

FAMILY HANDBOOK

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MECCA PHILOSOPHY

To provide high quality, developmentally appropriate child care for all families in the community in a safe, warm, caring, and educational environment. We focus on the individual child’s age and ability to stimulate their social, cognitive, physical and emotional growth. Our program is carefully designed to nurture your child’s imagination and encourage lifelong positive values. Marlborough Elementary Child Care Association is a non-profit organization which values people: The children in our care, our families, and our employees. We are committed to work to earn the trust placed in us.

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**Ages Served**: MECCA provides care for children age three to twelve (Can be two if turning three by January 1st of that year. Must be toilet trained.)

**Enrollment**: Enrollment to MECCA is open to all children who reside in Marlborough, and who are enrolled in Preschool through Sixth grade.

We do not discriminate based on age, sex, race, color, handicap or religion.

When enrolling, families must fill out a Registration agreement packet which includes the following: consent form, health form and discipline policy form. There is a $25.00 yearly registration fee per child, and a $100.00 onetime security deposit that will be refunded upon leaving the program.

To comply with State licensing laws, all sections of the enrollment forms must be completed entirely before we can accept any child for care.

**Hours of Operation**:

Before School: 6:45am to 8:15am

Preschool: 8:15am to 2:45pm

After School: 3:00pm to 6:00pm

Summer Camp: 6:45am-6:00pm

**Calendar:** MECCA follows the Marlborough school schedule. When the school is closed MECCA will be open on a signup basis except for the following dates: Labor Day, Thanksgiving Break, Winter Recess, Good Friday, Memorial Day, and the Fourth of July.

**Absences**: If your child is going to be absent from the program, please call or e-mail to let us know. Due to staffing, families will still be charged if not in attendance.

With two weeks advanced notice in writing, families are allowed to have one week’s vacation where child care fees will be waived. Otherwise you will be responsible to pay your program fees.

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**Illness Policy:** If you send your child to the MECCA program when he/she is not feeling well, he/she will be more vulnerable to infection. It is in the best interest of your child and the other children and staff members at MECCA to keep your child at home when he/she is ill. A child needs to be well to participate actively in the program.

1. After a fever, a child’s temperature must be normal (98.6) for twenty-four hours before he/she returns to MECCA. Masking symptoms with Tylenol or other such fever reducing medication is not considered fever free.

2. If your child’s pediatrician has prescribed an antibiotic, it usually will be twenty-four hours before your child is no longer contagious, so please do not return to MECCA until this time period has elapsed. If special circumstances exist, we will need documentation from your child’s doctor.

3. Weather permitting children go outside every day. We cannot keep one child inside due to illness.

4. If your child becomes ill at MECCA and you are called, please cooperate by picking your child up promptly. We will not call unless we believe your child needs to be at home.

5. In case of immediate medical attention, the staff member will call emergency medical personal and the families will be notified. A staff member will stay with your child until a family member arrives. Your child’s medical paperwork will be brought along with them.

**Child Abuse and Neglect:** The MECCA staff members have all been through a State required Mandated Reporter training. It is our responsibility to report any suspected abuse or neglect to the department of Children and Families (DCF) within twelve hours.

Staff responsibilities:

As childcare providers we are mandated by law to report any suspicion that a child is being abused, neglected or at risk.

Specifics on reporting a suspected case of abuse or neglect

* Call the Department of Children and Families (open 24 hours a day) at 1-800-842-2288.
* The reporter’s name is required, but may be kept confidential.

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* Name of child/Date of birth
* Address of child
* Phone number of child
* Name of parents or guardians
* Address of parent or guardians
* Phone number of parents or guardians
* Relevant information such as: physical or behavioral indicators, nature and extent of injury, maltreatment or neglect
* Exact description of what the reporter has observed
* Time and date of incident
* Information about the previous injuries, if any
* Circumstances under which reporter learned of abuse
* Name of person suspected of causing injury
* Any information reporter believes would be helpful
* Any action taken to help or treat the child
* Seek medical attention for the child- if needed
* Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF-136) to DCF.
* Staff are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT General Statutes, Section 17a-101e).
* All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at the center. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.
* The management of this program has a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child.
* The administration will protect the child, including immediate notification of a parent or guardian, once there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child in our program.
* Any staff member accused of abuse or neglect may be immediately removed from his or her position until DCF’s investigation is completed. Based on whether the allegations were substantiated or not, the employee would either be dismissed from his/her position or allowed back to work.

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* Staff Training:
* Staff will be required to attend bi-annual staff meetings, held in September and February, focusing on the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of a mandated reporter. All new staff will be trained in these procedures prior to their start in the classroom.
* When an accusation of abuse or neglect by a staff member is made, the Directors must immediately inform the parents or guardians that a report has been made to DCF. Health care officials may need to talk to a child’s parents to access the cause of the child’s injuries and offer support and guidance.

**Withdrawal:** MECCA requires two weeks’ notice in writing from our families when withdrawing from the program due to staffing.

**Schedule Changes**: Although every effort will be made to accommodate schedule changes, any changes in a child’s attendance in the MECCA programs will be subject to availability.

**After School Activities/Clubs**: If your child attends an afterschool activity or a club, families are responsible for continuing to pay for their child’s scheduled days. If families pull their child from the program, they risk their spot becoming unavailable upon the completion of said activity or club.

**Medication:**  Any medication on site needs to be in its original packaging with the RX label in order to comply with Connecticut standards.

Topical medication (such as sunscreen, ointments) requires a topical form given by the program. This is only valid for one year.

When children withdraw from the program, medications needed to be picked up within that week or they will be properly disposed of.

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**Immunizations and Heath Forms**:

The state of Connecticut requires MECCA to have the following paperwork up to date on each child in order to maintain our license:

For our preschool students, an annual physical exam signed by a licensed physician must be on file with the program. Immunizations must also be included on the physical exam.

For school age children, physical exams are required by the State of Connecticut on the same schedule as the public-school system.

MECCA’s Nurse Consultant helps us keep families aware when new physicals and/or immunizations are required.

**Emergencies**:

All staff members are trained in basic emergency procedures and fire escape routes. These are readdressed during bimonthly staff meetings.

Fire Drills: MECCA conducts monthly fire drills with all programs. During this process, our staff members take the sign out book, the first aid kit, and all epi-pens, then check each classroom and bathroom to be sure every child has safely exited the building. We walk to the paved area behind the well house and take attendance by room to be sure every child is accounted for. We will only reenter the building when emergency personal deems it all clear.

Evacuation: In case of evacuation, when the emergency personal say it is unsafe to reenter the building, MECCA will walk to the Marlborough Congregational Church and the staff members will begin calling families for child pick up.

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**Positive Discipline Policy:**

The goal of discipline is to help the child develop inner controls that he/she may move toward appropriate social behavior. Methods for resolving conflicts include: Positive guidance, setting clear limits, and redirection.

When disputes arise among children or between a child and teacher, the teacher will encourage a talking out process among those involved. The goal of this talking out process will be to acknowledge feelings and find solutions using children’s ideas whenever possible.

A child who may be overly aggressive or is repeatedly destructive of other children’s work or MECCA property, may be asked to make an activity choice in another area if talking things through has not resulted in better self-control

Staff will continuously supervise children during disciplinary actions.

Staff shall not be abusive, neglectful, or use corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child shall be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety and health of the child or another child or adult.

**Sign in and Sign out**: It is mandated by the State of Connecticut that each child must be signed in and out upon arrival and departure with the time and a signature. These records are kept for two years’ time. A staff member will be signing your children in and out daily.

**Billing Procedures:** The MECCA program sends out bills every Thursday afternoon. It is the families’ responsibility to pay the full amount by the following Monday. If payment is not received by the second Monday, MECCA will not be able to accept your child into the program until your account is paid in full or you have made financial arrangements with the Business Manager. We will hold your child’s slot for an additional week, costs will incur, after that we will have to dismiss you from the program.

All checks returned from the bank for insufficient funds will have an additional charge of $15.00. MECCA will have the right to refuse any further payments by check.

Options of payment are: PayPal (meccachildren@gmail.com) If using PayPal there is a fee attached that the family will be billed, a check (made out to MECCA Inc.) or cash.

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**Late Pick-up Procedure**:

Two staff members 18 years of age or older will remain at the program at all times with the child/children.

We certainly understand that emergency situations happen

MECCA’s normal closing time is 6:00pm. In the event you are going to be late for any reason, please call MECCA ASAP.

In the event that we do not receive a phone call of your situation by 6:15pm the following steps will be taken:

* A staff person will attempt to call the child’s parent/ guardians using the numbers provided. If they cannot be reached, the staff person will attempt to call the emergency and authorized, alternate adults provided by the parents/guardians at the time of enrollment. The police will be called after 6:30pm if parent’s or other adults specified on the permission to release forms cannot be reached. At this time the child may be released to the police. The non-emergency number for our local police department is (860-295-9098) or (860-338-4117).
* Fees:
* Due to the fact that we will be paying staff members to be here with your child/children the following fees will be charged:
* 6:00-6:15pm- $10.00 per child
* 6:15-6:30pm- an additional charge of $10.00 per child
* Continual late pick up will be reviewed and could result in dismissal from the program.

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**Early Dismissal:** Children come down from school at 1:00pm instead of 3:00pm then your child will stay until regular pick-up time (By 6:00pm) There will be an additional charge.

On early dismissal days, all children scheduled to attend the preschool program will have to be picked up from MECCA at 12:45 PM rather than the usual pick up time of 2:45 PM. Unless you are a preschooler enrolled in our afterschool program, then your child will stay until regular pick up time (By 6:00pm) An announcement will be posted on Channel 3 WFSB, TV and site.

As to early dismissals due to weather, MECCA is required to close by 4:00pm. Families will need to pick up by 4:00pm on these weather-related early dismissal days.

**Weather**:

On snow days, or during other hazardous weather emergencies the MECCA program will follow the Marlborough School delay or early closing schedule.

**-Delayed opening**: If the Marlborough school has a delayed opening, then the morning MECCA program will also have a delay. Children not scheduled to attend MECCA on delayed opening days are welcome to attend. Families need to call before dropping off their child/children, and will be billed an additional fee. The parents will be notified via TV announcements on channel 3 WFSB.

* 2 Hour delay opening MECCA opens at 8:45 am, Preschool opens at 8:45am, although class will not officially begin until 10:15am.
* **Closings**: When Marlborough Elementary School is closed, MECCA must also be closed. An announcement will be posted on channel 3 WFSB, TV and site.
* **Early Dismissal**: Ratios will be maintained at all times and two staff 18 years or older will remain on the premises with the children until 4:00pm when all children are required to be picked up.
* Parents will be notified by phone or email.
* **Severe weather emergencies**: Such as tornadoes and hurricanes, staff and children will remain indoors away from any windows and doors. First aid staff will be on hand to administer first aid, such as needed until emergency personnel can arrive. If needed we will locate the children and staff members to the community room. Parents will be notified after the immediate danger has passed.

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**MECCA policy on Homework**: Monday through Thursday from 4:00pm to 5:00pm MECCA will provide a homework room where staff members will be available for homework assistance. These staff members are here to encourage children but will not force children to do homework.

If children do not complete their homework in that time period, we must move on to other scheduled activities.

If children are disruptive and are reminded more than once to settle down, they may be asked to leave the homework room for the best interest of all of the children.

**Lunch and Snacks:** During a regular afterschool day, MECCA offers a health-conscious snack at 3:00pm as the children come down from school. These snacks are posted on a bulletin board in the MECCA classrooms.

On vacation sign up days, MECCA does not provide a snack. Snacks need to be brought in from home. Lunch needs to be provided by families, and the State requires an icepack be present in every child’s lunch.

We have a no sharing food policy at MECCA, due to food allergies.

During our Summer Camp program, MECCA does not provide snack for the children.

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**Personal Belongings:** MECCA is not responsible for any child’s personal belongings. We do not allow electronic devices or toys from home.

**Change of Clothes**: Every child at MECCA must have a change of clothes in their back pack at all times.

We understand that occasional accidents will happen, however every child at MECCA must be toilet trained in order to attend.

**MECCA Preschool Supplies Needed:**

* A packed lunch and drinks every day, labeled water bottle (We will provide a morning snack) this must include an ice pack as required by the State.
* A crib sized sheet
* Blanket and pillow
* Resting buddy (Stuffed animal if desired)
* Extra changes of clothes
* Weather appropriate clothing (We do go outside in all types of weather)

All bedding will be sent home on your child’s last day of their school week to be returned for the following week.

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I ­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have read and agree to abide by the following MECCA Family handbook.

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 Family Member’s Signature Date

This page needs to be returned to MECCA and will be kept in your child’s file.

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