



**Family and Student Guidebook
Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center
2019-2020 School Year**

Lisa Heyne, Executive Director and Superintendent
Sarah Cooper, Pedagogista
Kate Adams-Blake, President, Board of Directors

Note: this document is a work in progress and in draft form at this time. If you have questions or see an issue, please contact Lisa Heyne at heynel@childdiscoverycenter.org

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Attendance

We have a school-wide goal of 95% Average Daily Attendance or above for our entire student body *and* for each individual student. That is our general guideline. In alignment with best practices, we use 10 absences per year as our guideline for every students' attendance standard.

Over the course of the school year, this is the general guideline:

Excused	Unexcused
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 0-3- No action ● 4-7-Teacher Communication ● 8-10- Written Communication and contact from the Family Community Liaison ● 11-12- Written Communication and Required Administrative meeting ● 12+- Referral to the Office of Truancy <p><small>*for excused absences, the School Leader is authorized to verify and check on the cause of absences, as well as waive any of the steps above in extreme/unusual circumstances</small></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1st- call and Written Communication ● 2nd- Written Communication and required Administrative Meeting ● 3rd- call and home visit from Family Community Liaison ● 4th+- Written Communication and referral Office of School Attendance and Participation <p><small>*Families have 24 hours to excuse the absence via email or phone call. If after 24 hours the absence remains unexcused, the school will make an effort to contact the family to verify the reason for the absence.</small></p>

If your child is going to be absent, you must call the office at 459-0330 and let us know. You can leave a voicemail 24 hours a day.

Asking Questions/Who Does What?

We have a lot of adults working in our building! This is because we have a focus on Education Based on Relationships. We try to make sure to keep our kid to adult ratio small- about 10:1 or less. However, this can make it hard for parents and families to keep everyone straight at first. When in doubt of who to ask about something, your best bet is to call the office at 459-0330. Ms. Rachel or Ms. Jessie will be able to point you in the right direction.

People (besides your child's teacher) you should know:

- **Ms. Lisa Heyne:** Executive Director/Superintendent- Can answer or direct ALL questions. heynel@grcdc.org
- **Ms. Rachel Harth:** Main Office/Administrative Assistant/Director of Operations- She can help with Attendance Policy, Enrollment questions, medication, transportation, building use, and any other "central office" type of questions. Ms. Rachel keeps Ms. Heyne's appointment calendar, if you would like to set up a meeting, she can help. Ms. Rachel also does our state and federal reporting, human resources, payroll, and billing. harthrac@grcdc.org
- **Ms. Jessie Hammond:** Main Office/Administrative Support- Ms. Jessie is in the front office 4 days a week and answers phones, helps parents and children, works with medical needs, and provides support for children and families alike. She can answer most of what Ms. Rachel can answer for families. Ms. Jessie also handles extracurricular activities and clubs. hammondj@grcdc.org
- **Ms. Sarah Cooper:** Pedagogista/Instructional Leader- Ms. Cooper supports and coaches teachers, ensures our curriculum is being implemented, elevates our Reggio approach, and coordinates our testing. Specific curricular, classroom and/ or testing questions can be directed to Ms. Cooper. coopesar@grcdc.org (note: Ms. Cooper is out for maternity leave from August 27-early December this year)

- **Ms. Danielle Starke:** Special Education Team Lead- Special Education evaluation, Student Support Team, 504 plan and implementation, and IEP related questions should go to Danielle. starked@grcdc.org
- **Ms. Melissa Lantinga:** Special Education Resource Teacher and Behavior Support- Ms. Lantinga partners with Lisa and Trevor to support the School Culture Plan of the school. She can help answer questions especially related to social and emotional aspects of IEPs or when a student might need a Functional Behavior Analysis and Behavior Intervention Plan. lantingam@grcdc.org
- **Mr. Trevor Gilbert:** Family and Community Liaison/Social Emotional Learning Lead Facilitator- Mr. Trevor works with transportation, community connections, homelessness, and behavior support. Mr. Trevor is frequently involved if a child needs extra support to be successful socially or behaviorally in school. He is a great person to contact if you are wondering how to best support your child at home with these types of issues. gilbetre@grcdc.org
- **Ms. Lisa Holmes:** Ms. Lisa is our food service worker. She prepares breakfast and lunch daily for our students. Her aide on every day except for Thursday is Mr. John.
- **Mr. Eric Cole:** Maintenance and Custodial Technician- Mr. Eric is solely responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of our old building, as well as keeping it clean! He welcomes volunteers to help with this. Feel free to reach out to Eric if you are interested in helping with facilities maintenance or cleaning. Other questions for Eric should be directed to Lisa Heyne.
- **Mr. Joel-** Custodial Apprentice- Mr. Eric has an apprentice that works on a volunteer basis at our school. Mr. Joel has worked at our school for many years to practice job-related skills. Mr. Joel has a job coach who helps him complete his routine tasks at our school daily.
- **Ms. Beth and TBD** Interventionists- Ms. Beth works with students for reading intervention. We are currently hiring for our math interventionist position. You will know if your child is receiving intervention services because you will receive an Intervention Plan from your child’s teacher. The interventionists typically work with children 2-3 times a week for about 20 minutes for 6 week cycles. Ms. Beth: scarbroughb@grcdc.org
- **The Paras!**- We have 6 Paraprofessionals that work with students at varying times throughout the school day and provide supervision at lunch and recess. Each para has a “homebase”, but could work with several different classes throughout the day:
 - Mr. Fiore: First Grade Support and k-1 Social/Emotional learning
 - Ms. Abby Jensen: Kindergarten support
 - TBD- Second Grade Support
 - Ms. Megan Parisian- Third Grade Support and Third Grade Social/Emotional Learning
 - Ms. Aimee Ritesema- Fourth Grade Support
 - Mr. Eric Trichenor- Fifth Grade Support
 - Mr. Trevor Gilbert- Supplemental Support, Lead SEL Teacher, and 2, 4, 5th SEL

Behavior Expectations at GRCDC

- **Schoolwide Rules-** Our shared classroom and school rules are called the 3 Bs. The 3 Bs are a consistent way for all students to know what is expected of them- no matter where they are in the building.

Be Kind to Yourself	
Classroom/gym	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contribute your best effort <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take risks and ask questions ○ Be positive ○ Make connections ● Know your purpose ● Be a good friend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use appropriate language ○ Encourage others ○ Solve problems peacefully ● Be aware of personal space ● Follow adult directions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accept “no” appropriately ○ Be patient
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Know your purpose ● Be a good friend ● Be aware of personal space ● Stay inside the playground area ● Follow adult directions to keep you safe
Hallway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a quiet voice ● Walk quietly ● Have a pass ● Be aware of personal space ● Know your purpose and be timely
Bathroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a quiet voice. ● Have a pass ● Know your purpose and be timely
Dining Room/Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a quiet voice ● Eat your lunch and let others eat ● Be aware of personal space ● Raise a hand for help ● Wait to be dismissed ● Follow the Zero Waste System

Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a quiet voice ● Have a pass ● Know your purpose ● Be a respectful visitor
Be Kind to Others	
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a quiet voice ● Be part of the community ● Be a good friend ● Work and let others work
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be a good friend ● Be aware of personal space ● Know the purpose of others
Hallway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a quiet voice ● Be aware of personal space ● Know the purpose of others
Bathroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be aware of personal space ● Respect others and their privacy
Dining Room/Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a quiet voice. ● Eat your lunch and let others eat ● Be aware of personal space ● Wait to be dismissed ● Follow the Zero Waste System ● Leave the space ready for the next group
Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a quiet voice. ● Be aware of the purpose of others ● Wait patiently

Be Kind to Your Environment	
Classroom/gym	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a quiet voice ● Use materials for their intended purposes ● Leave the space ready for the next group
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be aware of the space around you ● Use materials for their intended purposes ● Leave the space ready for the next group
Hallway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be aware of the space around you ● Use and touch with permission ● Leave the space ready for the next group
Bathroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conserve materials. Use only what you need ● Leave the space ready for the next group
Dining room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use a quiet voice ● Follow the Zero Waste System ● Leave the space ready for the next group
Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be aware of the space around you ● Use and touch with permission ● Leave the space ready for the next group

The Board of Directors of GRCDC

Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center is a free, public, non-profit charter school. The Grand Rapids Public School district is our charter authorizer. As such, our school is autonomously governed by a Board of Directors. The role of the Board at our school is to govern- the Board hires, manages, and evaluates the Executive Director, approves and oversees the budget, ensures the school is in compliance with laws and regulations, and sets and/or approves the policies which govern the running of the school. The detailed workings of the board can be found in the first section of the Board Policy Book (linked on page 1).

Board Business meetings are open to the public and to staff. For the current academic year, they are the 2nd Monday of every month from 6-7:30pm. Board postings are on the bulletin board in the entryway.

The Board for the 2019-2020 School Year:

Kate Adams-Blake, President

Meg Lockard, Vice President
Anissa Eddie, Treasurer
Abby Sutter, Secretary
Ted Jauw, Board Member at Large
Andrew Brower, Board Member at Large
Amelia Grayson, Board Member at Large

Board Policies

The Board has adopted many policies to ensure the smooth operations of our district. They can be found at grcd.org- click "school" tab, then click "Board of Directors"

Breakfast

If your child is going to eat breakfast at school, they can arrive between 8:15am-8:30am. Drop your child off to the FRONT of the school (off of Lafayette). Your child will be let in the front door, signed in, and will be able to go down to the dining room for breakfast.

Bullying Policy

Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center believes all of its students and employees should be afforded an education setting that is safe, secure and free from bullying and harassment. Therefore, demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment or bullying is expected of students, staff, administrators, visitors, and volunteers.

Bullying is Prohibited

Bullying of any pupil at Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center, including cyberbullying, is prohibited regardless of its subject matter or motivation. [The Bullying Policy is found here](#)

Contacting and Connecting with Teachers and Other Staff

ALL classroom teachers will make themselves available to meet with you and/or you and your child, as needed. Simply email the teacher to arrange an appointment. If you wish to connect with teachers briefly, all teachers pick up their classes on the yard in the morning at 8:35am. Many teachers will also hold regular "open door" hours, so check your teacher's newsletter for information. Most teachers also have a class Facebook page and all teachers will be sending home a newsletter twice a month. Make sure you have downloaded Remind, as that will also be an easy way to get in touch with teachers and stay up to date on announcements. Teacher and staff should reply to any email sent within 48 hours. If you need additional help or you are not receiving the response you need, email Lisa Heyne at heynel@grcdc.org

Community Meetings

Twice a month on Thursday mornings, we will hold Community Meetings. These meetings will begin at around 8:45am and be an opportunity for us to celebrate milestones as a community, spotlight our social/emotional learning and projects and experience the talents of our community. Families (including younger siblings) are welcome to attend, just drop your child off in their line, enter the gym door and sign in.

Culture and Discipline Approach

Vision for the Intense Student Support Network

Education Based on Relationships

“We consider relationships to be the fundamental, organizing strategy of our educational system. We view relationships not simply as a warm, protective backdrop or blanket but as a coming together of elements interacting dynamically toward a common purpose.” Our common purpose is learning for all, resulting in increased life opportunities for every student who enters our school. In our school, children are not at the center of the system. Rather, at our center is a triad which represents the child, the family, and the teacher/adults in relationship with one another. Shared experiences, discussions, activities, provocations, interactions, and projects result in deep learning for all. The choices that we make should always be towards the purpose of intensifying and strengthening the relationships of the three subjects: child, family, teacher. (based on For an Education Based on Relationships by Loris Malaguzzi, 1993)

Our Images:

- Children are Rich in Potential, Strong, and Powerful
- Staff Members are Supported, Connected, and Inspired
- Community is Whole, in Relationship, and Diverse

Based on our vision, mission, philosophy and Images of Children, Adults, and Community, we hold certain core values. We believe in potential, connection, inspiration, and equity.

GRDC CORE VALUES

Potential ☑ Connection ☑ Inspiration ☑ Equity

We believe in Potential...

- Humans are born with the need and the right to communicate, interact, and use their energy and curiosity to construct their learning.
- Children have a voice that is sought, valued, and shapes the life of the school.
- Children and adults can do hard things in order to grow, and can withstand ambiguity, cognitive struggle, and challenge in order to learn.
- Each person has limitless potential and we behave in ways that show that.
- The school’s charge is to provide a system of delivery resulting in all children learning at high levels, so that their life opportunities and access are expanded through their experience here.

We believe in Connection...

- All of us bloom by engaging with one another, sharing roles and jobs, and approaching our school with collective responsibility.

- Each child has a network of relationships at school that make it impossible for them to fail.
- At the center of our system is the triad relationship between teacher/staff, children, and family- all of these are connected within the context of the environment and community.
- Adults must build a safety net for children- our processes and procedures result in a systematic response that meets each child's social/emotional and academic needs
- When we are in conflict, we must seek mutually agreeable solutions and collaborate to solve problems.

We believe in Inspiration...

- Each of us possesses a unique combination of 100 languages- for expressing, communicating, absorbing and experimenting with the world around them.
- The 100 languages must be honored and recognized in our experiences with one another.
- Curiosity, creativity, and flexibility are necessary ingredients in the human condition.
- Children thrive where adults thrive and vice versa.
- Joy, fun, and celebration are essential to our life together at school.

We believe in Equity...

- Each community member is whole, just as they are.
- Learning, wellness, nutrition, and access to experiences and opportunities are rights that all people have.
- We have a responsibility to constantly ask, "what am I missing?" "whose voice is missing?" "are we all here?" "are we all heard?" in order to elevate the voices of members of oppressed or marginalized groups.
- Each person in our community belongs; this is reflected in our interactions with one another, our physical space, our events and curricular choices.
- We have a responsibility to disrupt the status quo and seek equity, reject oppression, and create social justice.

Our Core Values call us to build an Intense Student Support Network that systematically builds social and emotional health, strong relationships between and among students and staff and families and recognizes this is an essential element to providing an opportunity-expanding education for all.

The Intense Student Support Network will:

- Ensure all teachers act with the "kids do well when they can" mindset (potential)

- Teach collaborative routines regularly and support teachers in re-teaching and tweaking such routines so that each child's needs are met (connection)
- Use common language, consistent expectations, and a progressive matrix of behavioral consequences, interventions, and strategies (equity)
- Create, implement, and reinforce schoolwide rules, routines, and processes that support the healthy culture of the whole school community (connection, equity)
- Partner with the A-Team to eliminate racial disproportionality in behavior outcomes (equity)
- Create and implement a system of early warning signs and response when something "goes wrong" for a student with increasing intensity as necessary (connection, equity)
- Use data for determining which individual or groups of students might need intensified support in the social emotional, relationship, or health and wellness realm (potential)
- Connect with outside community resources to enhance the safety net of the school
- Work with any and all parts of the relationship triad (teacher/staff - child - family) in order to strengthen the connection a child feels to school (potential, connection)

Being guided by our philosophy and our core values, committed to the actions above, the Student Support Network guarantees that GRCDC is prepared to meet the academic and non-academic needs of our children.

Culture and Discipline Support and Intervention

We use a 3 Tiered system to think about and support culture and discipline practices in our school. Many of these practices are quite simple and when used consistently, will meet the needs of most of our students. However, some students will require a more intensive approach and we are prepared to provide that as well.

The purpose of a schoolwide culture and behavior plan is to ensure children:

- Feel physically and emotionally safe in school so that they can learn at their best
- Learn the skills for working and learning cooperatively with others

Tier 1- Foundational for ALL students, all the time every day (all staff)

- Responsive School Wide Discipline Plan (includes Universal Quiet Signal, School Wide Rules, Positive Language, Interactive Modeling)
- Social Emotional Learning Curriculum/SEL extension for full class
- Classroom Culture Plans
- Responsive Classroom Morning Meeting and Closing Circle Routines
- Classwide Problem Solving Conference

Tier 2- strategies for 15% or less of students at any given time (mostly classroom teacher)

- Classroom Cool Down Box/Spot
- Buddy Teacher
- Informal/proactive Parent Contact
- Short Term problem Solving Peer Group (1 day-1 week)
- Extension of the Social Emotional Learning Lessons for small group
- Small Group Problem Solving Conference

Tier 3- strategies for 5% or less of students at any given time (Lisa, Trevor, and/orMelissa)

- Parent Planning Meeting (teacher + admin)
- Private Time Out in non-classroom space (chain of support)
- Safety Plan with Lisa or Trevor
- Assignment to a 6 weeks Advisory Group
- "different grade band" Buddy Teacher
- RC Problem Solving Conference
- SST meeting
- Functional Behavior Analysis and Behavior Plan

Culture and Discipline: Major Discipline/Behavior Referrals

A major behavior results in an Office Discipline Referral, to be entered on SWIS. Once the referral is received, someone from the Behavior Support Team will review, investigate if necessary, and consult with teachers as needed. *The response may be managed by the BST, the teacher, or a combination of the two.*

Major Behaviors- Result in an Office Discipline Referral (the behavior response matrix)		
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Legal)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inappropriate language directed at staff or classmate (could also be a minor, depending) ● Scuffle ● Sexualized behavior- not developmentally appropriate ● Uniqueness Slurs (race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, body type, etc.) ● Harassment of another student or staff member (could be level 2 or 3) ● Refusal to follow emergency procedures ● Leaving school grounds ● Academic Dishonesty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bullying (as defined by the bullying policy) ● Physical contact intended to harm another ● Weapons (also could be level 3) ● Sexualized behavior targeting others ● Vandalism/Malicious destruction of property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assault ● Robbery or theft ● Drug possession ● Drug distribution
<p>First Occurrence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conference with student - Parent Contact 	<p>First Occurrence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem Solving Conference - Alternate Activity 	<p>Any Occurrence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Up to 10 day suspension ● Mandatory Parent Meeting

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflection Sheet or Reflection conversation <p>Second Occurrence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem Solving Conference - Alternate Activity - Parent contact <p>Third Occurrence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mandatory Parent meeting - Possible FBA/BIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent contact - Restitution/Restorative activity <p>Second Occurrence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternate setting within the school day (different teacher or member of the BST) - Up to 3 suspension - Mandatory Parent Meeting - FBA/BIP <p>Third Occurrence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-3 day suspension - Safety Plan - Referral to outside services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Possible expulsion ● Contact law enforcement
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Dismissal Procedure

The Goal:

- To ensure that every student from GRCDC gets **safely** to the **authorized** car or walker who is picking them up
- To have a dismissal procedure that is **calm** and allows for a **positive transition** from school to the next environment students will be going to at the end of the day
- To **account for every child**, every day, during dismissal

Child Identification

Each child will be assigned a color and a number. The color will indicate the grade the child is in and the number is their personalized number. Each child will wear their color/number on a tag at dismissal. The car or walker picking them up will have a matching color/number card in their car or in their hand.

Leaving the Building

After instruction ends at 3:40, teachers will walk their class to an assigned spot in the gym. Students going to after care will be dropped off at the gym door and greeted by an after care worker. **Students being picked up by a car or walking adult will stay in line with their teacher.**

Authorized Car or Walker

Each person authorized to pick up a specific child will receive a card with the child's color and number on it. When picking up that child, the adult **MUST** have the color card with them to display (this identifies the adult as an authorized person and indicates who the child is to the staff members working the pickup lines).

- Cars: must display the color cards for all students being picked up in that car on the right side dashboard (visible to staff working the line)

- Walking adults: Simply have the card with you

Getting the Child(ren) from the Teacher's Line to the Car or Walking Adult

Authorized Car: When you pull up to the pickup area on Cass Ave, 3 pairs of staff members will be working the line. They will see the colored number cards in your windshield and radio for the child(ren) you are picking up. The children will be safely escorted to your car by school staff and you can be on your way! Once all children are in your car, you can exit the line.

Authorized Walking Adult: Walkers will meet the dismissal staff members on the lot near the gym door. There will be orange cones to indicate the proper location of the Walker Rendezvous. The walking adults will give the card to the school staff members in bright vests, and the staff member will go alert the teacher in the gym to send the child out.

Forgetting your Authorized Pick Up Card OR Sending Someone on a One Time Pick Up

We understand that life happens. You might change cars or have a rental, or just forget to bring the Authorized Pick Up card. You might have out of town grandparents come and pick up the kids once in a while. We get it! ***People who DO NOT have an Authorized Pick Up Card must park in the family lot and come to the main office.*** Once office staff verifies the authorization, a "temporary" Pick Up Card will be issued. That person will then go to the Walker Rendezvous spot (black top by gym door) and a staff member in a bright vest will come to dismiss the child.

Dress Code

The students of GRCDC do not wear uniforms. We ask that students dress comfortably and appropriate to the weather. Children go outside every day, twice a day. The only change to that is active rain- we still go out when it is wet but not currently raining.

Facebook Groups

Facebook can be a great way to share information, connect, celebrate and document the work and thinking of our children. However, navigating Facebook as a school is a little different from personal pages, which are usually one on one in nature and can be quite personal. For school Facebook pages, we seek to make sure that the Image of the Child, Adult, and Community are all upheld.

There are two school based Facebook groups-

- **Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center- grcdc-** This is our "official" school page. We will post updates, celebrations, events, for the general public on this page. Lisa Heyne moderates this page.
- **GRCDC Narwhals- Families of Current Students-** This is the Family Team page and is meant for families of currently enrolled students. School events, announcements from the Family Team will be shared and parents can post questions and information here, as well. The family team moderates this page.
- **Classroom Facebook Pages-** Many teachers curate a classroom Facebook page. This is for reminders and information and also a fun and easy way for teachers to document the work and thinking of children as they move through the year. Individual teachers moderate this page.

-
We ask that families adhere to some general guidelines to be good GRCDC social media citizens. Please make the job of our moderators easy!

Guidelines for Participation in GRCDC Facebook Pages (Public, Family Team, and Classroom)

- *Source: Facebook Group Moderation Guidelines (inspired by)*

1. **Be Kind and Courteous**

We're all in this together to create a welcoming environment. Let's treat everyone with respect.

2. **No Hate Speech or Bullying**

Make sure everyone feels safe. Bullying of any kind isn't allowed, and degrading comments about things like race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender or identity will not be tolerated.

3. **No Promotions or Spam**

Give more than you take to this group. Self-promotion, spam and irrelevant links aren't allowed. Also promotion of political causes not connected directly to the school (such as school board or bond issues) should be avoided.

4. **Respect Privacy-** Photographs, videos or any image of children, staff or any member of our school community must not be published on a personal or public web space without prior permission from the school.

5. **Focus on Connections-** Remember the page is for classroom information, connections, documentations or discussion. Please refrain from critical or personal comments about staff, children or other parents.

6. **Use Another Form of Communication for Concerns or Frustrations-** If you have the need to challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children or members of staff, we definitely would like to engage- just not on facebook. Please email the person involved, call the office to make an appointment or email, call or speak with Ms Heyne.

Family Team

The Family Team is YOU! When you enrolled your child in Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center, you joined a diverse community that aims to expand the potential of *all* children. This requires a partnership between school staff, family members, and the broader community.

Most schools have a group of dedicated people that works with the school to support its mission by raising funds, hosting events, and supporting extracurricular activities. These groups are often called Parent-Teacher Organizations. **At GRCDC, this group is known as the Family Team, and it includes all GRCDC families.** The Family Team provides the organizing structure for parent and guardian involvement at the school. Your membership in the Family Team is automatic.

The Family Team needs your participation. GRCDC's charter school status creates a solid foundation for its Reggio Emilia-inspired approach to learning. That status gives GRCDC incredible flexibility and freedom and also creates additional responsibilities for staff and family alike! That means your participation in the Family Team is **critical**. Not only is family participation essential to meeting the unique challenges that charter schools face; it's also an integral part of the Reggio philosophy. The school values the role of the Family Team and depends on us to support the school's mission.

- Lend your voice: Attend a monthly meeting, get informed, and join the discussion.
- Help out with special events, like the family dance or school fair.
- Raise funds: Past GRCDC fundraisers have included a wreath sale, a flower sale, movie nights, Box Top collection, and more. New ideas are always welcome.
- Handle communications for an event by creating a poster or helping to get the word out.
- Coordinate volunteers for events by creating sign-ups and contacting volunteers.
- Help in the classroom. Stuff folders or consider being a class liaison, working with the teacher to meet the needs of the classroom.
- Get involved with one of GRCDC's many extracurricular offerings. Help identify, recruit, and support extracurricular leaders and coaches. Or lead an activity yourself!

Let us know how you'd like to be involved. Contact the Family Team: grcdfamilyteam@gmail.com

Friday Folder and Link Letter

Each week on Fridays, children will receive their Friday Folder and you will receive a copy of the Link Letter. The Friday Folder will contain important information from your child's teacher and the school. There will frequently be items that need to be signed and sent back to the school. Send the folder back with your child on Monday. The Link Letter is distributed via email or hard copy. Please make sure you read it, it will contain LOTS of important information.

Lunch

Lunch is served daily and free for all GRCDC students. Children will have recess first, as research shows that children are then more willing to eat after recess. The cafeteria rules are covered by the 3 Bs. Children are expected to show courteous behavior in the lunchroom and listen to the para pro working with their class.

Morning Drop Off

In the morning, all children who are coming to school can be dropped off at the back of the school (off Cass) beginning at 8:30am. Please DO NOT drop off your child along Lafayette, Logan, or in the parking lot. This is prohibited as it causes several potential safety hazards.

Starting at 8:30am, children will line up according to their classroom. Children will be escorted inside the building by their classroom teacher at 8:35am. Classroom instruction will begin every day at 8:45am.

Parents who walk in with their children must leave the classroom by 8:45 am unless otherwise arranged and approved by the teacher. This is to protect instructional time, but also to build the culture of the classroom, as well. Some of our students struggle with unpredictability and really thrive on a safe

routine. All classrooms will begin Morning Meetings with their teacher at 8:45am and that will signal to students the start to their school day!

Promptly at 8:45am, the back gate will be closed. Families must park in the family lot and bring their child in **as tardy students must be signed in.**

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

MTSS is a research based approach to ensuring learning happens for all children. **MTSS is an integrated system of instruction, assessment, and intervention designed to meet the achievement and behavioral needs of all learners.** The essential components to MTSS include: 1) Instruction and Intervention, 2) Comprehensive Screening and Assessment System, 3) Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices, 4) Problem-Solving, and 5) Stakeholder/Family Involvement.

MTSS includes three tiers. Tier I represents the high quality instruction that occurs in the classroom with all students and our goal is to ensure that Tier I instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of at least 80% of our students. Tier II strategies are different than the Tier I approach and target instruction within the classroom; Tier II strategies may be necessary to meet the needs of about 15% of our students. Tier III strategies are the highest level of support, requiring more time and typically with an interventionist outside of the classroom. Only about 5% of students should be receiving Tier III instruction at any given time.



Parent Teacher Conferences

Conferences will be held for all families in October or November of each year. Each teacher will host a conference for each child on their class list for approximately 20 minutes. Teachers schedule conferences within provided timeframes, offering early morning and evening options to accommodate parent needs as well as scheduled breaks for the teacher. Teachers will work with families to schedule conferences for separated parents as needed. Special education resource room teachers will join homeroom teachers for their caseload.

Portfolios and Portfolio Day

Each GR CDC child has a portfolio, or a collection of artifacts (drawings, paintings, writing, photographs, work samples, etc.) that speaks to academic learning, developmental milestones, social-emotional growth, learning strategies and identity. It is updated and added to each year. The portfolio travels with the child during their GR CDC career. Upon 5th grade graduation, the child leaves the school with a large collection of student work.

On Portfolio Day, families join together in small groups each spring to reflect on student learning in our annual Portfolio Day celebration. Children will attend school with a parent for just part of the day. This alternative schedule allows for a rich experience between children, parents and teachers.

Reggio Emilia Approach and Inspiration

The GRCDC is inspired by Northern Italy's Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. The school looks to this approach as a model for viewing teaching and learning, children and education. It is not a curriculum that can be carried out the same in any context. The approach is based on the work of Dewey, Piaget, Bronfenbrenner, Bruner, Vygotsky, and other educational theorists. It is continuously revised, adapted and improved upon throughout the world.

At the GRCDC, "Reggio inspired," ambitious teaching upholds five core principles, each with a set of practices aimed to honor the Reggio Emilia philosophy in our American, K-5, public school. These five core principles include:

1. The Image of the Child
2. The Environment is the Third Teacher
3. Documentation Process as a Cycle of Inquiry and Meaningful Projects
4. The 100 Languages of Children
5. The Three Subjects: Teachers, Families and Children

School Leadership

The single building school district (SBSD) has one leader who reports to the Board, that is the Executive Director/Superintendent. All other employees of the SBSD report (either directly or indirectly) to the Executive Director.

The SBSD also employs a Pedagogista. In this SBSD, this is a hybrid role of instructional leader and instructional coach. The Pedagogista also partners and collaborates with the Studio Coordinator and all teachers to think about, refine, and continuously inspire our Reggio approach.

The Executive Director and Pedagogista are aligned by the vision of the school and work together to ensure all decisions align with the vision and the School Improvement Plan.

Report Cards

Families will receive four, formal report cards throughout the year, one at the end of each quarter or term. Report cards are standard based.

Families should expect that Report Cards include comments from the teacher on Term 2 and 4 Report Cards (term 1 and 3 should be considered more of a progress report)

Families can expect comments on:

- a. Progress on SPED, Tier 2 and Tier 3 goals (interventionist input)
- b. Fountas and Pinnell Reading level and grade level goal
- c. Progress within Math, including iReady Diagnostic score and what it means

- d. Social/Emotional development, behavior.
- e. One short summary about the project (1-2 sentences)

Retention

Generally, GRCDC does not retain students. Research shows that this practice does not improve student outcomes in the short nor long term. However, we will take into account individual student needs as necessary.

The “Third Grade Reading Law” passed by the state of Michigan requires schools to have retention policy linked to 3rd grade reading test scores. As we develop this in partnership with the Board, we will share with parents via the Link Letter and through updating this Guidebook.

Technology Use (personal tech and school tech)

Children should not bring personal technology to school. We cannot ensure the safety of such items and they are not permitted in the classrooms. Children should also not bring personal technology items on field trips. Teachers and paras will document these special times and share with families as appropriate.

Technology use in the classroom is a necessity. Children have Media class once a week and often use the chromebooks for iReady or assessments. Families and Children will sign an appropriate use contract in order to share the commitment to responsible technology use.

Visitor and Volunteer Guidance

ALL visitors to the school during the school day must be buzzed in the front door. Once in the building, proceed to the main office to sign in and pick up your Visitor’s lanyard. The lanyard must remain on while you are in the building.

If you wish to visit your child’s classroom, please arrange with the teacher ahead of time. The teacher will let the main office know and you will be able to proceed once you sign in and receive your lanyard. Teachers welcome parent visitors, but some times are better than others. If you are simply dropping off an item for your child (lunch, shoes, etc.), you will leave it in the main office and it will be delivered to your child.

We welcome (and frequently need) volunteers for work in the classroom, the dining room, and all around the school! If you are able to give your time, please see Ms. Rachel or Ms. Jessie about filling out Volunteer paperwork. All regular volunteers must pass a background check.