives at a child's home at drop-off time and either no one or an unauthorized individual meets the bus, the bus driver or company will contact VCLC:

- To call the parent
- Or check to see if the individual is on the authorized list

VCLC must receive a written authorization through fax, email, or a note ahead of time that states a person other than those on the list can take the child off the bus. VCLC will not accept verbal authorizations from a parent. The alternative person must show an ID that matches exactly the name you gave us in writing. The bus driver will not release a child to someone without authorization to accept the child and will follow company or district protocol that may include involving the police.

Most often, the bus driver will continue the route and come back to the child's home after the last drop-off to see if a parent or authorized person is there to get the child off the bus. If the situation has not changed, they will follow their protocol as described above.

Bus Changes Requested by Parent

Parents may need to make changes to pick-up and drop-off locations or to add or delete the names of people who are authorized to take their child off the bus. Prior to making any of these changes, contact:

Preschool Children at Syosset and Karopczyc:

Contact Amanda Schnorr, VCLC Transportation Coordinator, 516-921-7171, Ext. 2189 or email transportation@vclc.org.

Preschool Children at Levittown:

Contact Marlita Craven at 516-490-3301, Ext. 3155 or email transportation@vclc.org.

School Age Children: Contact your school district transportation office **and** Marlita Craven.

Please be aware that it may take up to two weeks for these changes to take effect. All changes must be in writing.

Route Changes Made by the Bus Company

Children from all areas of Nassau and Suffolk Counties may enroll in VCLC classes throughout the school year. This may change your child's bus route as Swissport adjusts to accommodate all students. Staff understand that this may cause some stress for your child and you. VCLC does not assign the routes. The bus company is responsible for routing. However, your child's teacher and social worker can help prepare your child for the change. If you have any questions about the changes, please contact the bus company.

Picking Up Your Child from School

Sometimes, parents of children taking the bus may want to pick up their child from school. To maintain a safe environment, **you must inform VCLC in writing that your child will not take the bus home and if someone other than a parent will be taking your child home. Without written notification, VCLC will not release your child. Verbal consent will not be accepted.**

- The note should be sent to the teacher indicating when your child will be picked up and the name of the person who will pick up your child.
- This person will have to follow the arrival/dismissal procedures and **show a valid picture ID before the child is released.**

Bus Safety Regulations for All Children

VCLC works closely with the bus companies, drivers, and driver assistants to ensure your child's safety.

- A "bus" tag will be attached to your child's backpack indicating his/her classroom. This helps us identify where your child will be taken when getting off the bus. PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE this tag.
- Nassau County Preschool Special Education Bus Guidelines state that the bus is not to wait longer than three to five minutes for a child to board.
- All children must be accompanied to and from the bus by an adult.
- Children are not permitted to drink or eat any food or candy on the bus.
- If a child must bring a small toy to school, please be sure it fits into the child's lunch box or backpack. Loose toys or toys that are too small (choking hazard) can be dangerous. However, some children have the need to carry or hold something during the bus ride. If the item is **soft**, for example a blanket, stuffed



animal or other items of that nature, your child can hold it during the ride to and from school. Be sure to label the item with your child's name.

- Children must remain seated and strapped into their car seat or the bus's safety belt during the bus ride.

PRESCHOOL CHILDREN ONLY

Emergency Drop-Off Procedures for Suffolk County Preschool Children

Parents must complete an emergency drop-off information sheet and submit it to the school district before transportation services start. These designations should be within the same school district and close to the child's regular drop-off location. Information should be updated regularly. This information will not be used for routine changes but will only be used when an emergency prevents the parent from meeting the bus. The designation of an emergency site within the same school district as your child's regular drop-off is important. In this way, your child will not have to spend an excessive amount of time on the bus should a situation occur which requires that the child be taken to the emergency drop-off location. It should be noted that if all else fails and no one is available to meet your child, your child may have to be taken to a local emergency services location.

Swissport - *Suffolk County*

Please Note the Following Regulations for Nassau County Preschool Children

If a parent, guardian or other authorized person is not available to receive a child at the scheduled drop-off time:

- A) The child has to remain on the bus while it drops off the remainder of the children, and then it returns to the original drop off location, or
- B) The child has to be taken to the Emergency Drop-Off location without prior notification to Swissport and school, or
- C) The child has to be returned to the school. *Please Note: VCLC will advise the bus company that children cannot come back to the school after the child's school day has ended.*

The first time that this occurs, VCLC will issue a warning to the parent. Should there be any re-occurrence within the same school year, transportation will be suspended according to the following Nassau County Preschool Transportation Rules:

- 2nd Incident - Transportation suspended for two days
- 3rd Incident - Transportation suspended for three days
- 4th Incident - Transportation suspended for the remainder of the school year. (The school year, for this Nassau County regulation, shall be either September through June, or July through August.)

Emergency drop-off procedure for Nassau County Preschool Children

An emergency drop-off is an address, other than the home address, where a child may be dropped off because of an emergency. The parent must call the school as soon as the emergency occurs. If the emergency drop-off is listed on the child's transportation form, the school will call Swissport, to arrange for the temporary change. If the drop-off is not listed, the school must change the transportation form and fax the information to Swissport. If the emergency drop-off does not fit into the scheduled route, the child will be dropped off last.

NO EMERGENCY PICK-UPS WILL BE MADE.

Swissport – *Nassau County*

HEALTH & MEDICAL INFORMATION FROM THE SCHOOL NURSE



VCLC's nursing staff prides itself on the safe, competent, and compassionate care of all children and staff. To ensure these goals and comply with VCLC medical and health policies and those of our regulatory agencies (SED, OCFS, and DOH), please review and adhere to the following:

Medical Exams

Students must have a yearly medical exam documented on VCLC's medical form. Documentation must include the results of the exam and a list of current immunizations. **If immunizations are delayed for medical reasons, the doctor must submit documentation on letterhead stating the medical reasons for the delay. The letter must be signed by the doctor and include his/her license, Medicaid and NPI numbers. There are no longer any religious exemptions as per New York State law (June 2019).** All exemptions must be approved by VCLC's Administrative Team.

The school nurse will notify you in writing two months before your child needs a new medical exam. Please submit an updated medical no later than one month after the current one expires.

A newly enrolled child cannot come to school until his/her medical has been received. It must be at school prior to the child's first day.

Emergency Contact List

There must be an Emergency Contact List on file for your child. OCFS regulations require that these lists be updated three times per year, September, January, and June, or sooner if the information changes. **You must provide at least three valid telephone numbers where you or a designated emergency contact person available to pick up your child can be reached.**



If your child becomes sick in school and a parent cannot be reached, the school nurse or designated school staff will use the emergency numbers to notify an authorized person. **When choosing emergency contacts, please select individuals who your child knows, are available to pick up your child, have transportation to get back and forth and live within a reasonable distance.** Your authorized person will be required to sign in and out at the front desk and show a valid picture ID.

Sick Children

VCLC is always concerned about the health and safety of children and staff

- **Children who are ill must not come to school.** If a child comes to school sick, the nurse will call you to pick up your child.
- **Please call the attendance line (516-921-7171, press 3 and follow prompts) to report your child's absence.**
- If your child becomes ill during the school day, the nurse will determine whether the child is too sick to benefit from school or is contagious to other children and staff. Based upon her assessment, the nurse may call you to pick up your child.
- **Children must be picked up in a timely way – within an hour of receiving a call.** If you are unable to do so, VCLC will call your emergency contacts. If no one is available to pick up your child, VCLC will call 911.
- If a parent cannot be reached, VCLC will call your emergency contact person(s) to pick up your child. **It is essential that there are three emergency contact people over the age of 18 who can drive on the emergency contact list.** This list is updated at least three times per year.
- **Under no circumstances will a child with a fever of over 100.4 degrees be transported on a school bus.**



Children Cannot Come to or Remain at School with the Following Illnesses

- A diagnosis of an infectious disease
- Fever
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea, as assessed by the school nurse: may return to school after 24 hours after last episode of vomiting or diarrhea
- Symptoms that prevent the child from fully participating in school activities include excessive tiredness or lack of appetite, productive coughing or sneezing, headache, body aches, earache, sore throat or eye infections.
- Specific Conditions Requiring Absence from School
 - Head Lice: may return to school after treatment with anti-lice shampoo and manual nit removal. A note from the parent is required stating the date the treatment was completed and that no new nits were found.
 - Pinworms: may return to school the day after Pyrantel, Mebendazole or Albendazole treatment. A doctor's note is required.
 - Ringworm: may return to school 24 hours after treatment has begun. A doctor's note indicating the diagnosis and recommendation is required.

If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, the school nurse will notify families of all children in the class and on the bus.

Children Can Return To School When

- **Fever free for 24 hours after an illness without the aid of fever reducing medications such as Tylenol or Motrin**
- For Bacterial infections
 - Impetigo: 24 hours after treatment begins
 - Conjunctivitis (not allergy related): no discharge from eyes and at least 24 hours after treatment begins
 - Strep Throat: after 24 hours on antibiotics and fever free as described above
- For Viral infections
 - Influenza (Flu): must stay home from school until child is symptom free. The flu is serious, and you should call your doctor at the first sign of symptoms which typically come on suddenly:
 - High fever
 - Chills
 - Headache, body aches, earaches
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Dry cough
 - COVID: Isolate at home for 5 days; symptoms must be improving; be fever-free for 24 hours without medication
 - Fifth Disease: fever free for 24 hours
 - Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease: fever free for 24 hours and no open sores
 - Diarrhea: no diarrhea for 24 hours if this is different from your child's typical bowel movement
 - Colds: must be kept at home if the child has a very runny nose or bad cough (not allergy related), especially if the child has been awake at night. Colds can be contagious for at least 48 hours (about 2 days). Returning to school too soon may slow the recovery process and expose others unnecessarily to illness.

Doctors' Notes are Required to Return to School When

- A child was diagnosed with a communicable disease.
- A child has undergone anesthesia or any surgical procedures.
- A child has stitches, a cast or any injury that might be made worse by normal school activities.
- A child was hospitalized.



The doctor's note must include a statement about clearance for all school activities. If your child receives OT or PT services, this note must state that they are clear to resume these services too. If this is not so, the note must clearly state the limitations of the child's activities, including gym, OT, PT, playground and going outside.

The school nurse must review the doctor's note before your child returns to school. Please email, fax or bring the note to school before your child comes back to school.

Children Who Are Ill Who Receive Home or Off-Site Services

A child cannot receive home services, SEIT or related services when he/she is ill. All the criteria listed in the beginning of this section pertain to children receiving home and off-site services. Please review the material.

If your child is ill, please notify the home care provider, SEIT teacher and/or therapist to cancel services. A child who is ill and cannot attend school cannot receive home or off-site services.

Medications in School

There are situations when children will need medications to be given at school. The school nurse is the only legally authorized person allowed to administer medications in school.



For medications to be dispensed at school, the following medication related forms must be kept on file and updated according to SED and OCFS regulations:

- Medication/Supplements: This form asks parents to list any medications their child takes. If your child takes no medication, please check the box that says, "My child is on no medications/supplements." This form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian and dated. You will be asked to complete this form yearly or if there is any change to the medications/supplements your child takes.
- Parent and Healthcare Provider's Authorization for Administration of Medication in School and School Activities: This form must be completed even if your child will not receive medication at school. Please check the box that states, "My child will not receive medication in school." If your child is going to get medication at school, please complete Section A and have your child's doctor complete Section B. **This form must be updated every six months or when there is a change in medication.**
 - The form must be signed by both the parent and the child's physician.
 - The physician must complete Section B listing the medication, dosage, frequency/time to be taken and route of administration.
 - The physician must list possible side effects and adverse reactions.
 - The physician must sign the form, provide his/her license number, and stamp the form.

All medications (including over the counter medications such as Tylenol, creams, etc.) to be given at school MUST have a doctor's order which must include the child's name, the medication to be given, the amount of medication to be given and the time the medication is to be given. Please check all expiration dates before sending any medication to school.

Medication consent must be updated every 6 months. Without an updated consent, the nurse will not be able to administer the medication. Families will receive a reminder that new consents are needed. If the medication authorization expires and VCLC has not received either a new authorization or written notice that

the medication has been discontinued, the child will not be able to attend school. When documentation is received, the child will be able to return to school.

If the child's medication is discontinued, a note from the parent and/or doctor is required.

Handling Medications

Parents must bring all medications, including EPI Pens, directly to the nurse's office. Children cannot bring medications in their backpacks. All medications must be in the original pharmacy container, with the original pharmacy label in place.

The nurse will not accept medication that does not meet the above criteria. No verbal instructions for medication administration will be accepted.

Upon receipt of any controlled medication, the nurse will count the number of pills. The nurse does a daily count of the medication before administering a dose. When these medications are returned to the family, the pills will be counted as well.

All medication is logged in to the medication log and must be labelled with the child's name. Medications are kept in a locked cabinet in the nurse's office. If medications require refrigeration, they are locked in a medication only refrigerator in the nurse's office. Access to the locked medications is limited to the nurse and the substitute nurse.

When medications are administered, the nurse logs the information including the time administered onto the medication log. If any reactions to the medications are observed, they will be noted on the log and appropriate action including calling 911 will be taken.

Special Health Needs

The school nurse reviews each child's medical packet to determine if the child has any special health needs including allergies, seizures, diabetes and more. An individual health care plan will be developed in consultation with the parent and the child's doctor. Once this plan is developed, the school nurse will meet with the classroom team, therapists, and specialists to train them on the plan. All participants will sign off on the plan that they received training. If the child has an allergy to specific food items, a note will be posted outside the child's classroom.

Parents should contact the school nurse as soon as possible to discuss their child's special health needs.

Incident Reporting

VCLC will notify parents when there are accidents, serious incidents and injuries by phone and written communication. The nurse and/or designated staff (social worker, principal or teacher) will call parents immediately to let them know about the event. VCLC will notify emergency contacts if the parents cannot be reached and will call 911 if the situation warrants.

As per OCFS guidelines, the nurse will describe the injury and his/her/their perception of the child's pain to the family. He/she/they will ask the family their expected time of arrival at the school and if the family would prefer VCLC to call an ambulance. If so, the parent would then meet the child at the hospital.

Written documentation will be completed by the nurse and witnesses to the event. The Incident/Accident Form will be reviewed by the parent if the parent picks up the child or sent home to the family for signature. OCFS requires that the school nurse, witnesses, and the parent(s) sign off on the report. A copy of the completed report will be filed in the child's medical folder. A copy will be sent home to the parents and to OCFS.

MANDATED REPORTER POLICY



All VCLC employees are Mandated Reporters as per New York State regulations and are required by law to report any suspicions of child abuse or maltreatment. As per the current law, mandated reporters must make the required verbal reports directly, or with the support of a team member or administrator, to the **New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Hotline**.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

VCLC is dedicated to supporting our learners, families, and staff to create and sustain a school environment that is safe, positive, and consistent where all children and families are welcomed, respected, and supported. In 2017, VCLC adopted a positive behavior support system, the Pyramid Model. It is an evidence-based, multi-tiered systems approach for establishing the social culture and individual behavior supports needed for our children. VCLC staff are guided by the following ideas and principles:

- Create a therapeutic environment where all children are successful
- Promote the social/emotional development of all children
- Build positive, supportive relationships between staff and each child, children and children, staff and families, and families and children
- Promote family involvement in their child's education



Each classroom teacher begins by implementing a classroom wide management system to teach and reinforce classroom rules and expectations. The classroom team develops with the children simple, positively stated classroom rules that support our Pyramid Model Expectations:

- Be Safe
- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible

Classroom rules should always teach the child what to do, not what not to do. For example, to teach the children to Be Safe, a classroom rule might be "Use Walking Feet" instead of "No Running."



Staff are committed to utilizing the following positive behavior supports:

- Praise positive behavior: Use concrete phrases such as "Good job sharing your toys with your friends." Try not to use statements such as "Good boy." Praise should be meaningful and specific so that it reinforces the desirable behavior.
- Redirect the child: Give the child an alternate behavior, toy or activity when a conflict arises.
- Offer choices: Give the child two acceptable choices and respect the child's choice. For example, you can sit on the red square or the blue square.
- Praise the child for using his/her words to communicate: If a child is having difficulty using his/her words, the classroom staff can model appropriate words or help a child communicate using symbols.
- Dialogue with the other adults in the room: Staff talk to each other stating the expectation for the children. For example, "The class will go outside when all the children line up."

- Use “if, then” statements: “If Mary puts on her jacket, then she will go outside.”
- Listen to the child: Respect what the child is communicating and proactively respond to his/her needs. Additional behavior management practices may need to be put in place when a child’s behavior escalates, and the classroom wide strategies are no longer working. At this point, the classroom team will:
 - Define the behavior
 - Collect data including:
 - The frequency (how often the behavior is occurring)
 - What happens just before the behavior occurs
 - What happens right after the behavior occurs
 - When it occurs

The classroom staff will meet with their education coordinator and their interdisciplinary team to develop individual behavior management strategies and decide whether to contact your child’s school district to discuss the need to complete an FBA (Functional Behavior Assessment). If an FBA is done, the district’s CPSE or CSE will determine if VCLC should develop a BIP (Behavior Intervention Plan). Your social worker and/or your child’s teacher will keep you informed.

If a child’s behavior results in the child being a danger to himself/herself/themselves or others, staff will immediately intervene and call the NCI (Non-Violent Crisis Intervention)¹ Team to help deescalate the situation and keep the child, his/her/their classmates, and staff safe. If staff need to use disengagement techniques or safety interventions, you will be contacted. The school nurse always examines the child after such an event.

If you have any questions about VCLC’s Behavior Management Policy, please call your social worker or the principal.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS

Variety Child Learning Center (VCLC) is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for the students where they may receive quality educational services. Each classroom teacher sets up class rules and reviews them with the children. They are posted in the classroom or on the Smart Board in a manner that is compatible with the students’ current levels of functioning.

The curriculum includes activities that focus on respect, appropriate social interactions, and providing models for appropriate behavior and responsibility. Discipline is focused on corrective action teaching the students an appropriate behavior to substitute for maladaptive behavior.

Student Rights

All students have the right to attend school and the right to be treated fairly.

Essential Partners

All parents, guardians, teachers, therapists, school staff and administrators are responsible for following the Code of Conduct to help maintain a safe learning environment.

¹ NCI (Non-Violent Crisis Intervention) is a behavior intervention model that is compatible with the Pyramid Model. It is a proactive approach to behavior management that is designed to promote: Care, Welfare, Safety and Security for both the children and the staff. Staff are trained to be respectful, avoid crises, keep children safe and intervene early to prevent a behavior from escalating. All direct care staff are required to participate in the NCI training workshops yearly.

Student Behavior

Students are expected to act appropriately in the school setting and follow classroom rules. If a student engages in activities that are harmful to him/herself or others or school property, the classroom team will:

- Take action to ensure the safety of the child and/or other students and staff. See Discipline and Behavioral Intervention Policy.
- If the behavior becomes a pattern, the classroom team or school psychologist will take data about the antecedent and consequence of the behavior and the frequency. The data will be discussed, and an intervention plan will be developed.
- The classroom team may contact the family to see if the behavior(s) are occurring at home.
- The focus will be on teaching students socially appropriate behaviors and/or responses rather than on punishment.
- Emergency interventions using NCI techniques may be used if the behavior escalates and the student and/or others are at risk of being hurt or in danger.

Bullying

Bullying will not be tolerated. Staff have been trained in DASA (Dignity for All Students Act).

Disciplinary Actions and Procedures

VCLC staff will discuss students' behavioral issues with the child's family if the behavior becomes a pattern and affects the learning environment of the students. Any actions will be dealt with individually and appropriate to the child's level of functioning. The focus will be to teach socially acceptable behaviors to replace maladaptive behaviors.

HOME/SCHOOL COLLABORATION

VCLC was founded on the principles of early identification, early intervention and home/school partnerships and collaboration. The New York State Education Department designated VCLC's Home/School Collaborative Model (HSCM) a "Sharing Success Validated Model" worthy of replication and adaptation.

"If children are to succeed in school, home and school must work together..."



This model facilitates family involvement in a child's educational program from the initial contact with VCLC through transition to another school setting. The model is based on three constructs:

- Parental inclusion in screening, evaluation, assessment, goal setting and remediation
- Family support and parent education
- Family friendly school environment which promotes parental and family involvement

Upon entrance to our program, each family is assigned a social worker. Social workers are members of your child's team. All social workers have extensive knowledge in early childhood development and the impact of the child's special needs on the family system. Experience has taught us that when there is concern about one family member, it affects the entire family. Families will have regular communication with their child's teacher. Your social worker will serve as a liaison with the classroom team.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES



There are two scheduled parent/teacher conferences each year: Fall and Spring. At the Fall Conference, you will meet with your social worker and child's teacher. Each therapist will prepare a short write-up that may include goals being worked on and suggested activities that you can do with your child at home. Your teacher and social worker will review this information with you and give you the write-up(s) to take home. The conference is a half-hour long and will be via teleconference or Zoom.

The Spring Parent/Teacher Conference focuses on your child's current level of functioning and preparation for your child's annual review with your district. This meeting will be 45 minutes long and take place anywhere between January through April. You will meet with your child's teacher and your social worker. Related service therapists will be invited to join.

At this meeting, the teacher will review your child's progress toward acquisition of his/her IEP goals, discuss his/her strengths and needs and classroom strategies that have been successful. The teacher and/or social worker will present the therapists reports if they are not able to attend.

All decisions made about your child's future educational placement are the responsibility of your district's CPSE or CSE. Please do not ask VCLC staff to make any recommendations about future placements. This will be discussed at your child's CPSE or CSE meeting.

While there are only two scheduled conferences, you can contact your child's teacher or therapist(s) or your social worker throughout the school year to discuss any issues or concerns that you may have.

FAMILY SERVICE DEPARTMENT



Social workers will contact each family to gain information about your child in order to be able to offer programs and services that will benefit you and your family.

The Family Service Department has many options available for parents:

- **Parent education and training: Programs** are offered throughout the school year to educate parents in the skills and knowledge needed to raise a child with special needs. Topics will include behavior management strategies, sibling issues, transitioning from one system to the next (EI to CPSE and CPSE to CSE), routines such as bedtime and mealtime, toilet teaching and more. Social workers will meet with parents and/or caregivers to discuss how this information can be best utilized in their own family.
- **Parent support groups: Parents** meet with a social worker and other parents to share information and concerns pertaining to raising a child with special needs. Families will receive notices in your child's backpack about the day, time, and location of the group.
- **Counseling: Social** workers are available to meet with parents and other family members to discuss their child's overall functioning and develop skills and strategies to foster growth and support all areas of their child's development.

FAMILY ASSOCIATION

VCLC's Family Association is a group of parents/guardians and other family members who support the school through community building and fundraising.



The staff advisors will communicate regularly with respect to ongoing fundraising and events. Meetings are scheduled monthly. Families will receive notices in their child's backpack about the time and location of the meeting.

Watch your child's backpack for more details about the Family Association and the planned fundraisers.

THE CLASSROOM

Each teacher sets up his/her classroom to optimize the children's learning and engagement. A typical day in any of the classrooms includes structured play time, individual instructional time, small and large group lessons, circle time, snack and/or lunchtime, playground (weather permitting) or gym. Each week the children go to music therapy, art therapy, computers, physical education/gross motor activities or movement. Visuals including photos and icons are used throughout the day across settings to help children become familiar with routines, transitions, and behavioral expectations.



Curriculums are age appropriate and aligned with the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards. In preschool, there is a focus on building the early foundations of learning utilizing a variety of rich experiences where the children can learn in the context of play and interactions to address the development of communication, cognitive, social-emotional and motor skills. In the school-age program, materials prepare the children to learn specific reading, writing and math skills that will help them succeed as they move forward.

VCLC has adopted the Pyramid Model, an evidence-based model that focuses on supportive environments and relationships, social-emotional development, and a pro-active approach to behaviors. Your child's teacher will share more information with you about the Pyramid Model, classroom curriculum, schedules, and routines at Back-to-School Night.

RELATED THERAPIES

VCLC offers related therapies in accordance with the child's IEP that may include speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, child psychological counseling, psychological counseling, and parent training. Each therapist is an integral part of your child's team and is a resource to the teacher and team members. The therapists share with the team strategies they are using in therapy to promote generalization across all settings.



Parents will receive pictures of their therapists as well as their contact information. Communication between therapists and families is encouraged.



VCLC recognizes the importance of providing each student with the means of communicating with others. The speech pathologists have received training in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). AAC is a continuum of alternative methods and devices to help students have a voice so that he/she/they can communicate their wants and needs. There are a range of AAC methods and devices that may be appropriate for your child. Your speech pathologist and your social worker can answer your questions about AAC and whether it is appropriate for your child.

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) describes multiple ways to communicate that can supplement or compensate for the impairment and disability patterns of individuals with severe expressive communication disorders. AAC is **augmentative** when used to supplement existing speech, and **alternative** when used in place of speech that is absent or not functional. AAC devices may include PECS (Picture Exchange Communication Systems), iPad with specialized software or electronic devices.

Your student's speech pathologist and/or social worker will contact you if the time comes to consider AAC for your child.



FAMILY CENTER SUNDAY AND VACATION RESPITE PROGRAM

Sunday Respite Program

VCLC's Family Center Sunday Respite Program is funded by the New York State Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)² and Medicaid. Children able to attend the program meet OPWDD eligibility criteria. Under VCLC's policy, only children funded through Family Support Services or Medicaid HCSB Waiver services can enroll in the program. VCLC is not enrolling children who have Self-Direction.

² The New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) is an executive agency in the state of New York, whose mission is to provide services and conduct research for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. OPWDD offers individualized, person-center supports to children aged birth to 21 who are OPWDD eligible with a qualifying diagnosis. OPWDD services can be provided in addition to supports received through Early Intervention (EI), the education system, and the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), which are the primary systems serving children with disabilities in New York State. In addition, OPWDD offers services to family members to help them provide supports to their loved ones. For more information about OPWDD, please contact the Long Island DDRO at 631-416-3917 or visit the OPWDD website at www.opwdd.ny.gov.

The Sunday Respite Program is for children with disabilities three to eight years old and residents of Nassau or Suffolk Counties. It meets designated Sundays from September to June³. Families can bring their child with a disability and his/her siblings for a day of recreation and socialization. There are fees for the sibling group payable in advance in September and February.

For more information about the Respite Program, contact Rebecca Esquilin at 516-921-7171, Ext. 2104.

Vacation Respite Program

The Vacation Respite Program is funded by a grant from OPWDD's Family Support Services. This program meets five times during the calendar year for four-hour sessions during school holidays. Children who are OPWDD eligible and have behavior challenges may enroll. Children with Self Direction are not eligible to attend. Enrollment is limited to 30 children per session.

For more information about the Vacation Respite Program, contact Rebecca Esquilin at 516-921-7171, Ext. 2104.



FEE FOR SERVICE PROGRAMS

Childcare



VCLC operates an OCFS licensed childcare center at the Levittown site for young children 6 weeks to 5 years. Childcare is in session from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM. There is infant, toddler and preschool classes before and after care. Enrollment in the infant, toddler and preschool classes is for five days per week; no partial weeks are available. Childcare follows the childcare calendar that is different from VCLC's school calendar.

For information about childcare availability and rates, please contact our childcare director at 516-490-3301, Ext. 3149.

³ The 2023-2024 calendar will be sent to families upon enrollment in the program.



Families often encounter documentation about their children and/or information about special education that use acronyms. Here is a glossary that may help you navigate through reports, program descriptions and regulations.

Acronym Glossary

| | | | |
|-------|---|-------|--|
| AAC | Augmentative Alternative Communication | LEICC | Local Early Intervention Coordination Council |
| ADA | American with Disabilities Act | OCFS | Office of Children and Family Services |
| ADD | Attention Deficit Disorder | OPWDD | Office of People with Developmental Disabilities |
| ADHD | Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder | PLP | Present Level of Performance |
| ADL | Activities for Daily Living | PSD | Preschool Student with a Disability |
| AIS | Academic Intervention Services | PT | Physical Therapy |
| ASD | Autism Spectrum Disorder | PTA | Parent Teacher Association |
| AT | Assistive Technology | ROM | Range of Motion |
| BOCES | Board of Cooperative Educational Services | RS | Related Services |
| BIP | Behavioral Intervention Plan | SC | Service Coordinator |
| BOE | Board of Education | SED | State Education Department |
| CA | Chronological Age | SCIS | Special Class in an Integrated Setting |
| CCC | Child Care Council | SEIS | Special Education Itinerant Services |
| CLD | Culturally & Linguistically Divers | SI | Sensory Integration |
| CPSE | Committee on Preschool Special Education | SLP | Speech Language Pathologist |
| CSE | Committee on Special Education | SSA | Social Security Administration |
| DD | Developmentally Disabled | SSD | Social Security Disabilities |
| DOB | Date of Birth | SSI | Supplemental Security Income |
| DOH | Department of Health | TBI | Traumatic Brain Injury |
| DSS | Department of Social Services | TC | Total Communication |
| ED | Emotional Disturbance | VI | Visual Impairment |
| EI | Early Intervention | WNL | Within Normal Limits |
| EIO | Early Intervention Official | | |
| ELL | English Language Learners | | |
| ESL | English as a Second Language | | |
| FAPE | Free Appropriate Public Education | | |
| FBA | Functional Behavioral Assessment | | |
| HI | Hearing Impairment | | |
| IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Act | | |
| IEP | Individualized Education Program | | |
| IFSP | Individualized Family Service Plan | | |
| IQ | Intelligence Quotient | | |
| LD | Learning Disability | | |
| LEA | Local Education Agency (school district) | | |

HELPFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Syosset Campus

516-921-7171

Levittown Campus

516-490-3301

Extension

To report a child's absence

Attendance Office (516-921-7171, press 3, follow prompts)

| | | |
|---|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Janet Koch, CEO | | 2130 |
| Andrea Rieger, CFO | | 2131 |
| Principal, Syosset | Anna Cicciari | 2201 |
| Principal, Levittown | Corey Lein | (Levittown Campuses) 3121 |
| Director of Family Services | Maria Freeman | (Levittown Campuses) 3177 |
| Assistant Director of Family Services | Stacey Trotti | 2184 |
| Director of Evaluations, Placement and Services (Early Intervention, Related Services, SEIS) | Barbara Pirnat | 2105 |
| Compliance Director | Sonia Puertas-Galletta | TBD |
| Bilingual (Spanish) Coordinator | Maria Ariss | 2212 |
| Child Care Director | Samantha Arpino | (Levittown Campus) 3149 |
| Evaluation Department | Georgia Kaitery | 2113 |
| Family Center | Rebecca Esquilin | 2104 |
| Health Office / Nurse | Laurie Librizzi | 2110 |
| Health Office / Nurse | Tara Ahart | (Levittown Campuses) 3122 |
| Occupational & Physical Therapy Department | Lori Christianson | 2200 |
| Psychology Department | Virginia Blum | 2225 |
| Speech/Language Department | Jackie Nicollet | 2221 |
| Transportation Coordinator | Amanda Schnorr | 2189 |
| Transportation Office | Marlita Craven | (Levittown Campuses) 3155 |

Visit us at our website:

www.vclc.org

for information about children and families, calendar, events, school closings and more.

Join us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Variety-Child-Learning-Center>

<http://linkedin.com/company/vclc/>

<https://www.instagram.com/varietychildlearningcenter>