**Institutional Policy**

***Summary***

This handbook serves to encompass the intents and goals of the educators of the Step by Step Early Childhood Center Incorporation. It will affirm our mission statement and give the reader a clear understanding of our policies regarding all aspects of our operation.

The guidelines will highlight the objectives of our facility in conjunction with the requirements of the New York City Bureau of Child Care. Due to their dynamic nature, these requirements of the state will be adjusted as soon as they evolve.

**Mission Statement**

Step by Step Early Childhood Center is committed to providing a quality interactive educational program for all children in its care. As we strive for excellence, our highly trained staff, in collaboration with the parental community, will provide challenging experiences to meet the high-performance standards our day care fosters. We actively seek to broaden our perception and understanding of a changing world in an effort to interact with and become active members of a diverse society.

**General Policies**

**Registration**

Before a child is admitted to the care of the Institution, the parent/guardian must register the child as required. To complete registration, the parent/guardian will pick up their package at the front desk and fill out the appropriate forms. The documents to be completed and returned are:

1. Bureau of Day Care Health Record Form (white)
2. Registration Form (blue) (2) copies
3. Income eligibility (Breakfast/lunch) Form (white)
4. Physical (white for) with up-to-date immunization

Also included in the package is the school calendar, “Getting To Know You Child Survey” Cookie’s Uniform coupon and any other information related to improving the services offered by the facility. The child is expected to begin school in uniform Monday to Thursday and Fridays are dress down unless otherwise stated (this is with the exception of children under two years old) as soon as the registration process is complete.

**Arrival Policy**

1. **All students must arrive for school at 8:20 am sharp!** ***Drop off are between the hours of 8:15 am- 8:30 am.***
2. All children admitted to the facility must be awake and aware of their surroundings. No sleeping child should enter the Daycare. This safeguards the possibility of a sick child being left at the facility without the knowledge of the care provider or even the parents.
3. All children admitted to the facility must have their temperature check and families will be ask various questions related to COVID-19 protocols.
4. Parent/guardian should let the care provider know the condition of their child at arrival; hungry, tired, sleepy, cranky, teething, cuts or bruise, redness, swelling, bumps etc. This helps the provider to quickly ensuring that the child receives what he/she needs.
5. Parents **must** sign in their children when they arrive at the daycare
6. Daily attendance is recorded for each child with exemptions made for illness etc. Any child absent for 3 or more days **MUST return a note from a physician.**
* Students are excused for infectious diseases such as chicken pox, diarrhea, food poisoning, fungal infection, lice etc. or any disease that may endanger the health of the other students. The school must be made aware of the situation within 24 hours of the illness.
1. A recurring absence is defined as **10 consecutive non-excused absences** or **20 non-excused absences in a four month period.** All absences are reported to the field office along with the reason(s). The situation will determine whether the child will be removed from the program to permit another who is on the waiting list.

**Pick-up Policy**

Pick up ends each day at **3:00 pm**, (except for students who are participating in the extended program who are allowed to remain until 6:00 pm M-TH, 5:00 PM Friday). **3KA 1 – 2:55 PM- 3:00 PM, 3KA2- 3:05-3:10 PM, PKA 3:00 PM**

**Pick up will be done using the side entrance.**

The following are important to note:

1. The late arrival for pickup will incur a cost of **$5/ 15 minutes** payable at time of pick-up and up to $ 20 for late pick up.
2. Only the persons given permission (names found in child’s file, registration (blue) form) will be able to make the pick-up.
3. Should circumstances call for another other than those stated to pick up the child, the parent or guardian has to email or write a note to the Center and given the name of the person designated\*\*\**Effective 03/26/2018*. That individual must arrive with a valid picture ID which will be recorded.
4. After 3:15 pm, if not contacted by the parent/guardian, the care giver will try to contact the persons on the registration form in an attempt to get someone to pick up the child. If that proves futile, **the care giver will leave the child at the nearest precinct at Foster Avenue (69th Precinct)**
5. The Parent/guardian **must** sign out their child(ren) before leaving the daycare.
6. Parent **must**inform us in person whenever a new emergency contact is added, or a change is made to this list on blue card, this documented changed is signed or initialed by the parent.

\*\* *Effective 3/26/18*

**Health Policy**

1. Each child’s hand must be washed on entering the daycare. This allows for everyone to start on the same footing and reduces the spread of infectious diseases.
2. Practice good hand washing techniques after toileting, before and after meals and whenever necessary.
3. Open windows and doors at intervals to allow for air exchange. Take the children out for walks whenever the weather permits.
4. Parents/guardians are encouraged to replace snacks with fresh fruits, vegetables and drinking water.
5. Parents/guardians are asked not to allow their children to wear beads or jewelry to the center. *\*\*Small hair beads, clips, sliders, etc. are not to be worn by children under three years old because it may be hazardous. \*\**
6. These are choking hazards and the daycare will not be held responsible.
7. Please refer to **(5) in Arrival Policy** regarding infectious diseases.

**Covid-19 Regulation** *(Please refer to covid-19 safety Plans)*

1. Upon arrival to center for drop off /pick up all families must maintain 6 ft apart and following the markers and signage.
2. Only one (1) family is allotted in the waiting area at a time. Please wait patiently outside while maintaining social distancing.
3. Temperature/screening check will be taken daily for **anyone** entering the building.
4. Children 2 years old and up are recommended to wear a face covering.
5. Children will not be able to enter with a temperature greater than 100.2 F. **If, it is suspect your child or an adult has covid, documentation of testing must be given to the school and the person must be quarantine for 14 days if there is a positive result.**
6. Families that are entering the center including the waiting area must wear a mask.
7. Limited number of families can enter the center.

**SNACKS/PARTIES**

We encourage our parents to provide healthy snacks for their children. Instead of candies, sweet biscuits, donuts, etc, try replacing them with fruits, vegetable, whole wheat crackers and water.

Please also note that this is a **nut free** school as there are children here with **severe allergies** to these items. This means that no food or snack that enters the building must be made of any nuts. These include, but not limited to peanuts, almonds, walnuts, etc.

Birthday parties are held at 1:30 pm for 3K and 4K and 3:00 pm for all other students. Parents are reminded not to include snacks with nuts (M&Ms, chocolate bars, etc) in the goody bags.

**Extended Day Program**

The Extended Day program seeks to facilitate the parents who are unable to pick up their child at 3:00 pm. We will use this opportunity to enrich your child’s education through Writing Skills, Science and Math based Inquiry and Arts and Craft.

Extended Program/Afterschool Services **$420** a month. Payments are due by the 5th of each month.

(late fee : $20)

***When public school/PKA/3KA is closed and Step by Step is open there is an additional fee.***

***Extenders/ After schoolers: $20/ a day***

***Non- Extenders $40/ a day***

**Financing/Fees**

Owing to the instability of the economy, the institution is well aware of the struggles faced by well-meaning parents/guardians. With this in mind, Step by Step has endeavored to keep any cost at a minimum.

Pre-K and 3K for all are free. However, any time spent before or after 3:00 pm will incur a cost. We offer an extended period for parents who are unable to make the pick-up time or who have to drop off their child before 8:20 am. There is therefore a fee for this extended program.

If Pre-K/3K for all is closed, the daycare fee applies.

We do accept ACD and other private vouchers.

 **Uniforms**

We would like to see our children uniformed as it provides a common ground for all students, with each child now focused solely on learning. As such, we suggest you purchase uniforms of Hunters Green pants/dress with light yellow shirts.

They may be bought at Cookie’s Department Stores. A discount coupon is available.

**Staffing** *(as per Article 47 of the Bureau of Day Care and the Department of Education)*

The staff employed at Step by Step are of the highest quality and are trained and licensed individuals who are committed to imparting sound education to the children. Each class is furnished with at least a trained teacher and an assistant.

All members of staff are approved by the Bureau of Child Care and the DOE and are being trained continuously in aspects that are relevant to the program.

Each staff member is expected to perform as professionals and adhere to both the internal and external regulations governing child care.

**Family and Teachers Conference**

Our program strongly believes in the partnership of families in the Pre K and 3K for all program. The connection builds a foundation for on-going learning for Pre K/3K and beyond. The program therefore provides three (3) conferences for the year. The dates will be announced in the yearly Calendar.

Families are encouraged to communicate with the staff regarding their children verbally, by telephone email or on the website ([www.stepbystepecc.com](http://www.stepbystepecc.com))

**Field Trips and Neighborhood Walks**

In order to expand our students’ experiences, they will be going on various trips that are appropriate and aligned to the theme of study. Parents must sign an approval form for all trips and walks. You will be given two weeks’ notice and no child will be allowed to attend any excursion without permission.

**Our Track Record**

Step by Step Early Childhood Center, Inc. has been in business for almost two decades and has shown its caliber in its graduates who often times than not, are accepted in Charter Schools and the gifted programs of the public schools in the area. Our students have excelled in these new environments and inadvertently have been our advocates.

We are proud of their achievements and take encouragement from them as they boost our spirit of commitment.

***Thank you for your continued support and for trusting us to help to mold your beloved ones.***