

**School Year**

**2022-2023**

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mackworth Island Preschool/MECDHH/GBSD



**Family  
Handbook**

MACKWORTH ISLAND PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

# **Family Handbook**

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Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/  
Governor Baxter School for the Deaf  
1 Mackworth Island  
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# Welcome!

*Welcome to the Mackworth Island Preschool Program at the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/ Governor Baxter School for the Deaf. We are thrilled you have chosen us to launch your child's learning adventures!*

Your child's teachers will work closely with you in helping your child grow in all developmental areas. As parents, you will be provided opportunities to support your child through classroom involvement and close communication with teachers and providers.

This Family Handbook has been written to inform families of Mackworth Island Preschool programs, policies, and procedures, and to answer questions that you may have. Please keep it for future reference throughout the year.

Please feel free to contact the Statewide Education and Family Services Administrative Assistant at [margaret.airey@mecdhh.org](mailto:margaret.airey@mecdhh.org).

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## **CAMPUS CONTACT INFORMATION**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

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## **OUR VISION**

### **Mission and Vision Statement**

To continue to build upon our evidence-based educational experience in order to empower families and provide all Deaf/HOH children with skills for lifelong learning and success.

We provide high quality, state of the art services to children and youth who are Deaf or hard of hearing, their families, and learning communities throughout the state of Maine.

## National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

The Mackworth Island Preschool has engaged in self-study and achieved NAEYC accreditation. Through the accreditation process, programs are discovered that create a stronger and more committed team of teachers, administrators, and families who work together to continually improve program quality. Teachers and administrators find their work more rewarding and families appreciate and seek out NAEYC accredited programs for their children. Since it's founding in 1926, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has been working to define quality in programs for young children.

**As a NAEYC accredited preschool**, we are committed to the following NAEYC core values:

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle.
  - Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn.
  - Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family.
  - Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community and society.
  - Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member and colleague).
  - Respect diversity in children, families and colleagues.
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect.

## Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

In addition to our NAEYC accreditation, our program is also licensed by State of Maine through the Department of Health and Human Services. The program's staff are all registered with **Maine Roads to Quality**, which is the state's quality rating system for childcare. Information on the MRTQ program can be found here: <https://mrtq.org/>

## Program Philosophy & Goals

### **PHILOSOPHY**

**O**ur preschool program is child-centered and family-oriented, striving to build a life-long love of learning. We promote the growth of children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development by utilizing evidence-based best practices in early childhood education. As a **result**, we focus on the whole child, understanding that learning must be integrated across the developmental domains and that it does not occur in isolation.

Our program fosters the growth and development of children with learning experiences that are meaningful and culturally relevant to their life. The preschool program encourages the joy, wonder and enthusiasm that children possess while supporting their communication and language needs in an enriching learning environment. In our classrooms, play allows young children to explore, experiment and manipulate his/her environment, while developing problem- solving skills. Young children construct knowledge based on their experiences with the world around them – they learn by doing. Children increase their knowledge of the world through interactions with adults, peers and materials. We have designed our programs to encourage the exploration and interaction of young children.

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**PROGRAM  
GOALS**

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- To engage the whole child in learning experiences that are meaningful and culturally relevant to their lives.
- To foster the growth and development of expressive and receptive language.
- To support the continuum of language and communication options.
- To encourage both independence and self-confidence while developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- To foster a sense of community within the classroom and beyond with respect for the similarities and differences amongst us.

## Getting Started in our Program

When families are interested in our preschool program the following steps occur:

- Contact by parents who express interest in the program; contact by Child Development Services Coordinator with a referral for services; or through the Individual Education Program (IEP) process with the child's Local Education Unit (LEA).
- A time is scheduled for parents/guardians to visit the program. The parents/guardians are guided and supported through the observation by the Preschool Coordinator or Director of Early Childhood Education & Family Services.
- Families will have the opportunity to review the program options, required paperwork, billing procedures (if applicable – for typically developing preschoolers), handbook and policies with the Coordinator before enrolling their child.
- If parents make the decision to enroll their child/children in the preschool, time can be scheduled for the child to visit the program for 1-2 hours. Parents should be encouraged to stay for part of the visit and then leave to observe how the child handles time away from primary caregiver.
- Hearing and Developmental/Language screening occurs for children whose families are seeking to enroll them as peer language models.
- All paperwork is reviewed and completed prior to the child's first day: All MECDHH forms can be found on our website at <https://www.mecdhh.org/children-3-21/student-packet-for-preschool-and-site-based-programs/>
  - Enrollment Form with Emergency Contact Information
  - Health Form
  - Release of Information
  - Copy of Immunization Records
  - Getting To Know Your Child Form
  - Tuition/Billing Procedures
  - Email Permission Form
  - Media Release Form
  - Authorized Child Pickup List Form
  - Authorization to Apply Sunscreen Form
  - Parent/Guardian Employment Information Form
  - Medication Form
  - Permission Slip for Field Trips

- The Family Handbook is given to parents, and parent's signature is obtained stating they have read and understand the contents.
- Start date is determined based on availability and the child's readiness to enter/transition into the Mackworth Island Preschool and the IEP process.



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**ANY  
PRESCHOOL  
AGE CHILD  
WITH ANY  
DEGREE OF  
HEARING  
LOSS**

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**PEER  
LANGUAGE  
MODELS**

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**TUITION**

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## Enrollment Criteria

Placement in Mackworth Island Preschool, accommodations and supports needed are documented through the IEP process with Child Development Services. The program is licensed for 49 children, but we average between 25-30 during the school year.

All children whose families are interested in having their child attend the preschool program as peer language models will have a hearing screening, a speech and language screening, and a developmental screening prior to enrolling in the program. The purpose of these screenings is to ensure that the peer language models enrolled in the program are typically developing and not demonstrating any areas of concern in their hearing and speech and language development. Once a family begins the enrollment process the screenings will occur on site at MECDHH/GBSD and will be administered by a teacher, an on-staff speech pathologist, and an on-staff audiologist, when a family begins the enrollment process.

Additionally, peer language models should not be receiving any services through CDS (physical, occupational, developmental, speech/language therapies). Priority is typically given to developing siblings of children in the program, children of staff members of MECDHH, and Children of Deaf Adults. Any child who does not meet screening criteria will be offered support in seeking further evaluation through CDS (Child Development Services).

## Tuition Policy

Tuition for children who are deaf or hard of hearing for the Preschool morning programming is funded through special education.

### Tuition for Hearing Peer Language Models

- \$150 flat-rate fee for 5 days enrollment (Monday-Friday, 8:30-3:00)

### Tuition for staff of MECDHH/GBSD

- \$100 flat-rate fee for enrollment (Monday – Friday, 8:30a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)

Tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance. To maintain a reserved space, tuition must be paid during the absence of a child due to illness, parent/guardian vacations, snow days and holidays. Parents do not need to pay during school vacation weeks.

Tuition is paid weekly. Weekly payments are due by Friday of every week and may be brought to or sent to the business office at MECDDH, 1 Mackworth Island, Falmouth, Maine 04105, or placed in the “tuition box” in the lobby. Payment two weeks overdue will result in your child being excluded from the program until payment is rendered.

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**L A T E  
P I C K U P**

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Please pick up your child at designated times. Our staff members have meetings and commitments at the end of their days. Children must be picked up and out of the building by 3:00. Our policy is to charge a \$25.00 late fee if a child is picked up late. If parents continue to arrive late, we reserve the right to terminate participation in the program.

## Preschool Program Information

The Mackworth Island Preschool Program at MECDDH/GBSD offers language-rich early childhood education for Deaf, hard of hearing and typically hearing children ages 3 to 5. Early learning is fostered through a play-based emergent curriculum. Children with a range of language and communication styles are guided to play, interact and explore their environment to cultivate social-emotional growth, cognitive development, motor skill development, pre-literacy skill development, communication proficiency and creativity. Each child’s natural curiosity and individual pace steers their learning process in each area of development. The island and classrooms serve as a palette for children’s learning, directed by the child and nurtured by staff to ensure growth in all areas indicated in state and national education guidelines.

For preschoolers, play is at the center of these learning endeavors. Through play, children are developing their sense of self, trying out different roles and making meaning of the world around them. Children in preschool benefit from clear, consistent structure and expectations. When children have a clear understanding of the organization of the day, they are able to focus their energy and enthusiasm on the business of discovery and play.

Mackworth Island Preschool is a bilingual/bimodal setting offering children open exploration, access and experience in American Sign Language (ASL) and spoken English. There are two classroom environments. In one room, spoken English is used as the language of instruction and communication. In the second room, American Sign Language is the primary language of instruction and communication. Children will have many opportunities to interact in both of the classrooms throughout their day. Children are encouraged to explore all learning

*Through play, children are developing their sense of self, trying out different roles and making meaning of the world around them.*

centers in the ASL and spoken language classrooms to aid in development of auditory/listening skills, spoken language, and both receptive and expressive ASL skills. The staff in the Preschool Program is versatile and adept at meeting the various communication goals of individual children. The teachers, assistants and speech therapists facilitate opportunities for children to effectively and independently express themselves. Throughout the preschool day children have whole and small group learning experiences that foster their individual language goals.

When the need arises, a special education preschool room is offered for those children who require a smaller, more specialized group setting. In this environment both ASL and spoken language are used at separate times. Precursors to language and communication development as well as early auditory skill development are supported throughout the day.

All classroom environments have been acoustically modified to minimize background noise and reverberation. Hearing assistance technology compatible with individual children's personal hearing aids and cochlear implants are used throughout the school day.

## Preschool Curriculum

The Mackworth Island Preschool is utilizing the OWL "Opening the World of Learning" curriculum that is aligned with the Maine Early Learning and Development Standards for children 3-5 years old. We believe that the children learn best when the curriculum is fully integrated into all of the content and developmental domains.

The OWL curriculum is comprehensive and covers all domains of early learning. The content of each unit is built around a carefully crafted daily routine within an activity-center day. Themes, skills and concepts are developed through quality children's fiction and non-fiction books.

The curriculum is based on six thematically organized units, each continuing for four weeks:

- Family
- Friends
- Wind and Water
- The World of Color
- Shadows and Reflections
- Things that Grow
- Transportation

Teachers and staff supplement additional units throughout the year to fill in the time gaps between the above-mentioned units, continuing with the O.W.L. system

*Children's natural curiosity and interest is considered during the planning process of the teachers.*

of planning. These units will vary depending upon child interest as well as time of year.

Children's natural curiosity and interest is considered during the planning process of the teachers. Young children learn by doing; as a result, both children and teachers are actively engaged in the discovery of new information.

**We value the wonder that children show** in newly discovered information. In the early childhood classrooms, teachers "set the stage" for new discoveries and information, while always remaining flexible to the directions that children may go as they embark on the adventure of learning. The theme is reflected in all areas of the learning environment allowing children to engage in the content using multiple learning styles (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.).

The program has classroom space large enough to accommodate three separate rooms. As a result, the space is organized so that children have daily opportunities to engage in Block Building, Dramatic Play, Art, Writing, Book Exploration, Sensory Experiences and Small Manipulatives while in a visually and language rich environment.

**Parent communication is an important aspect** of our curriculum. Parents are kept informed of information related to each unit and given activities to expand on their child's learning at home through daily communication logs, face to face communication, email and by phone. If difficulties arise in interactions between families and program staff, the case manager for the child will call the family, or the family may contact the case manager. If difficulties continue, the preschool to grade 5 Coordinator may be included in the conversation. If difficulties still continue, the Director may be contacted.

## **Mackworth Island Preschool Program Staff**

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### **STAFF INCLUDES:**

- Director of Early Childhood Education and Family Services
- Preschool Coordinator
- Early Childhood Educators/ Special Educators
- Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Speech Language Pathologists
- Educational Audiologist
- Classroom Assistants (Ed Tech III)
- Occupational Therapist
- ASL Specialist

We believe that a caring, competent and qualified teacher for every child is the most important ingredient in a child's educational experience, and we want to assure you that we consider all our teachers to be fully qualified for their positions. We are extremely proud of our teaching staff. We work hard to ensure that every

class has a teacher with the appropriate background, experience, and credentials for his or her current teaching assignment.

All of our teachers are currently entitled to teach under Maine's strict certification requirements and have college degrees. Most teachers and therapy staff have advanced degrees. In addition, each staff member continues his or her own learning through professional development activities and our teachers are evaluated each year to make sure that their teaching skills remain at the highest possible level. Staff are supervised and observed by the Preschool Coordinator and Director of Early Childhood Education and Family Services.

## Preschool Schedule

**The Preschool program runs Monday-Friday from 8:30-3:00.** A typical day in the Preschool Program is as follows:

8:30-9:00	Arrival, Listening/Gear Check, Sensory/Gross Motor Play
9:00-9:45	Bathroom and Snack
9:45-10:00	Morning Meeting/Story Time/Movement Activity
10:00-10:15	Whole Group Activity and Closed Door Center Time
10:15-11:00	Open Door Center Time
11-11:15	Large Group Bi-lingual/Bi-modal Story
11:15-12:00	Bathroom and Lunch
12:00-12:30	Sensory/Gross Motor Play, Dismissal

In the Preschool Program children are expected to arrive at 8:45 am at the latest, so that they are able to transition into the classroom at their own pace and fully participate in the program. If your child utilizes a transportation service, please make sure to inform them of the program hours, as before school care is not available.

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## **AFTERNOON SCHEDULE**

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### **Afternooncare Program Schedule**

#### Mackworth Island Tentative Afternoon Daily Schedule

12:30 - 1:30	Rest Time, Quiet Activities
1:30 – 2:30	Play Based Learning
2:30 – 2:45	Snack
2:45 – 3:00	Sensory/Gross Motor Play, Dismissal

The Preschool program is licensed by State of Maine Childcare Licensing Board. Per licensing regulations, any violations will be communicated to families. Please send a blanket and a cherished “lovey” that might help the child to relax during rest time. Blankets should be sent home on Fridays for washing, and returned the following Monday. Families are asked to provide an afternoon snack for their child, clearly labeled as “Afternoon snack”. If a child comes without a snack, please provide a snack from the cupboard and send a reminder note home in the communication log to send a snack.

### **Mackworth Island Preschool Policies**

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## **SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN**

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**S**taff ensures children are adequately supervised at all times. Teachers will regularly count children to confirm safe whereabouts of every child at all times. Counts will be done before the group leaves an area and when the group enters a new area.

- Teachers must be aware of where children are at all times. Preschoolers (ages 3-5) may be momentarily out of sight and sound (e.g., if a child leaves the classroom alone to get something in their cubby) as long as the child can be seen and heard within one minute. Supervision by sound alone should be for no more than a few (one to three) minutes before teachers directly observe, as well as hear, the child. An example of this is when the child is in the bathroom.
- Supervision of children in areas of high-risk: teaching staff is assigned to specific areas for close supervision of children engaged in potentially harmful activities on the playground.
- Children are closely supervised when using indoor gross motor equipment such as the tumbling mat, mini trampoline, etc.
- Parents are asked to make contact with at least one of their child’s teachers or ed techs at drop off and pick up times.
- Office personnel notify teachers of any information pertaining to a child’s absence. Office personnel, as well as teaching staff, keep accurate daily attendance records.

The child's file will contain written permission by the child's parent or legal guardian of the names of the individuals authorized to pick up their child from preschool.

The teacher-to-child ratio in all classrooms is 1:4 in our morning program and 1:6 in our Afternoon program. There are primary staff assigned to each classroom. However, staff may move around as children spend time in other classrooms to satisfy the language plan goals established by their families and educational team. Outdoor learning environments, such as the playground, maintain indoor classroom teacher-to-child ratios.

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## TOILET TRAINING & DIAPERING

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We accept children into our programs at any level of toilet training. We feel that children will begin to use the toilet according to their own schedule. We will work cooperatively with families during this important stage of development.

It is the parents' responsibility to bring the appropriate diapers, wipes and changes of clothes that may be needed for their child. We follow the Universal Precautions, as noted below, for the health and safety of all. For children who are toilet-trained or are in the process of being trained, toileting needs will be supported by staff. Families should inform staff if the child is beginning the toilet training process and let us know how to best help your child be successful in this area.

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## NUT FREE ENVIRONMENT

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### Nut Free Environment

The Mackworth Island Preschool adheres to a Tree Nut Free policy throughout

the Preschool Environment when necessary. If notified to do so, parents and children need to be mindful of any products containing nuts when preparing lunches or snacks. Parents of children who, historically, have suffered any anaphylactic reaction to any foods or insect bites, will be asked to provide the school with an up-to-date medical action plan, signed by their treating doctor.

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## OUT DOOR PLAY

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Our programs are located on beautiful Mackworth Island. Children are able to actively observe and interact with the environment in this setting. We are fortunate to have both ocean and forest habitats in walking distance of the classrooms. As a result, Mackworth Island fosters a love and curiosity of the outdoors.

*Mackworth  
Island fosters  
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curiosity of  
the outdoors.*

**We play outside every day**, weather and air quality permitting. We alternate our outside time between the playground, the quad area, and the walking paths around the island. Please send your child to school with appropriate clothing for outdoor play. Children need sturdy shoes for running, jumping, climbing and exploring the natural environment and playground. If you would like us to apply sunscreen or bug spray during sunny months, please sign our sunscreen and bug spray waiver

and include these items in your child's backpack. During the winter we will play outside as long as the temperature is above 20 degrees (including the wind chill). In the winter, please send your child to school with hats, mittens, snow pants and boots for outside play. When conditions do not allow for play outside, we will utilize the indoor gymnasium on site.

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### TOYS FROM HOME

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**W**e ask that you do not let your child come to school with toys from home, as this can lead to feelings of competition and items may become lost or broken. If a child does come to school with an item from home, please label it. Throughout the year we will have opportunities for children to share a special item from home during whole group times.

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### CHANGE OF CLOTHING

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**T**he learning endeavors of young children are often messy! **We ask that you leave two extra sets of clothes** (including socks and underwear) in your child's cubby and label them. Soiled clothing will be sent home in plastic bags.

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### MORNING SNACK AND LUNCH

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**W**e ask that you send your child to school with a brown bag type of lunch. Please only send items that do not need to be refrigerated or warmed-up. Also send a snack for the morning, labeled as 'Morning Snack'.

Young children are busy learning and growing and need well-balanced meals each day. Mealtime is a great opportunity for children to be independent and practice making choices about what to eat and what order they will eat their food in. Please keep this in mind when deciding what foods to send for your child's lunch.

**Please remember the following:**

- Children are encouraged to try all of the food that they bring for lunch each day.
- All food from home needs to be labeled with the child's name and date on the containers.
- Food that has not been eaten or is unfinished will be sent home.
- Please **do not send popcorn, candy, or soda.**
- If lunch items need to be kept cold, please include an ice-pack in your child's lunchbox.
- If your child has particular dietary needs/concerns (i.e. food allergies, lactose intolerance, etc.) please inform your child's teacher and the school nurse.
- If you need assistance with providing lunch for your child each day, please discuss this with your child's teacher or the Preschool Coordinator.



- If children forget their lunch, they will be provided with a nutritious meal that day.

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## **BIRTHDAYS**

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We enjoy honoring children's birthdays at school. We welcome a special birthday snack although this is optional. We prefer non-sweet snacks, but we do make exceptions on birthdays. Please check with your child's teacher regarding any food allergies in the classroom.

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## **HOLIDAYS**

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The Mackworth Island Preschool recognizes holidays from a multi-cultural perspective. We recognize that each family comes with their own traditions and customs. We respect the differences that diverse families bring to our programs and we embrace the similarities that are common. We learn about the similarities and differences of all the holidays and welcome families into the classroom community to share their own special traditions and customs.

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## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

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Family involvement and open communication is imperative to the success of our program and to the success of each child. We support ongoing communication throughout the year by providing daily communications books that can include comments back and forth from school to home to school. We encourage families to write in the book daily with their child. Individual parent conferences are offered bi-annually. Additional meetings can be set up by contacting your child's teacher. Families will be informed of workshops, conferences and family events throughout the year at MECDHH. Teachers and staff have a variety of resources that they would be happy to share.

If you have questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to let us know. You can send a note in with your child, speak with us in person, call or email. Our Preschool Coordinator is also available to meet with you. Information is shared between home and school via:

- Newsletters
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Remind App messaging/Daily Communication Logs.
- Email and Phone
- Facebook page: Mackworth Island Preschool

Parents are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the classroom in a variety of ways. Some examples are:

- Helping on a field trip
- Making a special snack with the children
- Reading a book or telling a story
- Assisting during Outdoor Play time
- Being involved in Center Time

Please discuss options with your child’s classroom teacher. They will be happy to find an activity for you to join in on in the classroom.

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## **CONFIDENTIAL EMERGENCY & MEDICAL INFORMATION**

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**E**mergency and medical information can be found on our Google drive in a file named “Baxter”. This file contains emergency contact information, allergies and pertinent medical information (IHPs), transportation information and contact number(s), media release information, and visitor information. This file should be compiled and updated by the Preschool Team, Administrative Assistant, and School Nurse on an ongoing basis.

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## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

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**T**he School Board believes that children and staff are entitled to learn and work in a school environment free of violence, threats and disruptive behavior. Children are expected to conduct themselves with respect for others and in accordance with Board policies, school rules, reasonable unwritten behavior expectations, and applicable state and federal laws.

With a goal of limiting or eliminating the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures, school staff will utilize training and strategies such as those from Safety Care Behavioral Safety Training to prevent, minimize, and manage behavioral challenges. The Executive Director may suspend and/or recommend expulsion of children who violate preschool policy based upon the facts of each case and in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.

## **Assessment**

**T**hroughout the year children are observed and assessed both formally and informally. The staff uses **standardized and curriculum-based assessments, anecdotal evidence, checklists, progress reports and portfolios** to document what children are learning and how they are acquiring new information.

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## **PURPOSES OF ASSESSMENT**

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- To understand what we want children to learn.
- To know the developmental steps we expect children to take.
- To observe children each day and document what we see and hear.
- To learn to appreciate each child’s strengths, abilities, interests and needs.
- To collect information about each child to share with families.
- To understand the diverse range of abilities and needs of a group of children.
- To utilize the information that we have gathered about each child in order to provide opportunities to support the individual child as well as a group of children.
- To be more reflective and intentional in our work with children.
- To design a rich learning environment that is appealing to a range of interests and abilities.

- To summarize what we learn about each child in order to partner with families to plan together about how to best support their child's learning.
- To identify children who may need additional evaluation and support in order to succeed.

## **PORTFOLIOS**

Each child has an electronic portfolio that includes a developmental checklist of the Maine Early Learning Development Standards, as well as anecdotal documentation through photographs by unit, children's work and anecdotal records to support the progress report. Teachers and therapists will update the file in Google drive monthly. The following shall be adhered to:

<b>What?</b>	<b>When is it added to Google drive?</b>	<b>Who?</b>
Communication Parent Questionnaire	Initial entry into program, and on going	Team Leader
Individual Language Plan Schedule	Initial and on going	Team Leader
Communication Plan or Child Language Profile	Initial and on going	Team Leader
MELDS Checklist (all children)	On going	Teachers
California or DHH Children's Visual Communication & Sign Language Milestones with Language Sample	On going	CL and MM
CASLLS with Language Sample	On going	SL Teachers and SL Therapists
Auditory Skills Development Checklist - Karen Anderson	On going	SL Therapists
Pragmatics Checklist	On going	Teachers - both ASL & SL and SLP
IEP CDS Quarterly Report	Quarterly: Dec.1, March 1, and June 6	Teachers and Therapists
ABC, abc, colors, shapes, ## identification (all children)	On going	Teachers
Self-Portrait with name (all children)	On going	Teachers and OT
FLE Functional Listening Evaluation (when applicable)	Prior to Kindergarten Transition	Audiologist
Input to IEP Form	1 week prior to Annual IEP	Child's team
Additional: Sensory Activity, Sensory Diet, Behavior Plan, etc.	As needed	As necessary

Ed Techs will be assigned duties in collecting data, language sampling, assessing, etc. as needed. Results will be kept confidential, and only shared with that child's team members.

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## PROGRESS REPORTS

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The Mackworth Island Preschool utilizes a progress report that aligns with the Maine Early Learning Guidelines and looks at:

- Personal and Social Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Creative Arts
- Early Language and Literacy
- Health and Physical Education
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Battelle Developmental Inventory
- The Carolina Curriculum for Preschoolers with Special Needs Assessment
- The Carolina Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs Assessment
- ASL Assessments
- CALIFORNIA ASL Assessment Checklist
- Cottage Acquisition Scales for Listening, Language, and Speech (CASLLS)
- Auditory Skills/Functional Listening Assessments
- Ages and Stages Developmental Checklists
- Ski Hi Language Scale
- Pragmatics Language Scale
- Adaptive Behavior Assessment System (ABAS)

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## ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENT TOOLS UTILIZED

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The above-mentioned assessment tools have been evaluated by the program administration and deemed valid and reliable for use in measuring the progress of children in Early Childhood Programs. Assessments will take place in the preschool setting, either in a group or one-on-one. If there is a concern about a child's developmental progress, we will utilize the observation and documentation of the child and partner with the family and the IEP team (when applicable), at which time CDS (Child Development Services) may decide to use the above-mentioned norm referenced and standardized test to seek information on eligibility for special services and will notify parents before the assessment takes place. We will not contact outside assistance without the written consent of the child's parents/guardian. Notice will go out in our weekly newsletter regarding when the developmental assessments conducted by teachers in preparation for fall conferences and spring transitions will occur. These typically take place in October and March.

For children who attend the Mackworth Island Preschool and have an established IEP, additional reports are sent home quarterly that discuss the progress that a

*Children are learning self-control and self-regulation; as a result, problem solving is a big part of what we do.*

child is making in regards to their goals on their Individual Education Plan.

**Children with an IEP have an additional annual team meeting to discuss the progress that a child is making in relation to the specific goals.** If at any time there is a concern about how your child is developing and you would like the IEP team to meet, you can contact your child's case manager at CDS (Child Development Services) to schedule a meeting.

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## PARENT/ TEACHER CONFERENCES

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We believe parents and teachers work collaboratively as a team to provide the best support for the children in our program. Parents meet with their child's teacher to discuss the progress that the child is making in their learning environment and to set goals for their child. This is an opportunity to discuss your child's successes, strengths and areas of challenge. Additional times to meet with your child's teacher are always available. Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice during the school year in November and March.

## Guiding Behavior

Within the preschool, children are in the process of learning self-control and self-regulation, how to share and how to work/play with others. As a result, problem solving is a BIG part of what we do.

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## SOCIAL STORIES

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Social stories are stories with simple text and pictures often used to help children learn appropriate behavior and/or expectations, or to help with big events, or transitions. The stories can be 'read' over and over again to help children gain confidence and understanding in the specific area. Copies are often shared with families, for carry-over at home.

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## IN THE PRESCHOOL WE:

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- Model how to solve problems with our words, not our bodies.
- Show (and practice) respect for self and others.
- Provide positive reinforcement when children are making safe choices.
- Use "I" statements when speaking to children (e.g., "I notice that Billy is sad, can you tell me what happened?") and facilitate opportunities for preschoolers to practice this skill.
- Re-direct children to a different activity if needed.
- Provide children with a safe, supervised space when they need a break.

**Physical restraint, shaming, verbal abuse or withholding of food utilized is not acceptable in our program.** Teaching staff never use physical punishment such as shaking or hitting and do not engage in physical abuse or coercion. **"Time Out" is not used in our program.**

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## SEPARATIONS

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The comings and goings and separating from parents are important events for young children. For some children good-byes are difficult, and they may be very teary. We have found it works well to give your child clear messages and to say very definitively and positively, "I am leaving now," "I will

see you soon,” “I will pick you up after school” or other similar messages. Letting your child know who to expect to pick him/her up at the end of the day decreases any anxieties about what is happening. A clear routine of hugs, squeezes and kisses often helps. If your child has difficulty during this transition, it may be helpful to ask a teacher for help. We will help to warmly re-direct your child’s attention and interest them in activity or offer some special attention to help bridge the gap. We also utilize a “Goodbye Door.” At the Goodbye Door, children are encouraged to connect with their parent/guardian before entering preschool. Options for saying goodbye could include a fist bump, high-five, hugs, a kiss, etc.

## Health Information

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### HEALTH CENTER

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The Health Center encourages positive, preventative health practices among children at the school.

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### MEDICATION POLICY

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If your child needs medication while at school, please see your child’s teacher, the Preschool Coordinator or the School Nurse. Only medication that has been prescribed by a physician and is in the original container marked with the child’s name, dosage and date will be administered. Most medications will be stored in a locked container. Long-term medications need to be accompanied by a special permission form signed by the doctor and renewed every six months or annually, depending upon the condition. **Over the counter drugs also need a physician’s permission. Staff cannot administer ANY drugs, including Tylenol or cough syrup, without written notice from the child’s doctor.**

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### IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

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According to Maine’s rules for the Licensing of Child Care Facilities, a child care facility must have on file, within thirty (30) days of the child’s first admission to the program and updated annually after, a Certificate of Immunization which clearly illustrates each child’s present immunization status and that they are up to date with routine screenings. The following immunizations must be documented: measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis, polio, tetanus, haemophilus influenza type B, hepatitis B, pneumococcal conjugate, VZV (Varicella or chicken pox), and Hepatitis A. A blood test demonstrating immunity to measles, mumps and rubella can be provided as proof of immunity. Please note if a child’s parent/guardian states in writing a religious or philosophical belief that is contrary to this immunization requirement or if the child’s physician submits documentation that states immunization is medically inadvisable, a written statement is acceptable and will be kept in the child’s file. In the event of a disease outbreak, children not vaccinated for religious, philosophical or medical reasons must be excluded from the program until the outbreak no longer exists, or until the child receives the necessary immunization.

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## STORAGE OF FIRST AID SUPPLIES

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First aid supplies (including, but not limited to, bandages, gloves, gauze, adhesive tape, hydrogen peroxide and ipecac) are located in each classroom in a secured cabinet above the sink area, out of the reach of children. The school nurse also has supplies stored in the health center.

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## GENERAL HEALTH POLICY

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Both staff and children should be well enough to participate in the Mackworth Island Preschool each day that they attend. If any of the following apply, staff/your child should stay home:

- Your child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the usual classroom and outdoor activities.
- The staff cannot care for your child without interfering with the care of other children.
- Experiencing any of the symptoms that indicate a contagious disease, as indicated below, or an immediate need for medical intervention.

If staff members/your child show any of the following symptoms, they should not attend the program:

- Diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Fever over 101 degrees in the past 24 hours
- Skin conditions/rashes with drainage
- Drainage from the nose or eyes that is not clear

**If your child develops any of these symptoms while at school**, you will be notified that your child needs to go home. Your child must be picked up within an hour of contacting you and you will need to keep your child home for 24 hours. If the parent/guardian is not able to be reached, we will contact the next person on the emergency contact information. If your child has been seen by a physician and placed on antibiotics, he/she should remain at home for 24 hours or longer until the antibiotics have taken effect and the condition has improved.

**Parents/guardians should exercise every caution** and keep their child home if unusual symptoms are noticed. If your child has been exposed to a highly contagious disease, details should be reported to us. We will post information to families regarding any communicable disease to which their child has been exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission and period of communicability. We will also notify the Center for Disease Control of any contagious diseases according to the “Notifiable Conditions List” that is prepared by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Health. Strep throat, pinworms, viral infections, measles, mumps, chicken pox, fifth disease, scarlet fever, conjunctivitis, diarrhea and impetigo are among those conditions categorized as “highly contagious.”

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## **CLASSROOM PREVENTION OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

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All surfaces and toys are cleaned on a regular basis, as recommended by NAEYC's Cleaning and Sanitation table. We use standard precautions for cleaning surfaces that have come in contact with potentially infectious bodily fluids. By including illness-prevention practices in daily routines and following clear prevention policies, we are able to limit the spread of infection.

Standard precautions we take to prevent communicable disease include:

- Ensuring any surface that may come in contact with body fluids are disposable or made of material that can be sanitized.
- Using barriers and techniques that minimize contact of mucous membranes or openings in skin with other body fluids.
- Cleaning spills of body fluid up immediately with detergent and water rinsing.
- Sanitizing non-porous surfaces according to Cleaning and Sanitation Table.
- Blotting and spot cleaning rugs with a detergent-disinfectant, shampooing, or steam cleaning.
- Disposing of contaminated materials and diapers in a tied plastic bag in a closed container.
- Separating toys that have been mouthed or contaminated into a separate bin for cleaning at a later time or by cleaning the toys immediately with detergent, sanitizing them, and letting them air dry.

Staff will take precautions to ensure communal water play does not spread infectious disease by ensuring:

- No children drink the water.
- Children with sores on hands are not permitted to use the water table.
- Fresh water is used and changed every day.
- Fresh water can flow freely out through a drain in the table to a bucket underneath.

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## **STAFF TRAINING**

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All staff members receive the following health-related training annually (or when expired):

- Pediatric Emergency First Aid
- CPR
- Blood Borne Pathogens

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## **HAND WASHING**

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Good hand washing practices prevent the spread of germs in early childhood programs. Staff will assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task. Children and adults' hands should be washed, using proper hand washing technique, which will be posted by all sinks:



- Upon arrival at the child care setting.
- When moving from one classroom to another.
- Immediately before and after eating or preparing food.
- After handling bodily fluids (e.g., blowing a nose).
- After using the toilet.
- Before and after diapering.
- Before and after using water tables. Children with sores are not allowed at the water table.
- After playing on the playground.

Sinks in the classrooms and bathrooms are not used for bathing children or for removing fecal material from clothes or other materials.

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## **COMMUNICATING ABOUT SERIOUS INCIDENCES**

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Families will be notified of any incident or accident involving their child on the day the incident occurs, and immediately if the incident or accident is serious and/or involves medical care.

Accident and/or Serious Incidence Reports will be filled out within 24 hours and submitted to the Preschool Coordinator and sent home to the parents.

## **Interpreting Services**

The role of the staff interpreter is to be available to facilitate face-to-face communication among signing and non-signing administrators, teachers, residential advisors, staff, children, their families and visitors on a scheduled as well as on an impromptu basis. As the mix of signing abilities at MECDHH/GBSD varies from year to year, so does the role of the staff interpreter.

Parents may also request interpreting services when MECDHH/GBSD is the party responsible for providing communication access. For example, MECDHH/GBSD provides interpreters for MECDHH/GBSD parent group meetings. Another example is that MECDHH/GBSD provides staff interpreting

services to family members who come to campus with emergency information to convey to their child.

MECDHH/GBSD **does not** provide interpreting services for outside agencies that are themselves required by law to make their services accessible to people who are deaf and hard of hearing. A staff interpreter cannot be used simply because it is “convenient” to meet with a child at school. A staff interpreter can help by educating outside agencies as to their legal responsibilities to provide interpreting services and by referring them to reputable interpreter referral agencies.

Requests for MECDHH/GBSD interpreting services can be made by filling out the Interpreter Request form, located online. If you have any questions about filling out the form, please contact the Interpreter Coordinator at [interpreter.coordinators@mecdhh.org](mailto:interpreter.coordinators@mecdhh.org).

## Audiology Services

**T**he MECDHH/GBSD educational audiologist provides audiological services on an as-needed basis. All children who wear hearing aids, cochlear implants and/or use assistive listening devices must have a primary care audiologist outside of MECDHH. The MECDHH/GBSD audiologist **provides services as a supplement** to the children’s primary care audiological services. Routine services are automatically provided to all children who wear hearing aids. Consultative services are provided as needed and with parental consent. Contact the school audiologist by phone at 781-6204.

<b>Routine Services</b>	<b>Consultative Services</b>
Weekly check of hearing aid, assistive listening device, cochlear implant processor	Meeting with parents to discuss audiological services and/or test results
Troubleshooting of malfunctioning devices	Middle ear evaluation at request of parent or school nurse
Replacement of ear mold tubing	Hearing testing
Ear mold cleaning	Hearing aid programming
Provision of hearing aid batteries (billed to you or MaineCare at the end of the school year)	Consultative educational audiology services to another educational program in which a child participates part-time
	New ear molds

	Collaborative consultation with other service providers
	Aided hearing testing
	Hearing aid repairs
	Participates at an IEP meeting

#### Insurance Coverage

MECDHH/GBSD **does not** carry insurance to cover accidental loss, theft, or damage to hearing aids that might occur at school. Families can contact their primary care audiologist or hearing aid dispenser to purchase a repair warranty or loss/damage insurance if their child's hearing aids are not currently covered.

## Volunteer Programs

The goal of MECDHH/Governor Baxter School is to provide rewarding experiences for our volunteers, children and staff and to foster awareness of and respect for a bilingual-bicultural environment.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the Executive Director's administrative assistant at 781-6284 to fill out the appropriate paperwork.

## Campus Safety

MECDHH has appropriate personnel on duty at all times when children are on campus. If you should need to contact staff for assistance, please call the main line at 207-781-3165.

## Annual Program Evaluation

MECDHH will provide a report to staff, families, and board members when each annual comprehensive program evaluation is complete. This report will be available online.

## MECDHH/GBSD Policies

### **ABS ENCES**

Please notify the school if your child will be absent due to illness, inclement weather, or other reasons. You may notify staff by leaving a message in the Brightwheel app, or contact the main office at 207-781-6215.

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The Mackworth Island Preschool as part of MECDHH/GBSD, follow the Portland Public School calendar and Child Development Services calendar. Please refer to this calendar for information about school breaks, first/last day of school, professional development days, etc.

### **STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Throughout the school year there are professional development days for the early childhood staff that are built into the calendar. These learning experiences are important opportunities for teachers and staff to enhance their skills to better meet the needs of your children. Professional development days are listed on the school calendar that you receive at the beginning of the school year. Staff receive at least two hours monthly of in-service training. Documentation of staff development training is kept on file in the Business Office. All staff receives training annually in the following areas:

- Confidentiality/HIPPA/FERPA
- Sexual Harassment
- First Aid/CPR
- Evidence-based, Developmentally Appropriate Practice in early childhood education

In addition to training provided on site, staff are encouraged to locate and attend other meetings, conferences, and workshops related to early childhood education. Mentoring and coaching experiences are included as part of professional development.

### **SNOW DAYS**

Mackworth Island Preschool follows Portland Public Schools with regard to closures and delays. Staff are encouraged to join the Portland Public School's notification system so they will receive a text, call, or email when there is a closing or delay.

The following stations will report school cancellations:

Television Stations	Radio Stations
WCSH (Channel 6)	WGAN (560 AM)
WGME (Channel 13)	WPOR (101.9 FM)
WMTW (Channel 8)	WYNZ (100.9 FM)
	WMGX (93.1 FM)

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## STAFF ORIENTATION

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All new staff receives training in the following areas within the first few weeks of hire:

- Specifics of their individual job.
- Behavior management including positive behavior support.
- Requirements related to child abuse reporting.
- School philosophy, organization, program, practices and goals.
- Employee hiring/firing, advancement, performance reviews.
- Confidentiality/HIPAA/FERPA.
- Emergency procedures, evacuation policies and procedures, and use of the alarm system and equipment, such as fire extinguishers.
- Curriculum and assessment practices.
- Communicating in a bilingual bicultural environment.

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## TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES

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In order to maintain a healthy breathing environment during drop off and pick up times, please turn off your vehicle's engine, except if vehicles need to idle in cases of extreme heat or cold to maintain interior or engine temperatures. We do not transport children to or from school. We do not participate in off-island field trips.

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## ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL TIMES

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Arrival time for preschoolers:  
Our preschool day **begins at 8:30 a.m.**

**Dismissal time** every day is **3:00 p.m.**

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## SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS BY PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

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Parents who plan to pick up or drop off their child at the Preschool, at other than the regularly scheduled time, should contact the classroom teacher **in advance** through the Brightwheel app or by sending a note, providing the date and time, when possible.

Parents must provide written permission and timely notification before their son or daughter will be allowed to enter any vehicle other than their family or transportation vehicle. Children will **not** be allowed to enter another vehicle under **any** circumstances without this permission. **No Exceptions.**

If your child has an IEP, transportation to our program is considered a “related service” to assist your child receiving early intervention or special education services. Transportation may be coordinated and arranged through your local CDS site.

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## EVACUATION & EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

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Smoke and gases from a fire pose a great danger to everyone in our program. The ability to control a fire in buildings or on grounds is possible only in the first few minutes after a fire is discovered. All staff, families and visitors should become familiar with fire safety, fire prevention and building evacuation procedures.

Fire drills are held during the first week of school and at least once a month during

the remainder of the year. Fire safety, prevention, fire drill and building evacuation procedures will be reviewed annually at the beginning of the school year with all staff and children.

All classrooms will have the Fire Drill/Evacuation Procedures and information posted at the front of the rooms and in the preschool lobby

Preschool Staff will ensure:

When the light flashes and the fire alarm goes off:

- Line up children at the nearest safe exit from your room.
- Pick up your class list and leave the room.
- Close the door behind you.
- Designated persons should check the bathrooms.
- Determine the nearest safe exit from the building. Leave the building with your class in a quiet, orderly manner. Please do not rush or run.
- Guide children to the nearest designated safe meeting place.
- Take attendance.
- Report any missing children to the Preschool Coordinator or Safety Officer immediately.

All clear signal: wait in the designated area for permission to re-enter the buildings and/or for further instruction. A flashing yellow light is indication that it is safe to re-enter the buildings.

In the event of inclement weather which may be harmful to staff and children (rain, snow, low temperatures), teachers may move children to a connector which has immediate available exits to the outside.

## **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

**S**ection 504 is an Act that prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program receiving federal financial assistance. The Act defines a person with a disability as anyone who:

- Has a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (major life activities include activities such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working).
- Has a record of such an impairment.
- Is regarded as having such impairment.

In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and children. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs and practices operated by Governor Baxter School for the Deaf.

Governor Baxter School for the Deaf has specific responsibilities under the Act, which include the responsibility to identify, evaluate and if the child is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to appropriate educational services.

If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of Governor Baxter School for the Deaf, he/she has a right to a hearing with an impartial hearing officer. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact the principal at 781-3165.

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920



**THE MAINE EDUCATIONAL CENTER FOR THE DEAF AND HARD  
OF HEARING/THE GOVERNOR BAXTER SCHOOL FOR THE  
DEAF**

1 Mackworth Island, Falmouth, ME 04105

Karen Hopkins

**Executive Director**

(207) 781-6284

[karen.hopkins@mecdhh.org](mailto:karen.hopkins@mecdhh.org)

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We at the Maine Educational Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MECDHH) and Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (GBSD) are sending you this information as one way to fulfill our obligations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Under these requirements, teachers must meet general qualifications as well as the specific requirements of the subject they are teaching. This means we will be informing parents whenever a teacher who does not meet the new federal definition of "Highly Qualified" teaches a child for four consecutive weeks. Maine has some of the most qualified teachers in the country, and we are extremely proud of our teaching staff. We work hard to assure that every class has a teacher with the appropriate background, experience, and credentials for his or her current teaching assignment.

We believe that a caring, competent and qualified teacher for every child is the most important ingredient in education reform, and we want to assure you that we consider all our teachers to be fully qualified for their positions. All of our teachers are currently entitled to teach under Maine's strict certification requirements. All of our teachers have college degrees and many have advanced degrees. In addition, every teacher continues his or her own learning through professional development activities and our teachers are evaluated each year to make sure that their teaching skills remain at the highest possible level.

Most teachers already meet the federal definition of "Highly Qualified." Those teachers who do not meet this federal standard will be able to do so by engaging in additional professional development or by passing a test.

Additional information on the IDEA, as well as on the qualifications of your child's teacher is available on request. Please contact Karen Hopkins at (207) 420-9918, if you have questions or would like further information. Working with parents is an important aspect of our efforts to help children learn and we welcome your interest.

Sincerely,  
Karen Hopkins  
*Executive Director, MECDHH/GBSD*



## Appendix

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### **M E C D H H / G B S D P R O G R A M P O L I C I E S & P R O C E D U R E S**

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#### **Appendix**

The appendix contains important School Board policies pertinent to children and parents. Policies should be reviewed carefully because there are specific rules and regulations which all children will be expected to adhere to while in attendance at GBSD. In some instances, violations under specific policies may have disciplinary consequences for the child. Contact the Executive Director's office (781-6284) to review all GBSD School Board Policies.

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### **F A M I L Y E D U C A T I O N A L R I G H T S A N D P R I V A C Y A C T ( F E R P A )**

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The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of child education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the child when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Children to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible children."

- Parents or eligible children have the right to inspect and review the child's education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible children to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.
- Parents or eligible children have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible child then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible child has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.
- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible child in order to release any information from a child's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - School officials with legitimate educational interest
  - Other schools to which a child is transferring
  - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
  - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a child
  - Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
  - Accrediting organizations

- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law

Schools may disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a child's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible children about directory information and allow parents and eligible children a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible children annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, child handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

For additional information or technical assistance, you may call (202) 260-3887 (voice). Individuals who use TDD may call the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. Or you may contact us at the following address:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

Revised 2004  
FILE: ACAA

## **HARASSMENT & SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS**

### **Harassment**

**H**arassment of children because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry or national origin, or disability is prohibited. Such conduct is a violation of Board policy and may constitute illegal discrimination under state and federal laws.

Harassment includes but is not limited to verbal abuse based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry or national origin, or disability. Harassment that rises to the level of physical assault, battery and/or abuse is also addressed in the Board policy JICIA – Weapons, Violence and School Safety.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or pressure to engage in sexual activity, physical contact of a sexual nature, gestures, comments, or other physical, written or verbal conduct that is gender-based that interferes with a child's education. School employees, fellow children, volunteers and visitors to the school, and other persons with whom children may interact in order to pursue school activities are required to refrain from such conduct.

Harassment/sexual harassment of children by school employees is considered grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Harassment/sexual harassment of children by other children is considered grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. The Executive Director will determine appropriate sanctions for harassment of children by persons other than school employees and children.

The Executive Director or the employee designated as the Title IX Coordinator will investigate complaints of harassment in accordance with the Child Harassment Complaint Procedure. School employees, children, and parents shall be informed of this policy/procedure through handbooks and/or other means selected by the school administration.

Legal Reference: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 USC § 1681, et seq.)

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 USC § 2000(d))

5 MRSA §§ 4602; 4681 et seq.

20-A MRSA § 6553

Cross Reference: ACAA-R - Child Harassment Complaint Procedure

AC - Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

ACAD - Hazing

JICIA - Weapons, Violence and School Safety

Adopted: June 12, 1997

Revised and Adopted: April 16, 1998

Revised and Adopted: April 8, 1999

Revised and Adopted: September 6, 2007

Edited for administrator title: January 2014

FILE: KI

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS**

The School Board encourages the active interest and involvement of parents and the public in the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Governor Baxter School for the Deaf (MECDHH/GBSD). In order to avoid interruption of the instructional programs and to promote the safety of children and staff, the MECDHH/GBSD Administrative Team shall institute procedures to enforce the visitor's policy.

The following general guidelines shall be incorporated in administrative procedures concerning visitors.

- A. The term "visitor" shall apply to any person on school grounds or in school buildings who is not an employee or child of MECDHH/GBSD.

- B. All visitors shall report to the main office upon arrival at the school. The administrative assistant will confirm the visitor's appointment and grant access. A visitor's badge will be assigned and worn at all times throughout the visit.
- C. All visitors who wish to visit classrooms, observe aspects of the instructional program or meet with staff members are expected to schedule such visits in advance. Teachers and other staff may not use instructional time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
- D. Visitors shall comply with all applicable Board policies and school rules. Visitors who violate these policies/rules and/or disrupt the safe and orderly operation of the school shall be asked to leave the premises.
- E. The school administrator/designee has the authority to refuse entry to school grounds or buildings to persons who do not have legitimate, school-related business and may disrupt the operations of the schools. This may include, but is not limited to, the news media, profit-making businesses, fundraisers and other organizations seeking access to children and/or staff.
- F. School staff shall report unauthorized persons on school grounds or in school buildings to the building administrator/designee. Unauthorized persons shall be directed to leave the premises immediately.
- G. Attendance to community events can be restricted to certain groups of individuals such as parents, alumni or members of the deaf community. Once attendance has been opened to a particular group, school administrators cannot disallow a particular member of the group from attending unless it is known that his/her attendance is in violation of a current court-ordered restriction on movement in the form of a restraining order or probationary condition.
- H. If a child or the child's guardian or case manager expresses a concern about the presence of an individual at the school, a member of the administration should meet with the child to ascertain the concern. If the administrator believes that the child's concerns are legitimate, steps are to be taken to contact the child's parent or guardian. If the child's safety is potentially compromised, MECDHH/GBSD will assist the family in obtaining a restraining order.
- I. In the event school personnel have concerns about the presence of an individual at school events, they should inform the Executive Director, who will check the state sex offender registry to determine whether the individual has a history of sex crimes. In addition, the State Bureau of Identification will be contacted to ascertain if the individual in question has a criminal history record. If a particular offense is of concern, the

Executive Director will work with the Attorney General's office to determine whether the person is currently subject to conditional release or probation, and if such a conditional release or probation exists; whether the prosecuting authority should be contacted to request a modification of the terms of the conditional release or probation to restrict the individual from being present at the school.

- J. The building administrator/designee may request the assistance of law enforcement as necessary to deal with unauthorized persons or violations of the law by visitors to the schools.

Cross Reference: EBCA – Crisis Response Plan  
ECA – Buildings and Grounds Security  
JLIB – Child Dismissal Precautions JLF  
– Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect  
KLG – Relations with Law Enforcement Agencies

Adopted: September 2, 2004  
Edited for school name and administrator title: January 2014  
Policy ACAD

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**TOBACCO  
USE &  
POSSESSION**

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In order to promote the health and safety of all children and staff and to promote the cleanliness of all facilities, the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf School Board prohibits smoking and the use of all other tobacco products in school buildings, facilities and on school buses during school-sponsored events and at all other times on school grounds by all persons, including children and employees.

In addition, children are further prohibited from possessing, selling, distributing or dispensing tobacco products in school buildings, facilities and on school grounds and buses during school-sponsored events and at all other times.

Employees and all other persons are also strictly prohibited, under law and this Board's policy, from selling, distributing or in any way dispensing tobacco products to children.

Legal Reference 22 MRSA §§ 1578(B), 1580(A) (3)  
Me. PL 470 (An Act to Reduce Tobacco Use by Minors)  
20 USC 6081-6084 (Pro-Children Act of 1994)  
Revised and Adopted: March 6, 2008  
Policy IHAI

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## **USE OF STUDENT COMPUTERS & INTERNET RESOURCES**

The Governor Baxter School for the Deaf Board (hereinafter referred to as the “Board”) believes that use of computers in instructional programs is an educational tool which facilitates communication, innovation, resource sharing and access to information. Due to the complex nature of accessible networks and the magnitude of information potentially available to children utilizing computers and the internet, the Board believes strict guidelines in the form of administrative procedures are warranted in order to reduce or limit potential negative effects. The global and fluid nature of the internet’s contents makes it impossible for the Board to completely regulate and monitor the information available to children. Although children will be under teacher supervision while on the network, it is impossible to constantly monitor all individual children and the information accessed. Thus, the Board makes no guarantees or predictions regarding the information which children may retrieve via the internet.

Children utilizing computers and the internet shall comply with the applicable administrative procedures (stated below). The Board, via its administrators, reserves the right to monitor all computer and Internet activity by children. There is no expectation of privacy when using school computers or accessing internet. The school administration will establish procedures that will ensure no unreasonable restriction of child communication with parent/guardians.

Use of GBSD computers and access to the internet through GBSD’s network is a privilege, not a right. As such, children violating the Board’s policy and administrative procedures shall be subject to revocation of privileges and potential disciplinary and/or appropriate legal action.

Parents shall be required to sign a permission form allowing their children to access computers and the internet. Children also shall be required to sign an acknowledgement affirming that they have read and understood the board’s policy on “Child’s Use of Computers and Internet Resources” and that they understand the consequences for violation of said policy.

Adopted: December 11, 1997

File: JLF

Child abuse and neglect, as defined by Maine statute, means “the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 years of age by a person who is responsible for the child’s welfare is harmed or threatened thereby.”

When any school administrator, teacher, guidance counselor, nurse, social worker, teacher aide, or contracted service provider in this school has reason to suspect that any child enrolled in school may be a victim of child abuse or neglect, he/she

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## **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE/ CHILD PROTECTION**

are mandated to report to the preschool coordinator who will notify the Executive Director. A verbal report to the Executive Director shall be followed by a written report prepared by the principal on the next working day. Any report shall include the following information if within the knowledge of the person reporting:

- A. The names and addresses of the child and his/her parents or other person responsible for his/her care or custody if known;
- B. The child's age and sex;
- C. The nature and extent of the child's physical injuries, if any;
- D. A description of any sexual abuse or neglect;
- E. Family composition;
- F. Any other information that the person making the report believes may be helpful for the safety and welfare of the child.

Upon receipt of a verbal report, the preschool coordinator will immediately report by telephone or in person to the Executive Director and by telephone to the Department of Human Services. When the alleged abuse is sexual in nature and is suspected to have been committed by an employee, contracted service provider, or another child at the school, the employee will be placed on administrative leave until the claim is investigated. The additional procedures outlined in the "Harassment" policy and regulations will also be followed.

The principal shall notify the initiator of the report when an investigation is being conducted or when the case is closed as an invalid referral. The principal shall attempt to keep the initiator informed as to the progress of the case. School personnel will cooperate with the Department of Human Services investigation by providing pertinent information and personal observation, which is necessary for an appropriate assessment of the child's welfare. The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act establishes rules governing the release of information from education records. The act does not restrict a teacher or school official from making a report based on his/her personal knowledge or observation.

The Department of Human Services Child Protective Worker may be allowed to interview the child named in the report at the school with or without parental permission when, in the judgment of the principal, such an interview will be in the best interest of the child. Any such interview shall be structured by the principal with due regard for the needs of the child.

Under Maine statute, all records and reports concerning child abuse and neglect are confidential and subject to release only under the specific guidelines of the Board's records management policy. Persons who permit unauthorized dissemination of such records are deemed guilty of a Class E crime.

Such personnel who are directly involved with the education or supervision of a child who is the subject of a report are authorized to give and receive information necessary for the planning and treatment of the child. Teachers who are in daily

contact with the child are important parts of the treatment team and should cooperate with the Department of Human Services Child Protective Worker in the conduct of the treatment plan.

Each case of child abuse in this school system is to be treated in a highly confidential manner by all school employees concerned.

Legal Reference: Title 22 MRSA SEC. 4001-010-A (“Child and Family Services and Child Protection Act”)

Title 22 MRSA Sec. 4001, 4012

Cross Reference: ACAA

ACAA-R1

ACAA-R2

Adopted: July 10, 1997

Edited for administrator title: January 2014

FILE: JICIA

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**WEAPONS,  
VIOLENCE,  
& SCHOOL  
SAFETY**

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The School Board believes that children and staff are entitled to learn and work in a school environment free of violence, threats and disruptive behavior. Children are expected to conduct themselves with respect for others and in accordance with Board policies, school rules, reasonable unwritten behavior expectations, and applicable state and federal laws.

School staff are required to immediately report incidents of prohibited conduct by children to the building administrator/designee for investigation and appropriate action.

**Prohibited Conduct**

Children are prohibited from engaging in the following conduct on school property, while in attendance at school or at any school-sponsored activity, or at any time or place that such conduct directly interferes with the operations, discipline or general welfare of the school:

- A. Possession and/or use of articles commonly used or designed to inflict bodily harm and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person. Examples of such articles include but are not limited to firearms, BB guns, pellet guns, any other kind of gun, ammunition, explosives, cross-bows, brass knuckles, switchblades, knives, chains, clubs, Kung Fu stars and nun chucks;
- B. Use of any object, although not necessarily designed to be a weapon, to inflict bodily harm and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce or harass another person. Examples of such articles include but are not limited to bats, belts, picks, pencils, compasses, objects capable of ignition (e.g., matches, lighters), files, tools of any sort and replicas of weapons (including toys);
- C. Violent or threatening behavior, including but not limited to fighting, assault and/or battery, taking hostages, threats to commit violence against persons or property (e.g., verbal or written death threats, threats of bodily harm, bomb threats);
- D. Verbal or written statements (including those made on or through a computer or other telecommunications medium) which threaten,



intimidate, or harass others, which tend to incite violence and/or disrupt the school program;

- E. Willful and malicious damage to school or personal property;
- F. Stealing or attempting to steal school or personal property;
- G. Lewd, indecent or obscene acts or expressions of any kind;
- H. Violations of the school unit's drug/alcohol and tobacco policies;
- I. Violations of state or federal laws; and
- J. Any other conduct that may be harmful to persons or property.

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## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

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A principal may suspend and/or recommend expulsion of children who violate this policy based upon the facts of each case and in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. Conduct which violates this policy is deliberately disobedient and deliberately disorderly within the meaning of 20-A MRSA § 1001(9) and will be grounds for expulsion if found necessary for the peace and usefulness of the school. Such conduct may also be grounds for expulsion under other provisions of 20-A MRSA § 1001(9 and 9-A) that specifically prohibit the use and possession of weapons, infractions of violence, and possession, furnishing and trafficking of scheduled drugs.

Children who are found to have brought a firearm to school (as defined by federal law), shall be expelled for a period of not less than one year, unless this requirement is modified by the Executive Director on a case-by-case basis.

All firearms violations shall be referred to law enforcement authorities as required by law. Other violations of this policy shall be referred to law enforcement authorities at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Children with disabilities shall be disciplined in accordance with applicable federal and state laws/regulations and Board Policy JKF.

Legal References: 20 USCA § 8921 (Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994)

5 MRSA § 4681 et seq.

17-A MRSA §§ 2(9); 2(12-A)

20-A MRSA §§ 1001(9); 1001(9-A); 6552

Cross References: ACAA – Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Children

ADC – Tobacco Use and Possession

EBCA – Crisis Response Plan

JICH – Drug and Alcohol Use by Children

JK – Child Discipline

JKD – Suspension of Children

JKE – Expulsion of Children

JKF – Suspension/Expulsion of Children with Disabilities

JIH – Questioning and Searches of Children

KLG – Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities

Adopted: November 4, 2004

**Edited for administrator title: January 2014**

# Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing / Governor Baxter School for the Deaf

Revised: April 2022

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## SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

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**Roxanne Baker**

Rep. Deaf Community  
rox3bak@gmail.com

**Lisette Belanger, *Chair***

Rep. Deaf Community  
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Rep. Parent of a D/HH Student  
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**Sandra Wood**

Rep. Member of the General Public with  
Expertise in Deaf Education  
sandra.wood@maine.edu

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## SCHOOL BOARD DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

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The Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf School Board shall have general charge of this MECDHH/GBSD and shall exercise such other responsibilities as specifically provided by law.

The Board shall concern itself primarily with broad questions of policy rather than with administrative details. The application of policies is an administrative task to be performed by the Executive Director and his/her staff, who shall be held responsible for the effective administration and supervision of the entire school system.

The Board, functioning within the framework of laws, court decisions, attorney generals' opinions, and similar mandates from the state and national levels of government, and recognizing the authority of the state, fulfills its mission as the governing body of a political subdivision by acting as follows in the execution of its duties including but not limited to:

- Enacts policy
- Selects, employs and evaluates the Executive Director
- Provides for the planning, expansion, improvement, financing, construction and maintenance of the physical plant of the school system
- Prescribes the minimum standards needed for the efficient operation and improvement of the school system
- Requires the establishment and maintenance of records, accounts, archives, management methods and procedures incidental to the conduct of school business
- Approves the budget, financial reports, audits, major expenditures, payment of obligations and policies whereby the administration may formulate procedures, regulations and other guides for the orderly accomplishment of business
- Estimates the funds necessary from taxes for the operation, support, maintenance and improvement of the school system
- Adopts courses of study
- Provides staff and instructional aids
- Evaluates the educational program to determine the effectiveness with which the schools are achieving the educational purposes of the school system
- Provides for the dissemination of information relating to the schools necessary for creating a well-informed public
- Approves/disapproves teacher/administrative nominations from the Executive Director and determines (where appropriate via collective bargaining) compensation and working conditions of all staff.
- Establishes criteria to be used in determining eligibility of applicants for enrollment

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA § 1001

Revised and Adopted: October 3, 2013

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## **BOARD MEETINGS**

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The MECDHH/GBSD School Board normally meets the first Friday of the month from 5:30pm to 7:30pm in the cafeteria, or you can join via zoom by going to the link below.

Here you will also find the agenda and can check the date of the next meeting.

**The School Board will determine if adjustments need to be made to these dates. Special Board meetings may be scheduled.**

\*No meetings are held in July

The Executive Director and board chair prepare the agenda for the meetings. Agendas posted on the website the Monday before each meeting: <https://www.mecdhh.org/events/>

2022-2023 Preschool Family Handbook, Board approved August 4, 2022.

# MECDHH/Governor Baxter School for the Deaf

Board Approved: April 5, 2022

## 2022-2023 Calendar

August 2022							September 2022							October 2022							November 2022							December 2022						
M	T	W	T	F			M	T	W	T	F			M	T	W	T	F			M	T	W	T	F			M	T	W	T	F		
1	2	3	4*	5			3	4	(5)	6*	7	8	9	3	4	(5)	6*	7	8	9	1	(2)	3*	4			5	6	(7)	8	9			
8	9	10	11	12			10	11	(12)	13	14	15	16	17	18	(19)	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31						
22	23	24	25	26			26	27	(28)	29	30																							
24 New Staff Orientation <b>25 All Staff</b> 29-31 School-year staff PD days							1-2 School-year staff PD days 2 Preschool Open House 5 Labor Day 6 First day PreK-12/school staff							7 No school-year staff/No students 10 Indigenous Peoples' Day							11 Veterans Day 23 No students/school-year staff 24-25 Thanksgiving recess							23 No students/school-year staff 26-30 Winter break						
4 school-year staff/0 student							21 school-year staff /19 student							19 school-year staff /19 student							18 school-year staff /18 student							16 school-year staff /16 student						

<b>January 2023</b>										<b>February 2023</b>										<b>March 2023</b>										<b>April 2023</b>										<b>May 2023</b>																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																								
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School-year Staff 2022-23						
August	.....	4				
September	.....	21				
October	.....	19				
November	.....	18				
December	.....	16				
January	.....	20				
February	.....	15				
March	.....	23				
April	.....	14				
May	.....	22				
June	.....	11				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>.....</b>	<b>183</b>				

<input type="checkbox"/> Holiday/Vacation (non-paid teacher days)	<input type="checkbox"/> School year staff PD day (no students)	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Release (one-hour early)	<input type="checkbox"/> No Students/School year staff (other staff report)	<input type="checkbox"/> Board Mtg 5:30-7PM, 1st Thursday, except July	<input type="checkbox"/> First/last student day, PreK-12
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