



# ***Merritt Academy***

## ***Great Start Readiness Preschool Program***

### ***Family Handbook***



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## **Program Overview**

The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) is Michigan's state-funded preschool for eligible four-year-old children with a focus on supporting children's development of school readiness skills. The program is administered by the MiLEAP. Research on preschool programs indicates that children provided with a high-quality preschool experience show significant positive developmental differences when compared to children from the same backgrounds who did not attend a high-quality preschool program.

## **Program Philosophy**

Our program supports the philosophy that children learn best with a hands-on approach that fosters a child's development and learning. Through play children have an opportunity to explore the world around them. As early childhood educators we believe our guidance should scaffold the child's learning by providing assistance when a child is working to accomplish a task.

## **Curriculum**

Merritt Academy follows the Creative Curriculum in all classrooms. The Creative Curriculum is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features inquiry, exploration, and discovery as the foundation of all learning. Children learn while interacting with the learning environment and through a structured daily routine. This supports the development of critical social emotional and academic skills that ultimately improve kindergarten readiness.

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is based on five fundamental principles:

- Positive interactions and relationships with adults provide a critical foundation for successful learning.
- Social-emotional competence is a significant factor in school success.
- Constructive, purposeful play supports essential learning.
- The physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interactions.
- Teacher-family partnerships promote development and learning.

## **Assessment**

Developmental Screening: In partnership with families we complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) developmental screening for all GSRP children within two weeks of the child's first day of school. This information is entered online where it can be automatically scored. All families will receive their child's results and activities at or before the fall parent-teacher conference.

Ongoing Assessment: We use Smart Teach to support and plan for each child's progress throughout the school year. Smart Teach is an observation tool that helps tell the story of your child's growth and development throughout the program year. Documentation is recorded and entered into an online portfolio for each child. The assessment drives differentiated, effective instruction. The assessment model used in Smart Teach follows widely held expectations for children from birth through third grade and enables a whole-child approach to assessment. Families receive their child's assessment data during the school year as a way to support learning at home.

## **Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement is welcomed and encouraged. To establish and maintain a strong school-home connection, which benefits children, we offer the following ways for families to be involved:

- Volunteering in the Classroom: Talk with your child's teacher about how you can be involved as a volunteer.
- Home Visits and Parent-Teacher Conferences: Teachers work with families to schedule two home visits and two parent-teacher conferences. Additional meetings can be arranged.
- Family Participation Meetings: Two or more are scheduled to share program goals, share community resources, and attain input related to program decisions.
- Sharing Culture/Home Language: We encourage families to share their culture and home language with the class. This can be done by reading a book to the class in your home language, teaching the children a few words, helping the teachers create labels and signs using your home language and introducing the children to your culture.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers are welcome in the program provided that they are at least 18 years of age, complete the same interview and reference check process as Staff, and are cleared through the Department of Human Services Central Registry and ICHAT systems. Candidates will not be accepted to volunteer in the program if they have been convicted of either of the following:

- a. Child abuse or neglect.
- b. A felony.

Volunteers will serve under the direct supervision of assigned childcare staff and never be left alone with children.

## **Hours/Days of Operation**

The school day program is scheduled to operate Monday through Friday from 7:50 to 3:00PM, which is the same length as a full elementary school day. Classrooms will operate for 180 days spread over 36 weeks.

## **Calendar**

Each family is provided a program calendar prior to the first day of school. Refer to the calendar for information regarding the first day of school, last day of school, school breaks, or other days the classroom may not be open.

## Inclement Weather

Inclement weather, power outages, or other building problems may require that classes be closed. Families are encouraged to tune in to school closings listed on the local TV, our Facebook Page and radio stations to learn if school is closed for the day. If school is in session and needs to be closed, families will be contacted via phone and/or electronically to pick-up their child.

### Typical Daily Routine

This is a sample daily routine for a school day GSRP classroom. The daily routine for your child's classroom is posted outside the classroom as well as displayed at a child's level inside the classroom.

7:45-8:15	<b>Arrival/Greeting/Wash Hands</b> – Children enter the classroom at their own pace, they spend time with books, or interact with their peers. Children wash and dry their hands.
8:20-8:45	<b>Breakfast</b> – Children have choices about what they serve themselves and whether they want to eat breakfast.
8:45-9:00	<b>Morning Meeting-</b> Adults and children discuss the events for the day, introduce study work, morning message, and teachers will conduct a read aloud.
9:00-9:30	<b>Outside / Gross Motor</b> – Children have many choices outdoors, while interacting with adults and peers.
9:30-9:45	<b>Small Group/Planning-</b> In a small group, children explore play, work with materials and talk about what they are doing. Children use materials in their own way while adults discuss what they are seeing to extend on learning.
9:45-10:45	<b>Work Time</b> – Children are encouraged to follow their plan or revise their plan as they work. Children make many choices about where they want to work and decide how to use materials. Adults participate as partners and encourage children's problem solving with materials and social conflict.
10:45-10:50	<b>Clean-up</b> – Children and adults clean up together, keeping it fun. Children make many choices where and how to clean, with adults supporting children's level of involvement.
10:50-11:00	<b>Recall</b> – Adults provide a variety of materials and strategies to maintain interest as they encourage children to talk about their experiences during work time.
11:00-11:15	<b>Bathroom and Read Aloud</b>
11:20-12:00	<b>Lunch</b> – (family Style) Children choose where they want to sit for a “family style lunch”. They serve and clean up after themselves.
12:00-12:20	<b>Large Group-</b> Read aloud/interactive read aloud
12:20-12:45	<b>Bathroom and set up rest mats</b>
12:45-1:45	<b>Rest (Quiet) Time</b> – Children are resting or sleeping. Children who are awake choose quiet play such as books, soft music, stories or fine motor manipulatives.
1:45-2:00	<b>Clean up rest time and bathroom</b>
2:00 – 2:20	<b>Snack</b>
2:20 – 2:50	<b>Outside / Gross Motor</b> - Children have many choices outdoors, as much as work time indoors.
3:50-3:00	<b>Dismissal</b>

## **Rest Time**

All children will be provided with a cot or mat on which to rest. Families are welcome to provide their child with a small blanket. Please remember to label all items sent to school. Rest items provided by families will be sent home at the end of each week for laundering.

Transitioning into rest time, children are encouraged to gather their nap belongings and place them on their cot. The lights dimmed and soft music may be played. Rest time is scheduled to last no longer than one hour. Children that do not rest are welcome to participate in a variety of quiet activities on a cot, on a mat, or at a table. After an hour, the lights are turned on and children are encouraged to return their rest items to their cubbies. Children that are still resting will be gently encouraged to wake up but not forced to get up.

## **Outdoor**

Your child will go outside every day, as long as the real feel is 20 degrees Fahrenheit or above. Outdoor play time is structured to be a healthy, educational and enjoyable time for children. Please make sure your child is dressed in clothing that is appropriate for the weather conditions. If it has recently rained, your child will need to have a pair of boots to wear outside. If there is snow on the ground and/or the temperature outside is very cold, your child will need a snowsuit, hat, gloves or mittens, and snow boots. Each child must have a complete change of clothes (underwear, socks, shirt, and pants) that will be kept in the classroom. Each piece of clothing must be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name. If you are in need of any of these items please let your classroom teacher or program administrator know. Kindly remember if your child is too sick to go outside and play he/she is too sick to come to school.

## **Conflict Resolution/Discipline**

Merritt Academy GSRP believes that discipline is designed and implemented to help each child learn self-control, choose appropriate alternatives, identify feelings, and when possible, develop an understanding and respect for the feelings of others. Discipline should not damage the child's self-image or embarrass the child who is being disciplined. When possible, the child being disciplined should contribute to resolving the conflict in which he or she is involved.

Staff supports children as they begin to understand their behavior choices and learn acceptable ways of interaction with others. The approach we use promotes and encourages self-regulation, self-direction, self-esteem, and a spirit of cooperation. We use a six-step process to resolve conflicts. The steps are:

1. Approach children calmly and stop any hurtful actions
2. Acknowledge children's feelings
3. Involved children in identifying the problem by gathering information
4. Restate the problem in children's vocabulary
5. Ask children for solutions and encourage them to choose one together
6. Give follow-up support when children act on their decisions

We encourage you to help us give children a consistent message by trying to use the six steps at home. In addition, staff will be trained in the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children. The resources in the Pyramid Model will be used to support the social emotional development of the students as well as provide interventions for challenging behavior in a positive way.

Staff are prohibited from using forms of punishment:

- Hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching, or inflicting other forms of corporal punishment.
- Restricting a child's movement by binding or tying him or her.
- Inflicting mental or emotional punishment, such as humiliating, shaming, or threatening a child.
- Depriving a child of meals, snacks, rest, or necessary toilet use.
- Excluding a child from outdoor play or other gross motor activities.
- Excluding a child from daily learning experiences.
- Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar cubicle.

Children must not be excluded or expelled because of the need for additional medical or behavioral support; assistance with toileting, or staff attitudes and/or apprehensions.

If a child is harming themselves or another child/staff member a meeting will be set up and a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be implemented to ensure safety of everyone in the program. The BIP will include strategies and interventions to prevent the unsafe behavior from occurring. The BIP may include next steps that follow the Macomb Intermediate School Districts Behavior Policy. In the event that a child is causing harm to another child or staff -the child may need to be picked up for the day. A reduction in the child's day may be necessary to ensure the program is providing a safe learning environment for all children.

### **Potty Training Statement**

Staff will support the developmental needs of all children. We understand children may have accidents while at school. If a child is not able to use the bathroom on their own staff will coach the child to clean up/change themselves. In the event that the child has a bowel movement or soiled his/her pants and requires cleaning up, the parent/family will be called to assist the child.

### **Attendance**

Please make every effort to arrive at school on time. When children arrive after the day has started, they miss out on important parts of the routine. Children who consistently arrive on time and are in school every day quickly master the routine, learn more, are happier to be in school and receive the maximum benefit from our preschool program. If your child will not be in attendance, please call the school before the program day begins and let them know your child's name, the classroom, and the reason for not attending.



If a child is absent and the program is not contacted by the parent, the program will attempt to make contact with the parent. If the program cannot make contact with the parent for 3 consecutive days, then a letter will be sent to the parent. If the program does not receive a response within 7 days of the date of the letter the child may be moved to the program's waitlist.

It is important that children are picked-up on time. If a child is still in attendance 30-minutes after the end of the GSRP day, and contact cannot be made with the parent, the program will contact the local police station to pick-up the child.

If a child is consistently absent the program will partner with the family to try and resolve the situation. If the situation cannot be resolved, then the child may be moved to the waitlist.

## **Referrals for Child and Family Needs**

We strive to meet the individual needs of all children in the program. To determine each child's needs, the program conducts screenings within the first two weeks of the child's first day of school to assess children's developmental, behavioral, and language development. If these screenings - as well as information gathered from observations or provided by parents, doctors, or other specialists - result in a concern about the child's development or functioning, we will begin a process to follow up on that concern, including further evaluation if needed. Families may be referred to their local school district for special education services.

Families may also need services unrelated to special education. To provide this support, families are asked to provide information related to the child's life experiences and current living situation. If there is a non-educational need that your family has, please notify a staff member. Staff will assist in seeking the resources you need and follow-up accordingly.

We will work with families to try and locate support needed in the areas of medical, mental health, food, clothing, and housing.

## **Transition to Kindergarten/Other Programs**

Merritt Academy works closely with the kindergarten teachers to support a smooth, successful transition to kindergarten. Families are encouraged to come to the Family Participation Meeting in May that focuses on Kindergarten expectations. Kindergarten teachers and the principal will be available to talk about enrollment, curriculum, and any other concerns you may have.

In addition, your child's Smart Teach assessment information will be shared with the Kindergarten teachers so that they can determine best placement and lessons for the first few weeks of school.

If your child is transitioning to another classroom within the school or attending a different school altogether, our staff will share any required documentation with the new program. A record release may be needed to share this information.

During the GSRP day, children will transition to and from different parts of the day. Teachers are trained in ways to reduce transitions so that the children have a sense of security and a consistent routine each day.

Additional resources to support transitions:

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/early/highqualel/kt/>

<https://www.michigan.gov/mikidsmatter/parents/pre-k/faq-transition-to-kindergarten>

<https://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/transition-from-grade-to-grade/>

## Confidentiality

Out of respect for the privacy of each family in our program, all information pertaining to students and families will be kept confidential. If a student is attending a program administered by a public school, the student's Smart Teach assessment and attendance records may be passed on to the students' Kindergarten school building. Information may be reviewed by Macomb Intermediate Schools and/or the MiLeap to ensure and support program compliance. The only instance in which information will be shared about a child or family without a parent's written consent is when staff has reason to suspect the child may have experienced abuse or neglect.

A parent has the right to:

- a. Inspect and review the student's education records within forty-five (45) days after receipt of the request. The school has a form which can be used to submit requests. The Custodian of Records will notify parent or adult students of the time and place where records can be inspected.
- b. Request amendments if the parent or adult student believes the record is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's rights. The school has a form which may be used to identify which information in the record the parent or adult student believes is inaccurate or misleading and to specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.
- c. Consent to disclosures of personally-identifiable information contained in the student's education records except to those disclosures allowed by the law.
- d. Challenge District non-compliance with a parents request to amend the records through a hearing. If the Custodian of Records decides not to amend the record, the parent or adult student will be notified and provided an opportunity for a hearing. Additional information concerning the hearing will be provided when notified of the opportunity for a hearing.
- e. File a complaint with the US Department of Education, 600 Independence Avenue, Washington D.C., 20202

## Notice of Program Measurement

GSRP sites are required to work with the MiLeap to measure the effect of the state-wide GSRP. Information is sometimes collected about GSRP staff, enrolled children, and their families. Program staff or a representative from MiLeap might:

- Ask parents questions about their child and family.
- Observe children in the classroom.
- Measure what children know about letters, words, and numbers.
- Ask teachers how children are learning and growing.

Information from you and about your child will not be shared with others in any way that you or your child could be identified. It is protected by law. If you have questions about this, contact:

Address: MDE  
Office of Great Start  
608 W. Allegan, P.O. Box 30008  
Lansing, MI 48909  
E-mail: [mde-gsrp@michigan.gov](mailto:mde-gsrp@michigan.gov)  
Phone: 517-373-8483

## Admission

Children must meet criteria based on the MiLeap, and the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). Priority is given to families with greatest need. Students are not selected on a first-come, first-serve basis. Prior to admission, the following documents need to be completed and on file:

- Proof of age (four years old on or before September 1), which could be one of the following:
  - Birth certificate (a district may require a certified copy)
  - Passport
  - Hospital record
  - Baptismal record
  - Other governmental form such as a Medicaid Card
- Proof of income, which could be one of the following:
  - Tax return
  - Paycheck stub
  - W-2 Form
  - Written Statement from employer(s)
  - Public assistance
  - Signed Income Verification Form or local equivalent
- Eligibility factor information and related documentation
- Head Start Waiver (if applicable)
- Immunization records
- Child Information Record
- Application
- Free and Reduced Meal Family Application

Once the above documentation is on file, a determination regarding admission will be made. A child will either be admitted to the program or placed on the waiting list. Children will be on the wait list in order of need, listing those with greatest need first.

A Health Appraisal must be on file within the first 30 days of initial attendance or the child will not be able to attend until it is submitted. The Health Appraisal must have a physician's signature, stamp, and the date.

## **Emergency Cards**

Parents will complete an emergency card at the time of enrollment. Your child will ONLY be released to someone authorized on that card. Please keep us up to date if the information on that card should change.

## **Sign-In and Sign-Out Procedure**

Merritt Academy does not assume responsibility for a child until he/she is signed in by the parent/guardian/ person designated on the emergency card or by school staff. A child may not sign himself or herself in or out of school. The person picking up or dropping off must come to the classroom with the child. By agreeing to the family handbook you agree to allow the school to sign your child in/out if the family member does not. Please also understand that if your child is sick or needs to go home-the teachers may sign out the child with your verbal permission over the phone, and release the child to the office. The child will be picked up in the office/sick area.

## **Release of Children**

Only those people listed on the Emergency Card will be allowed to pick your child up from school. All "Pick-Up People", other than parents, must be at least 18 years old and will be asked to show photo ID before your child is released. If the person picking up is not 18 a parent or guardian may provide in writing permission for that child to be released. This policy must be strictly adhered to for your child's safety and compliance with LARA Child Care Licensing Rules. We understand that situations may arise where someone who may not be on the Emergency Card will need to pick your child. We will not be able to release your child to that person unless we have written consent from you. The person picking up will also need to show identification in order for the children to be released.

For your child's safety, we will not release them to someone not on their Emergency Card, or to anyone on the card who does not appear to be a safe pick up person, due to intoxication or other impairments. The following steps will be taken when a parent or other pick-up person appears to be intoxicated or otherwise impaired.

### **The Staff will attempt:**

- To contact the other parent or another person responsible for the child.
- To keep the child until another authorized person can pick up the child.
- If the pickup person insists on leaving, the staff will tell the pickup person that they feel it is not safe for the children to ride with him/her and notify the local police as soon as they leave the facility.

## **Custody Issues**

We realize that for our families, sometimes custody is an issue. We must have a copy of the custody order on file outlining your child's custody arrangement. Only with this order may we respect any wishes you might have for our child not to be released to the non-custodial parent.

## Withdrawal Process

Our GSRP withdrawal process consists of two parts: 1) the steps we ask families to take if they decide to leave our program and 2) reasons why a child might be asked to stay home or leave a GSRP program.

### 1. Parent initiated withdrawal

- If you decide to withdraw from our program, please let Michelle Nighbert, Program Coordinator know as soon as possible so that we can notify a family on our wait list.

### 2. Program initiated withdrawal

- Once enrolled in GSRP, the only reason we will initiate permanent withdrawal from our program is due to low attendance (see page 10 for more information)
- Children will be asked to stay home while they have a contagious illness that endangers the health and/or safety of children or others. (see page 15 for more information)
- According to the MiLEAP, children enrolled in GSRP programs “must not be excluded or expelled because of the need for additional medical or behavioral support.” If your child is struggling in our GSRP program, we will partner with you to help your child succeed. (See page 10 for more information)

## Accidents/Emergencies

In case of an accident/injury a staff member will identify the injury and notify the certified CPR/First Aid staff member. An incident report will be completed by staff and submitted to the office by the end of the school day. A parent can obtain a copy of the report by request.

When a child incurs a minor injury, staff will take the following steps:

1. Immediate care is provided to the child
2. A phone call, written report (“Incident Report”), or both will be provided to the parent at or before dismissal on the day of the minor injury

When a child incurs a serious injury, staff will take the following steps:

1. A staff member calls 9-1-1 and then immediately phones any other required personnel that need to be notified when 9-1-1- is called, while the certified CPR/First Aid staff member remains with the injured child.
2. Ensure the scene is safe. If so, provide care and comfort to the injured child until EMS personnel arrive.
3. EMS personnel will determine if the injured party needs to be taken to the hospital.
4. The parents will be contacted by phone once the situation is under control. If the parents cannot be reached the next person on the emergency card will be contacted until either the program is able to talk with someone or all individuals have been phoned.
5. A staff member will ride in the ambulance if the parent is unable to do so.
6. Within twenty-four hours of the injury, a call will be made to the Department of Regulatory Services Licensing Division followed by a written report within three days of the injury.

## **Emergency Procedures and Precautions**

Severe emergency situations including fire, tornado, serious accident/injury and man-made disasters, as well as, a crisis management plan has been written for GSRP. Emergency procedures and evacuation plans are posted for your review in each classroom and include detailed instructions on specific emergency procedures. Staff will be trained at least twice a year on the responsibilities for all emergency procedures.

The center defines crisis as an unexpected, critical event that disrupts normal business operations and could threaten people's safety and welfare on the property where the program is located including, but not limited to: intruders, bomb threats, custody disputes, power outages, or violence. Both internal and external communication takes place in cooperation with local law enforcement. Phone numbers for emergency personnel, as well as the building address and nearest cross streets are posted in GSRP classroom or GSRP Family Board for immediate and effective response to any emergency situation.

### **Fire Plan**

1. Staff will follow school policies in the event of a fire evacuation. Staff will line children up and take to the designated exit (posted in the room).
2. Classes will line up at designated areas away from the building and staff will ensure all children are accounted for.
3. Families will be contacted via family app, email, or phone.
4. Fire drills will be conducted at least 1 time quarterly and will be documented in the room.

### **Tornado Plan**

1. Staff will follow school policies in the event of a tornado. Classes will evacuate to the designated area in the hallway.
2. Staff will ensure all children are accounted for. Children will be directed on how to sit/remain in a safe position.
3. Families will be contacted when it is safe to do so.
4. Tornado drills will be conducted at least 3 times between March and November and will be documented in the room.

### **Other Natural or Man-Made Disasters/Crisis Management Plan**

**(including but not limited to: flood, gas leak, chemical spill, sewer backup, or power outage)**

#### **Power Outage**

1. Staff will check the circuit breaker. If restoration time is unknown or more than 3 hours, a staff member will immediately close the child care and children must be picked up. A message will be sent via family app, email, and if necessary, a phone call will be made.
2. Make sure all children are accounted for.

## **Gas Leak**

1. In the event that a gas leak is detected at Merritt Academy or in the immediate vicinity, we will evacuate immediately to fire emergency procedures and follow instructions of emergency responders.
2. Relocation site will be the park down the street.

## **Water Main Break**

1. In the event of a water main break or total loss of water-the school will close. A member of staff along with emergency responders will determine if Merritt Academy needs to be evacuated or if the children can shelter-in-place until parents can arrive. In the case of evacuation, fire emergency procedures will be followed.

## **Winter Storm**

1. Should a winter storm arrive while children are at school, the principal and administration will determine if Merritt Academy can stay open or close.
2. If Merritt Academy closes, staff will notify families on the family app, email, and phone calls will be made to notify families to pick up their child.

## **Lockdown/Shelter In Place**

1. In the event that a lockdown must occur at Merritt Academy, such as an intruder or dangerous situation near the school, make an announcement to any other CCSM's of the lock down and call 911 to report the emergency.
2. Grab an emergency bag and bring children to a safe spot.
3. Shut and lock doors.
4. Take roll to account for all children in attendance. Keep children calm and quiet.

Plan for continuing care during or after disaster. Teachers will contact families when it is safe to release children. While they are in school we will offer food if necessary. Lockdown procedures have been created to ensure the safety of all children and adults in the building.

Children with special needs will be accommodated in accordance with the special health care plans on file. The severity of the threat will determine how lockdown procedures are enforced. In a 'Lockdown Code', family members will not have access to the building until law enforcement has issued an 'all clear'.

If a child has a chronic medical condition the medical plan will be followed at all times.

## **Building Evacuation Plan**

In the event of a building evacuation, a relocation site has been predetermined to ensure that all children and adults are effectively and safely moved to an alternate clean and secure site. Children

with special needs will be accommodated in accordance with the special health care plans on file.

Relocation site:

Superb Machine Repair  
59180 Havenridge Road  
586-749-8800

Children will be relocated by the following method:

1. The children will line up in a single line and the Teacher will do a headcount of the children. The Teacher will get the attendance and emergency cards and proceed to walk with the children to Superb Machine Repair. Teachers will check the room for any children and get any medication.
2. Once by Superb Machine Repair the Teachers will take roll call to account for all the children in attendance and keep the children calm and quiet.
3. Teachers will help keep the children calm and quiet.
4. Accommodations will be made accordingly for children with special needs.

### **Pick up after an all school emergency**

In the event of an all-school or site-wide emergency, site protocol will be followed, including the format of how families shall be contacted. Once law enforcement determines that an emergency has been resolved, family members/designated adults will be contacted via phone using the contact information provided on your child's information card. Adults will be provided details on how, when, and where to pick up their child.

### **Hazardous Exposure Policy**

A plan for responding to a situation of hazardous exposure has been put in place to ensure the safety of all children and adults in the building. Children with special needs will be accommodated in accordance with the special health care plans on file. In this situation, family members will not have access to the building until law enforcement has issued an 'all clear'.

### **Pest Management**

Per licensing regulations, liquid spray or aerosol insecticide applications will not be performed in any classroom unless the room will be unoccupied for at least 4 hours or longer if required by the pesticide label use directions. Families will receive advanced notification of pesticide applications through these two methods; letters sent home with students and notices posted at the center entrance and on classroom Family Information Boards.

The advanced notice shall contain the following information:

- Information about the pesticide, including the target pest or purpose
- Approximate location and date of the application
- Contact information at the Center
- National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) toll-free number: 1-800-858-7378



## Health Guidelines

Regardless of the precautions taken at home or school, your child may become ill during the course of the school year. If your child becomes ill, you will be called and asked to pick up your child. If you are unavailable, we will call someone on your Child Information Record. The child should be picked up within one hour of being notified. If your child has been absent due to a communicable disease, such as strep throat or pink eye, you may be required to present a doctor's note documenting that the child is able to return to school.

There are times when a child should not be sent to school. These times include when a child has:

- A fever (temperature of 100 or more)
  - Child must be free of fever for 24 hours (without fever reducing medication) in order to return.
- Diarrhea or vomiting
  - Child must be symptom free for 24 hours in order to return
- Discharge or redness of the eyes
- Discharge from the ear
- Green or yellow discharge from the nose
- Persistent or productive cough
- Sore throat
- Skin rash

Ringworm, lice, hand-foot-mouth or any other communicable disease .

Parents must notify the school if a child has a communicable disease or an extended illness. When applicable, the school will notify families of an illness. A doctor's note for treatment of a communicable disease or an extended illness may be required for re-admittance to school.

## Exclusion or Dismissal of Children Due to Health Concerns

The parent, legal guardian or the person the parent authorizes shall be notified immediately when a child has any sign or symptom that requires exclusion from the center. The center shall ask the parents to consult with the child's health care provider. The staff shall ask the parents to inform them of the advice received from the health care provider. The advice of the child's health care provider shall be followed by the center.

## Universal Precautions/Handling Bodily Fluids

As a protection against blood-borne pathogens, staff members are to use universal precautions when coming in contact with the blood or bodily fluids of any person. Strict adherence to universal precautions prevents exposure to blood-borne pathogens including HIV and Hepatitis B. The following universal precautions apply:

- Wear latex gloves when coming into contact with blood, skin and mucous membrane cuts, or any open lesion.
- Wear latex gloves when coming into contact with urine, stool or vomit.
- Use gloves for the care of only one child and then discard the gloves.

- Wash hands after discarding the gloves.
- Properly dispose of contaminated materials in a properly labeled biohazard container.

## **Cleaning Up Body Fluids**

Treat urine, stool, vomit, blood and body fluids as potentially infectious. Spills of body fluid should be cleaned up and surfaces sanitized immediately.

For small amounts of urine and stool on smooth surfaces wipe off and clean away visible soil with a little detergent solution. Then rinse the surface with clean water. Apply a sanitizer to the surface for the required contact time.

For larger spills on floors, or any spills on rugs or carpets:

Wear gloves while cleaning. While disposable gloves can be used, household rubber gloves are adequate for all spills except blood and bloody body fluids. Disposable gloves should be used when blood may be present in the spill. Take care to avoid splashing any contaminated material onto the mucous membranes of your eyes, nose or mouth, or into any open sores you may have. Wipe up as much of the visible material as possible with disposable paper towels and carefully place the soiled paper towels and other soiled disposable material in a leak-proof, plastic bag that has been securely tied or sealed. Use a wet/dry vacuum on carpets, if such equipment is available. Immediately use a detergent, or a disinfectant-detergent to clean the spill area. Then rinse the area with clean water.

For blood and body fluid spills on carpeting, blot to remove body fluids from the fabric as quickly as possible. Then spot clean the area with a detergent-disinfectant rather than with a bleach solution. Additional cleaning by shampooing or steam cleaning the contaminated surface may be necessary. Sanitize the cleaned and rinsed surface by wetting the entire surface with a sanitizing solution of bleach in water (1/4 cup of household bleach in 1 gallon of water) or an industrial sanitizer used according to the manufacturer's instructions. For carpets cleaned with a detergent-disinfectant, sanitizing is accomplished by continuing to apply and extract the solution until there is no visible soil. Then follow the manufacturer's instructions for the use of the sanitizer to be sure the carpet is sanitized by the treatment. Dry the surface.

Clean and rinse reusable household rubber gloves, then treat them as a contaminated surface in applying the sanitizing solution to them. Remove, dry and store these gloves away from food or food surfaces. Discard disposable gloves.

Mops and other equipment used to clean up body fluids should be:

- Cleaned with detergent and rinsed with water
- Rinse with a fresh sanitizing solution
- Wring as dry as possible
- Air-dried

Wash your hands afterward, even though you wore gloves. Remove and bag clothing (yours and those worn by children) soiled by body fluids. Put on fresh clothes after washing the soiled skin and hands of everyone involved.

### Sanitizing Process and Solution

The following steps are to be followed for cleaning and sanitizing:

- Clean surface with detergent and water.
- Rinse the surface with clean water
- Submerge, wipe or spray surface with bleach solution.
- Wipe bleach solution over the surface with a paper towel. Do not dry off.
- Allow to air dry for 2 minutes.
- Cloths can be rinsed in solution for food preparation areas, large toys, books, and activity centers.
- Objects, such as small toys, can be dipped into a container filled with the sanitizing solution.

Sanitizer solutions can be applied in various ways to surfaces that have been cleaned with detergent and rinsed: spray bottles for diaper changing surfaces, toilets, doorknobs, cabinet handles, phone receivers, countertops, and tables. Note: Spray bottles and other containers should ALWAYS be labeled with the name and strength of the solution they contain and kept out of reach of children. In addition, fresh air should be moving about when sanitizing (a large fan or windows open).

A bleach solution is recommended:

- Made fresh daily (the solution loses strength once it is mixed).
- 1/4 cup household (not industrial strength) bleach + 1 gallon of cool water OR 1-tablespoon bleach + 1 quart of cool water.

Other examples of sanitizing solutions include but are not limited to:

Commercial sanitizers specified on the label to be safe for food contact surfaces and used according to the manufacturer's directions. Bleach being used for sanitizing must have an EPA number indicating an approval for food sanitizing.

## Handwashing

Hands shall be washed with soap under running water. The following are **not approved** substitutes for soap and running water: hand sanitizers, water basins, and pre-moistened cleansing wipes.

**The following procedures are considered best practice for hand washing:**

- Have a clean single service towel available.
- Turn on the water to a comfortable temperature between 60° F to 120° F.
- Moisten hands with water and apply soap.
- Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least 20 seconds.
- Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and the back of hands.
- Rinse hands under running water until they are free of soap and dirt. Leave the water running while drying hands.
- Dry hands with a clean, disposable paper or single-use cloth towel. If taps do not shut off automatically, turn taps off with the disposable paper or single-use towel.
- Dispose of the single service towel in a lined trash container.
- Use hand lotion to prevent chapping, if desired.

**Additional Hand Washing Information:**

- By using a paper towel to turn off the water faucet, staff that have just completed hand washing prevent recontamination of their hands.
- Shared cloth towels can transmit infectious disease.
- Taps that turn off automatically or those that can be turned off without using hands avoid the recontamination problem.
- When hand-washing facilities are not available at a remote work site, use appropriate antiseptic hand cleaner or antiseptic towelettes. As soon as possible, rewash hands with soap and running water.
- Good practice mandates that staff members always wash their hands, upon arrival for the day or when moving from one child care group to another

Before and after:

- Eating, handling food, or feeding a child
- Giving medication
- Playing in water that is used by more than one person
- After:
  - Handling bodily fluid (mucus, blood, vomit), from sneezing, wiping and blowing noses, from mouths, or from sores
  - Handling uncooked food, especially raw meat and poultry
  - Handling pets and other animals
  - Playing in sandboxes
  - Cleaning or handling the garbage

## Medication

In order to establish and maintain a system of safe storage, handling and administering of medications at school, an Authorization to Administer Medication Form is required. We will follow all steps noted in the Licensing Rules for Child Care Centers, Rule 400.8152, including:

- Medication, prescription or nonprescription, shall be given to a child by an adult caregiver only.
- A caregiver shall give or apply medication, prescription or non-prescription, only with prior written permission from a parent. A physician's permission may also be required.
- All medication shall be in its original container, stored according to instructions, and clearly labeled for a named child.
- Prescription medication shall have the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, child's name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication and shall be given according to those instructions.
- Topical non prescription medication, including, but not limited to sunscreen and insect repellent, requires written parental authorization annually. Any nonprescription medication needs to be provided by the parent.

## Dress Code

Preschool children are not required to wear the K-12 uniform. Clothes should allow students to participate comfortably in a variety of physical and outdoor activities. We do not encourage the use of open toe shoes and flip flops as the kids play outside daily. We recommend shorts under skirts and

dresses. Sunglasses, hats, coats, and jackets may be worn outdoors only. Parents are urged to see that their children are properly dressed for inclement or cold weather. Students will go outdoors if the temperature is above 20 degrees Fahrenheit (wind chill factor). Dress code is subject to change for special events.

## Family & Health Care Resources

Macomb County Health Division	586-465-8090	27690 Van Dyke	Warren, MI 48093
McLaren Macomb	586-493-8000	1000 Harrington Blvd	Mt. Clemens, Mi 48043
Henry Ford Macomb	586-269-2300	15855 19 Mile, Garfield	Clinton Twp, Mi 48038
National Capital Poison Center	1-800-222-1222		<a href="http://www.poison.org">www.poison.org</a>
General Health & Wellness	American Academy of Pediatrics		<a href="http://www.aap.org">www.aap.org</a>
	Healthy children		<a href="http://www.healthychildren.org">www.healthychildren.org</a>
	Bright Futures		<a href="http://www.brightfutures.org">www.brightfutures.org</a>
Nutrition	My Plate (USDA)		<a href="http://www.choosemyplate.gov">www.choosemyplate.gov</a>
	American Dietetic Association		<a href="http://www.kidseatright.org">www.kidseatright.org</a>
Violence & Bullying			<a href="http://www.stopbullying.gov">www.stopbullying.gov</a>
Fire Department (Non-emergency)	586-749-9351		New Haven, MI
Police Department	<a href="tel:5864695151">586 469 5151</a>		New Haven, Mi
Family Resources/Macomb & Wayne County	Great Start Macomb		<a href="https://www.greatstartmacomb.org/">https://www.greatstartmacomb.org/</a>
	Great Start Wayne County		<a href="https://www.greatstart.org/">https://www.greatstart.org/</a>
Child Find	Macomb ISD 586-228-3321		<a href="https://www.misd.net/ac/child-find.html">https://www.misd.net/ac/child-find.html</a>
	Wayne County		<a href="https://sites.resa.net/ec-referral/">https://sites.resa.net/ec-referral/</a>

## Food Service

A planned food service program will be part of the school day. There is no cost for snacks or meals. The following meals/snacks will be served at the following times:

- Breakfast at approximately 8:30am
- Lunch at approximately 11:30am
- Afternoon snack at approximately 2:00pm

All meals will be fully compliant with the final rule for nutrition standards in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Menus with noted food substitutions will be posted in a place visible to parents. If there is a need for a child to receive substitutions due to medical or religious reasons, a Request for Food Service Individualization and Adjustments Form must be submitted. The center will comply with rule 400.8330 (3) to ensure children with special dietary needs receive meals/snacks in accordance with the child's needs.

Families are not allowed to send in food for their children simply because the child does not like the food served or prefers something from home. A child may have to be exposed to a food that is new 12 or more times before becoming comfortable with it.

If you prefer to send your child to school with a lunch from home it must be done daily. You will need to sign a meal form that states you will follow the CACFP meal pattern and provide a healthy lunch for your child every day. We can not pick and choose which days you want to bring meals.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children. Under the act, our employees are considered Mandated Reporters and are required, by law, to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. Under the Act, Mandated Reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. Our employees are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents before reporting the matter, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition before making a report. We take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities.

## **Parent Notification Policy**

Merritt Academy strives to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all families and children. In the event that an incident occurs at the school, families will be notified of all incidents that result in the notification of the Michigan Child Care Licensing Department. Merritt Academy will promptly contact Child Care Licensing for any incidents involving inappropriate contact between child to child as well as staff to child. This includes but is not limited to inappropriate sexual contact/appropriate discipline techniques. The time frame for making a verbal report to Child Care Licensing is within 24 hours and the written report within 72 hours.

## **Grievance Policy**

We strive to provide a positive, nurturing environment for all. However at times, concerns may arise. If you have a concern about something related to your child's preschool program the best place to start to resolve the issue or concern is with the child's teacher. Talk about the concern with the teacher and try to reach a solution. If that does not work, you are welcome to contact the program administrator. We will work with all families to arrive at an agreeable resolution for all parties.

## **Prohibited Behaviors**

### **Drug Free School Zone**

The use of any alcohol, drug, or tobacco products including E-Cigarettes, within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds by any individual, including school personnel, is prohibited.

### **Firearms – Weapon free School Zone**

This program is located inside of a weapon free school zone. Weapons/firearms are not permitted.

The federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 requires school districts to expel a student from school for a period of not less than one year if it is determined that the student brought a firearm to school.

## **Licensing Notebook**

The center's licensing notebook is maintained online. The licensing notebook contains all the licensing inspection and special investigation reports and related corrective action plans for the last 5 years. The licensing notebook is available to parents during regular business hours. Licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, and corrective action plans from at least the past 3 years are available on the department's child care licensing website at

**[www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare)**.

Merritt Academy offers internet services if a family would like to look up the center's licensing notebook.

## **Staff**

Employees are carefully selected through an evaluation of written applications, personal interviews and reference checks. In addition, staff are cleared through the Department of Human Services Central Registry and are required to obtain fingerprint background checks before hire.

## **Staff Training**

All employees will have current certification in infant, child and adult CPR and first aid. Employees will also complete blood-borne pathogen training within 6 months of initial hire and annually thereafter. In addition, staff will complete at least 16 clock hours of annual training, not including CPR, first aid, and blood borne pathogen training. Training will be verified in MiRegistry and will cover topics as outlined in R400.8131:

- (a) Child development and learning.
- (b) Health, safety, and nutrition.
- (c) Family and community collaboration.
- (d) Program management.
- (e) Teaching and learning.
- (f) Observation, documentation, and assessment.
- (g) Interactions and guidance.
- (h) Child care center administrative rules.

## **Transportation**

Merritt Academy will be offering busing to GSRP students. Busing will be available at designated locations and parents/guardians will be required to be at the designated location for the child to get on/off the bus. Only adults listed on the child's emergency card will be allowed to take the child off the bus. All LARA childcare licensing rules regarding transportation will be followed. Children will not be on the bus longer than one hour.

All parents will be required to provide the school with written permission before the child is allowed on the bus. The routine transportation permission form provided by the school, must include all of the following:

- Child's name.
- Date parent gave the permission. Parents must re-sign the permission form annually.
- When the routine transportation will occur.
- Transportation destination.
- Parent's signature. An electronic signature from a child's parent is acceptable.



## **Attachment A**

### **Celebrations/Holidays**

*We invite families to share their home celebrations with the school community. Please share your ideas with your child's classroom teacher, the program director, or at the parent advisory meeting. We look to support celebrations while maintaining curriculum and grant requirements (e.g. not asking families to pay for or donate items).*

### **Birthdays**

*Many families are interested in celebrating their child's birthday with the classroom. Our standard practice is to invite the child to bring a healthy snack to have that afternoon. Please remember sending in a food treat to the classroom to celebrate can exclude those children who have food allergies, diabetes, celiac disease, or other dietary restrictions. In addition, frequent sugary snacks do not contribute to achieving our goal of healthy bodies and healthy eating habits for all students. We ask that if you do send a snack on your child's birthday, it is an item from below:*

- Pretzels
- Gold fish
- Cheese & Crackers
- Fresh Fruit
- Fruit snacks
- Fresh veggies
- Store bought muffins.

### **Field Trips**

*Our classrooms may participate in field trips. Field trip locations are determined based on the development and interests of the children in the class. For example, if children are interested in wooded areas and the animals that live within them we may take a field trip to our local nature center. With the goal of maintaining a consistent daily routine, the number of field trips will be limited.*

*Whenever a field trip is scheduled we will be sure to arrange transportation. Any associated costs, like entrance fees, will be incurred by the program. Parents are welcome, not required, to attend as well. If there are entrance fees, the number of adults per student that can attend for free may be limited to one.*

## **Fundraising**

*If our program participates in fundraising or a drive to help those in need, it will include optional participation from GSRP families.*

## **Guests/Visitors/Volunteers**

*We welcome special guests and visitors into our classroom to support children's growth in knowledge, experiences, and relationships with family and community members. We may have a special guest share on a topic that the children are interested in, like a veterinarian. We may have a community member who has gone through our volunteer training join the classroom to interact with children during work time. We may have a family member join a table during lunch. If you have any suggestions for a special guest or visitor, please talk with your child's teacher or the program director.*

## **Picture Day**

*School pictures are an important part of many cultural heritages in our community. To honor that, we have picture day in the fall every year. Your child will have the opportunity to be in a class picture, as well as individual pictures. Additional classroom and individual pictures can be purchased if you choose to do so. If you do not want your child to participate, please let your classroom teacher and program director know.*

## **Toys from Home**

*We recognize children may want to bring an item from home to school. As a program, we do not take any responsibility for damage to or loss of items brought from home. If challenges in the classroom are created by bringing toys from home we will work with the child and parent to determine a solution.*

If you have any questions please reach out to:

Meghan Smith

Onsite Program Director

[MSmith2@merritt-academy.org](mailto:MSmith2@merritt-academy.org)

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