



Parent Handbook

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Section 1: Introduction

Welcome:

Welcome to Vinton Early Learning Center! Vinton Early Learning Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing high-quality care and education for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years. We're glad to have your child in our program. We are committed to helping your child and family make an easy and comfortable transition into our program. Therefore, we have put together this guide to outline the philosophy, practices, policies, and procedures of our childcare center. We hope that our Parent Handbook will help with your initial orientation to the program and serve as a convenient reference while your child is enrolled. If you need additional assistance or clarification, please let staff know.

Mission Statement:

To provide a high-quality, safe, nurturing environment for children in which all families are supported so that they can learn and grow together.

Philosophy:

- We believe family is the first and most important teacher in a child's life. As educators, we will respect and support this philosophy.
- We believe young children learn through play and creative exploration.
- We believe that young children thrive in environments where adults and routines are consistent and reliable.
- We believe young children benefit from an environment that is structured, clean, safe, and flexible to their needs.
- We believe young children need adults in their lives who are consistent, loving, caring, and compassionate.
- We believe each child is an individual and comes to us with a different set of moral and cultural values. We will respect, support, and cherish these differences.

State Licensing:

We are fully licensed by the State of Iowa for one hundred and twenty children. This includes infants aged 6 weeks to 2 years and preschool children aged 3 years to 5 years. The Before/After School Program is licensed for eighty-three children aged 5 years to 12 years. The Iowa Department of Human Services and the Iowa State Fire Marshal inspect our center every 3 years. We participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and are inspected every three years. Maintaining a license in good status indicates that a program meets or exceeds guidelines in a variety of areas including health and safety, personnel, nutrition, environment, and administration. If you have serious concerns about the care your child is receiving, please contact the Iowa Department of Human Services, 411 3rd Street SE Suite 400 Cedar Rapids Iowa 52401 or 319-892-6827.

Hours of Operation:

Early Childhood Program:

Monday through Friday from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Before/After School Program:

Monday through Friday during the school year from 6:30 am to start of school and end of school until 6:00 pm.

Monday through Friday on in-service/no school days and summer break from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm.

Our Staff:

Children thrive when their teachers are consistent, nurturing, and committed to their care. Our teachers enjoy working with children and their families to create a warm and structured learning environment.

Each staff member must pass a thorough review of personal references and criminal and child abuse record checks. They are CPR and First Aid certified. They are trained in Universal Precautions and Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting. Each staff member is required to participate in professional development opportunities related to child development and education.

Staff members are fully oriented to the philosophy, policies, procedures, and their classroom. The staff has formal evaluations yearly.

Early Childhood Program:

Vinton ELC offers infants and young children a variety of experiences based on their individual needs and abilities. We provide primary caregiving, allowing each child to bond more closely with a nurturing caregiver. Each of the early childhood rooms participates in the Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS-R) or the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS-R), <https://ers.fpg.unc.edu/early-childhood-environment-rating-scale-ecers-r>. Our center participates in the Iowa Quality Rating System, <https://dhs.iowa.gov/iqrs>. These programs evaluate and help Vinton ELC improve the learning environment, health practices, and teacher/family interactions. Vinton ELC also utilizes “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” assessment tool to track children’s milestones.

- **Infant/Orange Room-** Young infants will begin to smile and look at the staff. They will start to coo and follow things with their eyes. Young infants will practice holding up their heads during tummy time. Infants will learn to roll over and sit up when ready. Staff will use a lot of

communication for infants to learn words and sounds. Infants will work on fine motor skills with grasping and popper toys.

- **Toddler 1/Red Room-** Children 1 year-18 months old will learn more communication skills. Staff will play games like “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes,” and “Wheels on the Bus.” In the Red Room, children will start to do more art projects and independent play. Staff will participate in simple pretend play, such as feeding a doll or cooking in the kitchen.
- **Toddler 2/Blue Room-**Children 18 months- 2 years will start showing more and more independence. While reading stories children and staff will point out pictures. Children will begin to learn 1-step verbal prompts, for example, “sit down.” Children will start learning how to drink from a cup and eat with a spoon/fork. Staff will have lots of interaction with blocks, pretend play, discuss shapes and colors, and sing!
- **Two-Year-Old/Purple Room-**Children in the 2-year-old room will start showing excitement playing with other children. Staff will encourage group play and following two-step directions. In the two-year-old room, there is a lot more gross motor play. Children will have fun playing simple make-believe games and sorting colors/shapes.
- **Three-Year-Old/Yellow Room-**Children in the 3-year-old room will be kept busy with fine motor and gross motor activities. Staff encourage a lot of learning through play activities. Three-year-olds like to be independent, and staff will help support them. Children will have special jobs throughout the day and children will earn stickers for Positive Reinforcement.
- **Four-Five-Year-Old/Green Room-** Children in the 4-5-year-old room will participate in a lot of hands-on activities. Staff will include colors, shapes, letters, and numbers in daily learning centers. Staff will support and encourage problem-solving skills.

Before/After School Program:

Vinton ELC offers school-age children a caring and supportive environment where they can develop social skills through interaction, build confidence through exploration and new activities, and be creative in their play. The Before/After School Program is located at Tilford Elementary.

Vinton ELC Management/Board of Directors:

Vinton Early Learning Center is managed by a full-time Director. The Vinton ELC Board of Directors is made up of a volunteer group of Vinton ELC parents and community members. A list of the members of the Vinton ELC Board of Directors is in the office. The Board generally meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 5:45 pm at Vinton ELC. The day and time of meetings may fluctuate due to the availability of the members. Board meetings are open to the public.

Section 2: Getting Started

Orientation for Prospective Families:

Prior to admission, parents/guardians are encouraged to come in for a tour of the center and ask any questions they have regarding enrollment. Prospective parents/guardians are directed to our website, www.vintonelc.com, or given a copy of the Parent Handbook, fees, and additional policies to review. We will help (translations, reading assistance, etc.) if needed to be sure the content of the handbook, fees, and additional policies are clearly understood and communication between staff and parents/guardians is able to happen effectively.

Admission Policy:

Admission is on a first-come, first-serve basis for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years. However, depending on capacity at the time of enrollment, we may have to limit our number of enrolled Part-Time families and Drop-In families. Full-time families will have priority on the waitlist. Vinton ELC accepts Child Care Assistance through the Iowa Department of Human Services, including but not limited to Block Grant and Promise Jobs programs.

Enrollment Procedures:

The following documents MUST be on file for each child to be admitted into our center.

- **Enrollment Information including parent/guardian information, emergency contacts, authorized persons to pick up the child, and medical information.**
- **Physical Examination**
- **Completed Iowa Certificate of Immunization.**
- **Travel and Activity Authorization.**
- **Picture Release Form.**
- **Parent Emergency Medical Consent Form.**
- **CACFP Income Form.**

ALL OF THE ABOVE ITEMS ARE REQUIRED BY THE STATE OF IOWA.

Waiting List:

State licensing requires that Vinton ELC maintain specific teacher/child ratios. We will do our best to accommodate new enrollment, but at times there may be a waiting list. Depending on capacity at the time of enrollment, we may have to limit our number of enrolled Drop-In families.

Children Requiring Special Accommodations:

Vinton ELC will make a reasonable effort to accommodate children with special needs provided we have the appropriate facilities and sufficiently trained staff to provide the necessary care. Vinton ELC cannot provide more staff to solely accommodate one child. We consider each request on a case-by-case basis. Vinton ELC reserves the right to discontinue or refuse services when appropriate care cannot be provided. Such a decision would be made to encourage a more appropriate placement for the child. Parents/guardians with children on a current IFSP or IEP are encouraged to share a copy of it with the center.

Brightwheel:

Vinton Early Learning Center utilizes Brightwheel. Brightwheel Software is an all-in-one program that benefits the staff and parents. Brightwheel includes registration & enrollment records, attendance, family billing, and internal staff functions. Parents need to be aware of the following functions of Brightwheel:

- **Brightwheel App**-Parents can download the Brightwheel app to their mobile device or computer. Brightwheel will share daily information, photos, and more for parents to access.
- **ACH**-Parents will be required to fill out an Automated Payment Processing form that allows secure, on-time tuition and fee payments to be made from either your bank account or credit card. If Vinton ELC does not receive tuition payments within 2 weeks, our bank will automatically pull outstanding balance funds. If you are discharged from the center and have an outstanding balance, the bank will pull the remaining balance from your account.

Section 3: Tuition, Supplies, and Attendance Policies

Center Fees:

Vinton ELC has a one-time registration fee of \$50.00 for the first child and \$25.00 for each additional child. This fee is due at the time of registration. If you discontinue services and decide to return at a later date, this fee will be incurred again.

Tuition rates are issued in a separate handout. These rates include the following:

- Weekly tuition rates for the Early Childhood Program.
- Weekly rates for the Before/After School Program when school is in session.
- In-service/no school day rate for the Before/After School Program when school is in session.
- Weekly summer rates for the Before/After School Program.
- **Drop-In Rate: Spots are not guaranteed, parent/guardian needs to call the morning of to make sure there is room. If your child has not**

dropped in for at least 3 months, the child/ren will be withdrawn from Vinton ELC.

Rates may change as needed with a two-week written notice from the Board of Directors.

Tilford Fees:

We offer three options for care at Tilford: 1) before AND after school, 2) before school care and 3) after school care. Parents are required to designate their choice on the enrollment form. This is needed to help staff for ratio purposes.

We understand changes to your schedule will happen. We want to give you flexibility, but we also need plenty of notice if there is a change from your typical schedule.

If you need to make a change outside of your typical schedule, you will be charged accordingly. If you choose before school care but you will also need after school care on any given day, you will be charged the \$10.00 hourly fee. If you choose after-school care but you will also need before-school care on any given day, you will be charged the \$10.00 hourly fee.

This may most likely be encountered for weather-related delays or dismissals. Example: Your child attends after-school care per your enrollment form. There is a late start to school due to fog and now your child will also attend before school care on that certain day. You will be required to pay the \$10.00 hourly fee for the time your child attends in the morning.

Pandemic Fees:

If a room must close and quarantine due to COVID-19 or other illnesses, families will be billed 50% of their child/ren's weekly rate. If the same room were to have to close and quarantine a second time due to COVID-19 or other illnesses, families will NOT be billed their child/ren's weekly rate.

Financial Assistance:

Vinton ELC accepts Child Care Assistance through the Iowa Department of Human Services, including but not limited to Block Grant and Promise Jobs programs. Your child must be approved and set up in the DHS Provider Portal before starting care. If you wish to start care before this happens, Vinton ELC requires payment of the registration fee and tuition in advance while you are waiting for approval. Tuition will continue to be required before each week of care at Vinton ELC and at the Before/After School Program until you are approved. These fees will be reimbursed back to you once you are approved.

Once parent/guardian is approved, they will receive a DHS Certificate of Enrollment. The certificate lists the Daily and Weekly Maximum Units for School Days and Non-School Days. This is the maximum number of hours Child Care Assistance will cover for each child. One unit is equal to five hours. Some certificates will have a Fee Per Unit Copay. This amount is determined by DHS, NOT Vinton ELC. The parent/guardian is responsible for paying this amount for each unit of childcare attended. This will show up as "DHS copay" on invoices/statements.

Vinton ELC's agreement with DHS allows us to charge additional fees directly to families with Child Care Assistance for the following:

- **Late fee if the child is picked up after our hours of operation.** This will show up as a "Late Fee" on invoices/statements.
- **Activity fee to cover costs of field trips.** Families have the choice not to attend the field trips and Vinton ELC is required to provide childcare.
- **Cost of care that is over the hours/units allowed on the DHS Certificate of Enrollment.** This gets billed out at the drop-in rate. This will show up as "CCA Units Overage" on invoices/statements.

Those with assistance from Block Grant or Promise Jobs must have children in attendance at least 80 % of the time they are allowed or provide a doctor's note stating that their child was ill and could not be in a childcare setting. Please see the Director for other circumstances. Those with children not attending 80% of their allowed time may have their childcare agreement terminated or be changed to drop in status.

Late Pick-up Fees:

A \$15.00 fee will be charged to your account if your child is picked up after 6:00 PM. After 6:15 PM, an additional fee of \$1.00/minute will be charged to your account. You will be required to pay the late fee within 24 hours. After the third time picking your child up after 6:00 pm, the family will be required to meet with the Director and may be excluded from returning to the center.

Payment:

Payment is due on the Monday that services are rendered for weekly tuition fees.

If your account balance is outstanding for 1 week, you will receive notification from the Assistant Director and discuss forms of payment or a payment plan within 24 hours of notification. You will be required to pay the full amount if your account is outstanding for more than 2 weeks via automatic withdrawal and cover any fees relating to the processing fees. If you continue to not pay your bill, it is up to the discretion of the Board of Directors or Director if your child(ren) will be allowed to continue care at Vinton ELC. If you re-enroll and continue not to pay

your bill it is up to the discretion of the Board of Directors or Director if you are allowed to re-enroll your child/ren in the future.

You must follow the provisions of your established payment plan, or your child/ren will not be able to attend until your bill is paid in full. Not only will care for your child/ren be terminated but your account will be sent to a collection agency. You will be responsible to pay your balance and any collection and/or attorney fees.

Please bring any questions about your invoice or statements to the attention of the Director within 7 days of receipt.

A fee of \$35.00 will be added to your account for all returned checks. After two NSF checks, parents will be required to pay their account with cash or money order. Vinton ELC offers automatic withdrawal from your bank account.

Rooms and Supplies:

Parents will get a supply list during enrollment. If a child runs out of anything: diapers, wipes, clothes, etc., staff will send home reminder notes for parents to bring the items needed for the next day. If a child runs out of diapers and/or wipes and must use Vinton ELC's supply, the parent will be billed \$15 per week if it has been 3 or more days.

Infant/Orange Room: Infants 6 weeks of age to 1-year-old

Ratio 1:4 (up to 8 children)

- Two bottles
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Diaper cream
- Pacifier if needed.
- Breast Milk/Formula (only if you are not using the formula provided by Vinton ELC)
- Two extra sets of clothes

Toddler/Red and Blue Rooms: Toddlers 1-year-old

Ratio 1:4 (up to 12 children)

- Cot sheet
- Small sleeping blanket
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Diaper cream
- Two extra sets of clothes
- Water Bottle
- Sunscreen (if not paying sunscreen fee and using the sunscreen provided by Vinton ELC)

2-Year-Old/Purple Room:

Ratio 1:7 (up to 16 children)

- Cot sheet
- Small sleeping blanket
- Diapers/Pull-ups
- Wipes
- Diaper Cream
- Extra set of clothes
- Water bottle
- Sunscreen (if not paying sunscreen fee and using the sunscreen provided by Vinton ELC)

Three-Year-Old/Yellow Room:

Ratio 1:10 (up to 24 children)

- Cot sheet
- Small sleeping blanket
- Pull-ups if needed.
- Extra set of clothes
- Water bottle
- Sunscreen (if not paying sunscreen fee and using the sunscreen provided by Vinton ELC)

Pre-K/Green Room:

Ratio 1:12 (up to 36 children)

- Cot sheet
- Small sleeping blanket
- Extra set of clothes
- Water bottle
- Sunscreen (if not paying sunscreen fee and using the sunscreen provided by Vinton ELC)

Tilford: 5 - 12-year-olds

Ratio 1:15 (up to 83 children)

- Water Bottle
- Extra Clothes
- Sunscreen (if not paying sunscreen fee and using the sunscreen provided by Vinton ELC)

Room Transitions:

Vinton ELC reserves the right to place children in rooms according to development.

Children may move up to the next room before their birthday at the discretion of the Director. However, the room rate change will not occur until the Monday after the child's birthday.

Children may not move up to the next room on their birthday at the discretion of the Director. If this occurs, the room rate change will not occur until the child is moved to the new room. Children MUST be potty trained before they can move to the Pre-K/Green Room.

It is possible that children of different ages will be placed together based on staffing and the time of day. Vinton ELC always adheres to licensing staff/child ratio standards.

Attendance:

Payment is still required when your child/ren is scheduled but does not attend due to illness, vacations, or other absences.

If you plan for your child to be absent set days in a week, this schedule needs to be turned in to the main office at least a week in advance due to staffing and meal purposes.

Please notify the center by 10:00 am if your child/ren will not be attending that day. If the center is not notified by 10:00 am, lunch will not be provided for your child/ren due to the time it takes to prepare. Vinton ELC understands that prior arrangements may have been made (doctor's appointment and/or family engagements) but please let staff know prior to meal counts and then a meal will be provided.

Holidays and Closings:

Parents are required to pay for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. If the holiday falls on Saturday, we will close the Friday before. If the holiday falls on Sunday, we will close the following Monday. The center will be open on New Year's Eve from 6 am-3 pm.

Vinton ELC will close for two days throughout the year for staff professional development and deep cleaning. This will help ensure our staff is knowledgeable on the latest classroom curriculum. These days will be treated like a "holiday" and there will be no discount on the childcare rate for the affected weeks. Dates will be chosen and communicated at the beginning of the year so that parents have enough time to make arrangements that are needed.

Extended Absences:

Each enrolled child is entitled to one extended leave of absence per year. This leave of absence shall not be less than four consecutive weeks or greater than twelve consecutive weeks. This includes those who do not wish to attend the Before/After School Program in the summer and return the next fall. A written notice must be given two weeks in advance to hold the child/ren's spot. Families

will be billed 25% of the child/ren's weekly rate, until their return date. Once the child/ren return, normal weekly billing will resume.

Withdrawal:

Parents/Guardians shall give two weeks written notice when Vinton ELC services are no longer required. If you withdraw your child from Vinton Early Learning Center with an unpaid balance and no arrangements to pay your bill, your balance will be forwarded to an outside collection agency.

Section 4: Daily Routine

Schedules are posted for your child's activities in their classroom.

Arrival and Departure:

Please accompany your child into the building. Each child shall have direct contact with a teacher or the Director upon arrival to assure that an adult is in contact with the child continuously. Staff will sign your child/ren in upon entering the center and sign them out when leaving the center.

Children are only allowed to leave the center with individuals that are listed on the Emergency Pickup List. They **MUST** have a photo ID available. Please call ahead when anyone besides the parent/guardian is picking up your child/ren.

Daily Communication:

A daily note is provided for infants, toddlers, and three-year-old through the Brightwheel App. Infants' information is provided in detail. Notes for those over 12-36 months provide basic information and highlights of the child's day. Notes are updated throughout the day for parents to check and see.

Meals:

Infant Room:

Parents/Guardians must provide their own baby bottles. Vinton ELC provides infant formula with iron, baby food, and cereal. Parents are welcome to bring breast milk or another formula. Infants are served on demand.

Toddler, Twos, Threes, Pre-K Old Rooms:

Breakfast is served at 8:30 am.

Lunch is served at 11:30 am.

Snack is served at 3:00 pm

Before/After School Program:

Vinton ELC does not provide breakfast for school-age children on school days. Parents/Guardians can choose to have their children eat breakfast at school. It is charged to your school lunch account. A snack is provided at 3:30 pm.

Breakfast is served at 9:00 am lunch at 12:00 pm and snacks at 3:00 pm on no-school days.

Menu:

Menus are posted on the bulletin board in the entryway. If your child has an allergy or cannot eat a particular food, please inform the center with written instructions from your child's physician.

Food Brought from Home:

Early Childhood Program:

Vinton ELC is NOT peanut-free at the center. Children may bring snacks for special occasions such as birthdays or holidays. Snacks must be store-bought, prepackaged, and sent in their original packaging with the ingredients listed. Children are encouraged to bring healthy snacks such as crackers, fruits, and vegetables. We ask that parents do not send candy, gum, or soft drinks. All treats will be served along with the regular snack or meal.

Children should not bring food that they are eating from home as they enter the building. (ex. Granola bars, donuts, milk, snack packs, etc.) This policy is enforced to protect those children with any type of allergy.

Before/After School Program:

This part of our program is NOT peanut-free. Parents/Guardians can provide a pre-made meal or snack if they so choose. Again, we encourage parents to provide healthy snacks or meals. Food brought from home will be stored in the refrigerator until mealtime. Please label all food with your child's name and date.

Clothing:

Please dress your child in clothes that are comfortable for jumping and playing. Flip flops are not allowed in the Early Childhood Program. All sandals must have a back strap. Children in the Before/After School Program can wear flip flops.

Jewelry, such as rings, bracelets, and necklaces, are not allowed in the Early Childhood Program. These items can be choking hazards.

We will go outside every day, weather permitting. Your child needs to bring the appropriate clothing for outside play (winter hat, coats, mittens, boots, snow pants all labeled with your child's name).

Personal Belongings:

Please label all of your child's personal belongings. Vinton ELC will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items. Children can bring a small, soft, quiet "sleeping buddy" if necessary for nap time. Please DO NOT bring other toys from home unless it is a special day designated by the teacher. Please DO NOT bring birthday invitations to the center unless the whole class is invited, otherwise, Vinton ELC staff will not hand them out.

Inclement Weather/Emergency Closure Policy:

Information regarding a closure due to weather or emergency will be on the KCRG cancellations and delays. You may access this information on television, the KCRG website, or to receive a text alert, you may sign up at www.kcrg.com. You will find Vinton ELC Child Care – Vinton under schools. If Vinton ELC is closed due to the weather, there are no weekly/monthly fee adjustments.

Field Trips:

Field trips are planned throughout the year for children 3 years of age and older. At least one extra staff person over the required staff/child ratio will attend all field trips. Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of each field trip and MUST sign a permission slip before the child can attend. Vinton ELCT-shirts will be provided for each child to wear on field trip days. These shirts will be kept and laundered at Vinton ELC. Childcare will be provided at the center if a parent/guardian does not want their child to attend a field trip.

Some field trips will require an additional fee.

Transportation:

Early Childhood Program:

Transportation for field trips is either on foot or is provided by Benton County Transportation. Children are required to wear seat belts on the Benton County Bus. When traveling on foot, the children will not cross busy streets and all adults present will teach and follow all traffic signs and rules.

Before/After School Program:

The School District provides bus transportation to and from Tilford Elementary for the Tiny Vikes Pre-School program during the school year. Transportation for

field trips will be provided by the Vinton-Shellsburg Community School Bus System or Benton County Transportation.

Parents are required to pay Benton County Transportation for bus tickets.

Section 5: Health

Physicals:

Vinton ELC is required by DHS licensing standards to keep a copy of a physical exam completed by a medical doctor (MD), doctor of osteopathy (DO), physician's assistant (PA), or advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP) on file for each child. The physical exam is to be updated every year in the Early Childhood Program. Children initiating enrollment into the Before/After School Program are required to have a physical exam on file upon admission and then a parent statement of health every year. Children transitioning from our Early Childhood Program to our Before/After School Program are required to have a parent statement of health on file, updated every year.

Immunizations:

Iowa law requires all children in childcare to have up-to-date immunizations. Vinton ELC is required to keep the Iowa Department of Public Health Certificate of Immunization on file for each child. DHS licensing standards require parents/guardians to provide updated documentation of immunizations every time their child receives an immunization. A valid Certificate of Exemption (medical or religious) or Provisional Certificate of Immunization is also acceptable. Vinton ELC works with our Child Care Nurse Consultant to assure compliance.

Illness Policy:

Iowa Department of Public Health shall supersede Vinton ELC policies.

Parents/Guardians are required to inform Vinton ELC of any illness.

Staff will do daily health checks when greeting your child. The child will be sent home due to a suspected illness at the discretion of the staff. Factors that are considered for this decision include the following:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in planned programming. This includes going outside. Parents/Guardians should keep children at home if they are too ill to participate in outdoor activities.
- The child needs care for the illness that is greater than our staff can provide.

- The illness poses a risk of spreading to other children.
- If the parent is called to pick up their child due to an illness, the child must be picked up within 1 hour of the phone call. If the child is still here after the hour, the parents will be billed a \$15 late fee. If the child is still here after 1 hour and 30 minutes, the parents will be billed \$1 for every minute.

The following will occur if a child appears to be ill:

- A quiet supervised area will be provided for a child who appears to be ill.
- Parents/guardians will be notified if a child has a temperature of 100 degrees or higher.
- A child with a temperature of 100.6 degrees will be sent home.
- An infant under the age of 2 months with an unexplained temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher needs a medical evaluation in a timely manner.
- A child with three episodes of diarrhea or diarrhea that cannot be contained in a diaper or soils older children's clothing will be sent home.
- A child with one episode of vomiting will be sent home.
- A child with a rash with fever or behavior changes will be sent home.
- A child that has mouth sores and cannot control drooling will be sent home.
- A child with the pink eye will be sent home and can return to the center after 24 hours once drops have been administered.
- A child with impetigo will be sent home until treatment is received.
- A child with scabies will be sent home until treatment is completed.

Children will not be allowed to return to the center until they have been fever-free for 24 hours WITHOUT use of medication. Children ill with the above symptoms should remain out of the center until they are symptom-free for 24 hours.

Children with any other contagious illness should remain out of the center until they are symptom-free or the criteria to return to daycare have been met as specified by their treating physician.

Parents/Guardians must notify the center one day prior to returning if the child is out with an illness. If a child is absent one week or longer due to an illness, a written notification from the parent or doctor will be required one day prior to the child returning.

A no-nit policy for children returning after having head lice will be enforced.

Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication Policy:

Parents/Guardians may bring in prescription and non-prescription medications for the staff to administer as long as these guidelines are followed:

- The child's health care provider must sign an action plan (recommended for allergies or asthma) or provide written authorization for prescription AND non-prescription medication.

- The child's health care provider must update written authorization for prescription AND non-prescription medication at least yearly or when there is a change in dosage.
- Parent/Guardian must complete and sign a Monthly Medicine Record Form at the front desk.
- Medications that are to be given 2 times per day should be given at home if dosage interval allows.
- All medications must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name, and have the original physician or pharmacy directions intact. Please include the patient information sheet from the pharmacy.
- Medications cannot be expired.
- Staff will not administer more than what the original container recommends for the child's age and weight.
- Medications that state, "not to be given to children under 2 years of age" (or other ages) will not be administered without the written permission of a physician.
- Staff will record their initials, the date, time, and dosage amount on the Monthly Medicine Record Form each time the medication is given.
- Staff will record the reason for a missed dose if the child is not given the medication for any reason. These reasons include but are not limited to the following: the child is absent, the child is brought in later or picked up earlier and medicine is not administered, and the parent forgets to bring the medication.
- All medications are stored per label recommendations. They will be stored in the kitchen refrigerator in a separate locked container if refrigeration is required.
- Expired medications and medications no longer needed will be returned to the parent for disposal and documented.

Food Allergies:

Vinton ELC is currently **NOT** peanut-free at the center. The **Before/After School Program** at Tilford is currently **NOT** peanut-free. Please inform the center if your child has food allergies or cannot eat a particular food. Vinton ELC requires that you submit a Diet Modification Request Form signed by your physician upon enrolling your child. Vinton ELC requires an Allergy Action Plan, including all medications necessary for an allergic reaction. If your child requires an Epi-Pen, please provide two to keep at the center.

Other Non-Prescription Items:

Sunscreen: Non-prescription sunscreen requires written parent/guardian permission that is updated yearly, however does not require physician authorization. Parents/Guardians can bring in their own sunscreen or pay a sunscreen fee to use the sunscreen provided by Vinton ELC. Sunscreen needs to be in lotion form, not spray, and cannot be expired. Parents/guardians need to provide signed documentation if they do not want sunscreen applied to their child.

Insect Repellant: Requires written parent/guardian permission that is updated yearly, however, does not require physician authorization.

Diaper cream, Chapstick, and lotion: Require written parent/guardian permission that is updated yearly. These items need to be provided by the parents/guardians.

Homeopathic or Homemade Products, Essential Oils:

Vinton ELC does not allow the use of these products in our Early Childhood Program or in the Before/After School Program. Iowa Department of Public Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics state that these products should not be used in the childcare setting as they are not tested by the US Food and Drug Administration for safety.

Extreme Temperatures:

Children will remain indoors if the wind chill is at or below 15 degrees F and the heat index is at or above 90 degrees F. Children in the **Before/After School Program** may still go to the swimming pool when the heat index is at or above 90 degrees F at the discretion of the Director. Proper precautions must be taken as follows:

- Drinking fountain located at the swimming pool.
- An alternate place of shelter if the bus is late (Recreation Center).
- Staff informed of the signs and dangers of heat exhaustion.
- School-age children may not go swimming if a Heat Advisory is in effect.

Section 6: Safety

Access Policy:

Enter and exit Vinton ELC through the main entrance in the front of the building. Our facility has a secure coded entry at our main location. Only staff and families with the code can access the entrance. The code is to be kept confidential. Unauthorized persons will be let in by the front office. There is a doorbell to ring if you need assistance. All doors, except the main entrance, will remain locked. We want to protect all staff, children, and families. It is important to know that, even though it may be polite to hold the door open for someone or have them use your door code, it is for safety measures that you don't. We want to follow all security measures to keep everyone safe because some people may not be authorized to enter the building. If you witness anyone violating this policy, please report this to a center supervisor.

Enter and exit the **Before/After School Program** at the main entrance.

All visitors and volunteers must show ID when visiting Vinton ELC. Visitors and volunteers will remain in the front lobby until a staff member escorts them to the specified room. Volunteers will sign a form giving Vinton ELC permission to perform an Iowa Record Check as well as be fingerprinted to send into the Department of Criminal Investigation for a national record check.

Vinton ELC staff are trained to ID anyone they do not know and check the name of that person with the Emergency Form on file or contact a supervisor for approval. Parent/Guardian must inform Vinton ELC if someone not listed on the Emergency Form will be dropping off or picking up their child. This person will need to provide a picture ID when dropping off or picking up the child.

Camera Policy:

Early Childhood Program:

Vinton ELC is equipped with a 24-hour video surveillance system. Security cameras are installed in all classrooms, common areas, outdoor play areas, and the parking lot. Vinton ELC may conduct video surveillance of any portion of its premises at any time, except for those areas where cameras are prohibited by law (i.e.: restrooms, dressing rooms). Video/security cameras are positioned in appropriate places within and around the daycare center facility and used to help promote the safety and security of all persons and property.

The locations of all cameras are in clear view of the public and there are NO secret cameras anywhere on or around the center. Video footage can only be viewed by the Director, Assistant Director, any staff deemed relevant to the situation by the Director or Assistant Director, Vinton ELC Board of Directors, DHS personnel, and the police department. Parents cannot view video footage because of our confidentiality policy.

Before/After School Program:

A surveillance system is provided by the Vinton-Shellsburg School System at Tilford Elementary. Please contact them with any questions or concerns.

Daily Health/Well Being Checks:

Daily health checks are done by the staff greeting you and your child when you come into your room. This is a good time to inform your teacher of any illness symptoms, injuries obtained at home, or other information you want them to know before you leave. Written and photo documentation may be done at this time.

Infant Safe Sleep Policy:

Vinton Early Learning Center practices safe sleep recommendations suggested by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP.) Children under the age of 1 will be

placed on their back EVERY time they are put to sleep. When infants can roll back and forth from front to back, the infant will be placed on their back for sleep and allowed to assume a preferred sleep position. There will be NO loose bedding or toys in the cribs, and the child will sleep alone. The presence of AT LEAST one staff member is required while children are sleeping.

Per our Nurse Consultant (CCNC), DHS and AAP, swaddling to sleep has been deemed an unsafe option in a commercial setting. According to the AAP and Iowa SIDS Foundation, children should be transitioned out of a swaddle by the time they are center-ready (at 6 weeks.) “Swaddling is not necessary or recommended in the childcare setting. The risk of swaddling includes overheating, hip dysplasia and SIDS.” Should extra warmth be needed, footed pajamas, or fitted lightweight sleep sacks is a great alternative. If the infant needs to be swaddled, it must be for medical reasons and Vinton ELC needs to have a doctor’s note that includes the following:

- Medical reason to be swaddled
- Type of swaddle that can be used
- Description of how to swaddle
- Expiration date of when to stop swaddling
- Doctor signature

Vinton ELC does not permit the use of Boppy pillows or similar as there has been a high rate of suffocation accidents in Iowa.

Accidents/Incidents:

Staff will complete an accident/incident report anytime a child’s well-being is affected. Photo documentation may be done at this time. The report will be given to the parent/guardian of all children affected by the incident for parent/guardian signature. Names will be kept out of the accident/incident report due to confidentiality. Reports will be reviewed by the Director and/or the Assistant Director and stored in the child’s file. Parent/Guardian can obtain a copy of the report at any time. If the parent/guardian refuses to sign the incident/accident report presented to them at the time of pick up, the child cannot return until it is signed. This must be signed by the original parent/guardian and notified by Vinton ELC staff.

Emergency Evacuations:

Fire and tornado drills will be practiced monthly. The Emergency Evacuation Plan is posted in the entryway and available upon request. The Emergency Evacuation Plan for Tilford is posted on the Parent Info bulletin board outside the stage and cafeteria at the Tilford location and is available upon request.

Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting:

Our staff has been trained in mandatory child abuse and neglect reporting.

We are required by law to report suspected child abuse. Iowa Code Section 232.69 requires any director or employee of a licensed childcare center to report to the Department of Human Services within 24 hours when, while working with a child, we have reason to believe that the child has suffered sexual abuse, physical abuse, or neglect.

Behavior Management:

Guidance and discipline at Vinton ELC are used as learning tools. Incidents will arise when children of all ages will test their limits with the teachers. Vinton ELC staff will respond to children's inappropriate behavior in the following ways:

- Redirect the child's attention to an alternate activity.
- Explain why the behavior is not appropriate.
- Offer the child alternatives to help them deal with the situation differently if it arises again.
- If the behavior continues, the child will be asked to sit in a quiet area to take a break and calm down.

Staff will work to be proactive with behavior concerns. They will provide an appropriate environment that stimulates the children's learning process and encourages good behavior. Staff will model good behavior for the children.

Eloping:

Vinton ELC is required to follow DHS Licensing Staff Ratio Requirements. If a child elopes from the group, it becomes unsafe for the child who is eloping, and the other children involved. Once the child elopes (wanders, hides, runs) a staff member must leave the group to follow the eloper. This can be difficult and unsafe if there is only one staff member in the ratio group. What staff will do in the case of an eloper:

- Staff will call other staff for assistance.
- Staff will encourage the eloper to join the group.
- Staff will redirect the eloper in an activity that he/she would like to do. Staff will communicate with the child that walking away from the group is unsafe.
- If eloping continues, parents/guardians will be called to pick up their child.
- If eloping is a continued behavior, staff will hold a meeting with the parents/guardians regarding information and suggestions to solve the behavior.
- Staff will follow the suggestions and plan put in place. However, if eloping continues to occur, the Director and/or Assistant Director has the right to terminate the childcare contract.

Aggressive Behavior Policy:

Vinton ELC works hard to provide a safe environment for all children and staff. It is important for staff, children, and parents to work together as a team to correct the behavior. Vinton ELC staff will respond to aggressive behavior in the following way:

- Staff will complete an incident report documenting the behavior.
- If there is destruction of property, the family will be billed and be responsible for paying for the broken item.
- The parent/guardian may be called to pick up the child for aggressive behavior and/or inappropriate language, at the discretion of the staff. An emergency contact will be called if the child cannot be picked up by the parent/guardian in a reasonable amount of time.
- Staff will document all communication with the parents/guardians regarding information and suggestions to solve the behavior.
- The Director will hold a meeting with parents/guardians and relevant staff after three incidents reports of aggressive behavior.
- A written plan will be put into place with recommendations that may include observation and referral to Grant Wood AEA.
- A second meeting will be called if aggressive behavior continues within a 4-week period. At this time, the Director may make the decision whether the child can continue to attend Vinton ELC. The safety of all the children in the class will be taken into consideration when this decision is made.
- If a child or parent's behavior becomes a threat to the other children, families, and staff, we reserve the right to terminate enrollment immediately.
- If the child is sent home or has behaviors that are physical, and/or unsafe to themselves or others at Tiny Vikes or School, the child cannot attend Vinton ELC for the rest of the day.

Biting Policy:

Biting is common in young children. The first step in learning to control biting is to look at why it may be happening. Teething aside, children may bite out of curiosity, frustration, or seek attention. Vinton ELC staff will respond to biting in the following way:

- Staff will remain calm and will not express frustration or anger to the child that has been bitten.
- Staff will ensure all children are safe.
- Staff will redirect the child that has bit to a positive activity.
- Staff will provide emotional and physical support to the child that was bitten.
- Staff will assess the wound and wash it with soap and water. Universal precautions will be followed if there is blood exposure.

- Staff will give strategies to use instead of biting if the child is verbal.
- Staff will complete an incident report for each child involved. Names will be kept out of the report in accordance with Vinton ELC's confidentiality policy.

Medical Emergency Policy:

If a medical emergency arises, staff will first attempt to contact the parents/guardians. If they can't be reached, staff will contact the emergency contacts listed on your child's Emergency Medical Consent Form. If needed, staff will call 911 and your child will be transported by ambulance to the hospital. Parent's/Guardian's signature on the form gives the hospital permission to care for the child. **Parents/Guardians are liable for all expenses incurred related to the incident.**

Dental Emergency Policy:

If a dental emergency arises, staff will first attempt to contact the parents/guardians. If they cannot be reached, staff will contact the dentist listed on your child's Emergency Medical Consent Form and follow any recommendations given. **Parents/Guardians are liable for all expenses incurred related to the incident.**

Smoking Policy:

Smoking or vaping of any kind is not allowed in Vinton Early Learning Center, the Before/After School Program located at Tilford Elementary, or anywhere on the property in compliance with the Iowa Smoke-Free Air Act of 2008. A "No Smoking" sign meeting the law's requirements is posted at the entrance to the building to inform people they are entering a nonsmoking place. Vinton ELC also has a tobacco-free policy in the above-designated areas.

Alcohol and Drug Policy:

Alcohol and illegal drugs of any kind are not allowed at Vinton ELC. Parents/Guardians who arrive at Vinton ELC or the Before/After School Program intoxicated or under the influence of drugs will be asked not to leave with their child for their child's safety. An emergency contact will be called by staff to help with transporting children home safely. Staff will call 911 if the parent/guardian chooses to leave with their child. Violation may result in a child's suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the Director and/or Board of Directors.

Weapons Policy:

No parent/guardian or child shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place, or put into the possession of another child any real weapon or a look-

alike weapon on Vinton ELC and the Before/After School Program premises, in any vehicle used by Vinton ELC and the Before/After School Program or for their purposes, or in other buildings or premises used for Vinton ELC and the Before/After School Program functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. “Look-alike weapon” means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon. Vinton ELC has a zero-tolerance policy on weapons (real or toy) including but not limited to guns, squirt guns, water rifles or pistols, slingshots, toy guns, toy grenades, knives, and other items that may resemble a weapon. Violation may result in a child’s suspension or expulsion at the discretion of the Director and/or Board of Directors. Confiscation of weapons or dangerous objects may be reported to law enforcement officials.

Weapons under the control of law enforcement officials shall be exempt from this policy and may be displayed for educational purposes with the authorization of the Director.

Section 7: Family Rights

Confidentiality:

All information concerning an individual child and his/her activities at the center are confidential. Written records for individual children are kept locked in a secured location. The Director will field all requests for confidential information. A child's written records will be destroyed seven years after childcare service has been terminated.

Please be mindful and respect the staff at Vinton ELC by not asking staff to discuss your child or other children outside of the center. Vinton ELC staff are prohibited from sharing any information with you about another child and/or family.

Vinton ELC makes the confidentiality of all persons within the center a high priority. Parents/guardians must respect and understand the importance of this responsibility. Parents/Guardians need to know that the Confidentiality Policy also applies to all children, families, and employees associated with Happy Time, not just their child/ren. Any parent/guardian that shares confidential information, pressures employees or other parents for information that is not necessary for them to know, will be considered in violation of the policy.

Open Door Policy:

We welcome parents/guardians to visit at any time. Parents/guardians have unlimited access to their children and to the staff caring for their children whenever their children are in the care of Vinton ELC or the Before/After School Program unless parental contact is prohibited by court order. Other visitors are also welcome with parent/guardian permission, but please remember early

afternoon is nap time. Parents/guardians and other visitors should not distract or disrupt the other children. Please schedule a meeting with staff if you need to have a lengthy discussion. This will allow staff to stay in ratio, keep their attention on the children they are supervising and ensure confidentiality. We hope you will come and talk with us if you have any comments, questions, or concerns about our program.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT:

Vinton Early Learning Center expects the parents/guardians of all enrolled children to be respectful and behave with common courtesy. At Vinton ELC it is not only the staff's responsibility to create the most nurturing environment for our children, but it is also the parents/guardians of our enrolled children as well.

Language:

Vinton ELC will not allow parents/guardians to curse or use any other form of inappropriate language on the property either in the presence of a child or not. Disrespectful language can be offensive towards many people and will not be tolerated. Vinton ELC will not allow any inappropriate language to be directed towards our staff.

Threatening Behavior:

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. If a threat is given at any time, that family will be terminated. Vinton ELC will take all threats seriously and out of an abundance of caution all threats directed towards Vinton ELC or the staff will be reported to the appropriate authorities and action will be taken based on their findings. For the safety of our staff and families, Vinton ELC will not risk the chance for this behavior to be repeated. All parents must be responsible for their own behavior.

Physical/Verbal Abuse of Any Child:

Physical or Verbal abuse of any child – be your own or another child – will not be tolerated on Vinton ELC property. Vinton ELC staff would be more than welcome to discuss the behavior issues with you and your child and discuss appropriate forms of discipline, however, any form of abuse done onsite will not be condoned. If a parent is concerned for another child's safety, either from witnessing something themselves or from their child bringing it up, these concerns should not be directed at the other parent. The acceptable next step would be to discuss these actions with a staff member at Vinton ELC. Additionally, it is extremely inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's behavior. Bring any concerns you may have directly to a Vinton ELC staff member and be assured that we will discuss this with both parties. Due to our confidential policy, we are unable to share information about another family, however, be assured that we will discuss the issue with the family member.

Termination of Enrollment Policy:

It is the discretion of the Director and/or Board of Directors to discharge a child for any violations of the rules contained herein by either the child or the parent. The Director and/or Board of Directors have the option to discharge a child for nonpayment of fees 14 days after the due date or if a designated payment plan is not being followed. Vinton ELC reserves the right to:

- Modify or change services, agreements, fees, schedules, and handbooks at any time.
- Reevaluate any child's continued participation in the program at any time, for any reason, particularly if the child has needs that cannot best be met by the center, or that may be detrimental to the health or progress of other children.
- Terminate services to any family whose parents/guardians are uncooperative in adherence to all policies, procedures, fee schedules, program requirements, and amounts due. Any parent who avoids cooperation and positive communication with staff/administration may jeopardize their child's participation/enrollment status. We encourage positive communication with all families. Vinton ELC will not tolerate yelling, threats, or acting out in front of the children for any reason.
- Terminate the childcare contract at any time if the Director and/or Board of Directors feels that it is in the best interest of the Center.

Appeals & Grievances:

If a parent/guardian has a concern, appeal, or grievance concerning an action that has taken place at the center, the parent/guardian should contact the teacher/staff person with the concern in writing. The staff person will consider the information and respond to it in writing, including any corrective action taken within seven working days.

If the parent/guardian does not agree with the action taken, the parent/guardian may put the concern in writing and request a meeting with the Director, within seven days after receiving the formal written response from the teacher/staff person. The Director will respond in writing to the parent/guardian concerning any action taken within seven working days.

The parent/guardian may present the concern in writing to the Board of Directors within fourteen days after receiving the formal written response from the Director. The Board of Directors will inform the parent/guardian as to when the matter will be reviewed (the next board meeting after the receipt of the complaint). The Board will hear information at that time and render a written decision concerning the center's actions within fourteen days. That decision is final.

Harassment:

Harassment of employees, students, and parents will not be tolerated at Vinton ELC. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, racial, religious, national origin, age, disability, and sexual harassment. Harassment by board members, administrators, employees, parents, vendors, and others doing business with Vinton ELC is prohibited. Individuals whose behavior is alleged to be in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge or other appropriate action. Employees, students, and parents who believe they have suffered harassment shall report such matters to the Director or Board of Directors.

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html , and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
 2. fax: 202-690-7442; or
 3. email: program.intake@usda.gov
- This institution is an equal opportunity provider.