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# PARENT HANDBOOK

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“Strengthening our communities by improving the lives of those in need through actions promoting self-sufficiency. We seek to eliminate the impact of poverty by focusing on education, housing stability and economic opportunities.”

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PAGE - STANLEY HEAD START: CLASSROOM #1 CHAIN OF COMMAND

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SUBSTITUTES

## **DAY TO DAY OPERATION**

Skyline CAP Head Start – Page 01/Stanley Head Start is in session 8:30 am-2:30 pm, Monday-Friday, while observing all federal holidays and school closings and delays.

Contact information: Stanley Elementary School – 306 Aylor Gubbs Ave, Stanley, VA 22851  
Skyline CAP – 532 S. Main St, Madison, VA 22727 – 540-948-3916

## **Inclement Weather Policy**

**Skyline CAP Head Start will follow the county school's procedure for closings and delays.** Please listen to your local television/radio for school closings. The decision to close or reopen schools is always based on the safety of the children.

## **Illicit Drugs and Tobacco**

Any adult present in Head Start facilities who is suspected of being/or is under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave immediately. Any adult who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol will **not** be permitted to pick up a child. Another adult on the Emergency Contact Form will be called and a police report may be filed. **All Head Start facilities and school activities (regardless of where the activity is held) are drug, alcohol, and tobacco free.**

## **Clothing**

Children will be participating in many activities such as running, jumping, and climbing during the entire school year. The health and safety of all children is the primary concern for Head Start and we therefore recommend the following guidelines when preparing to send your child to preschool:

- Have your child wear a coat, hat, and gloves/mittens in colder weather, when temperatures fall below 45 degrees.
- Please provide a clean change of clothes for your child in the event of an accident.
- Shoes should be comfortable and well-fitted. Tennis shoes are highly recommended.
- Long, dangling earrings and fake fingernails are not permitted to help prevent safety accidents

*Please contact your Family Advocate (Monica Etter: 540-948-3916 ext. 272) if you have any clothing needs. They will be happy to assist you and your family.*

## **Classroom Ratio**

Student-teacher ratio in the classroom is always 1 adult to 10 children. Staff will count and confirm with each other when lining up before leaving; at transition points; and upon arrival.

## **Outdoor play**

The routine of the classroom must allow for outdoor play every day as weather permits. Outdoor time is important to maintain good early childhood health and development. If you do not wish your child to go outdoors because of a recent illness, you must keep your child home. Skyline CAP Head Start does not provide staff to stay indoors with a child. To ensure all outdoor equipment is safe, playground safety checks are conducted on a weekly basis.

### **Personal toys**

Skyline CAP Head Start encourages parents to **please leave all personal toys at home**. Head Start **will not** be responsible for lost, stolen or broken toys.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Head Start parents provide transportation to Page Head Start students.

### **ARRIVAL and DEPARTURE**

To ensure your child's safety, you must accompany your child to his/her classroom when signing them in and out of the program. You may also be asked for a photo ID to ensure every child is being released to authorized personnel. Head Start staff will begin admitting children at the designated arrival time and please plan on picking up your child promptly at dismissal time. For safety reasons, please do not leave any children unattended in a vehicle and hold your child's hand while in and around parking lots and roadways.

If your child has not been picked up by parent/guardian or designated party by the close of the day every effort will be made to contact you or your emergency contacts. If no contact can be made Child Protective Services will be called to ensure your child's safety.

### **Authorized Pick Up**

If someone else will be picking up your child, you must give **advanced** notice. **Head Start will not release your child without written authorization**. Head Start staff will require him/her to show a photo ID. **The person signing your child in and out of the Head Start program must be at least 18 years of age**.

### **Parking Lot Policy / Pedestrian Safety**

**(Head Start Performance Standard 1310.21a) (training is provided within 30 days after the start of the new program year)**

All vehicles must follow established traffic patterns and must be in a parking space when dropping off and picking up children. It is against the law to pass a stopped bus that is unloading and loading children. Vehicles must be turned off and children are not to be left unattended, as this creates an unsafe environment for the child. **Law enforcement will be contacted when staff are concerned about the safety of a child**. Staff members are not permitted to supervise children left in vehicles. Parents/guardians must walk their child(ren) to the teaching staff and sign-in their child to transfer legal responsibility to the Head Start program.

**For safety reasons, please hold your child's hand when crossing through parking lots and roadways. It is important for parents to accompany a preschool child while crossing the street.** Skyline CAP Head Start promotes proper car seat and seatbelt usage. It is required by law that all passengers in a vehicle wear a seatbelt. It is also required by law that a child under the age of 8 years old **must** be in a booster or car seat. Skyline CAP Head Start can assist you with obtaining an appropriate car restraint.

## Leaving the classroom

- Children are not allowed to leave the classroom unless accompanied by a staff member.
- If a child is scheduled for an onsite screening or diagnostic evaluation, he/she will be accompanied by an authorized adult.

## HEALTH and MEDICATION POLICIES

### Health Services

The health service objectives for each child are to identify health concerns and ensure that each child receive any needed medical, dental, mental health, and nutritional services. Additionally, Head Start works to promote parent/guardian understanding that the child's program success is directly linked to his/her receipt of these services. The following must be completed in order to participate in the Head Start program:

- Immunizations- (due prior to the first day of school)  
Immunizations are important for your child's health. A schedule of required immunizations is Part II of the Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health - form which should be completed by your primary care provider. (Page immunizations: consult with Family Advocate (*Monica Etter: 540-948-3916, ext. 272*) for requirements).  
Health Physical - (must be completed within 30 days of enrolling in the program and include bloodwork)  
Dental Exam - (must be completed within 90 days of enrolling in the program)
- Head Start will also conduct the following health screenings as part of your child's enrollment:  
Sensory (hearing and vision screenings) - conducted within 45 days by the Health and Safety Manager  
Developmental/Speech - conducted within 45 days  
ASQ-SE – parent-conducted within 30 days  
Mental Health Observations – observations scheduled 3 times during the year via mental health professional  
Height/Weight – conducted 3 times during the year by staff

If the screenings indicate concerns or a need for further treatment, parents/guardians will be notified and asked to make arrangements for follow-up treatment. Family Advocates are available to assist parents/guardians in obtaining further treatment.

### Sick Policy (in accordance with State Licensing Standard VAC 15-30-570)

- Head Start asks that you send your child to school every day UNLESS your child is sick.
- If your child is sick, you should call the classroom to notify the teaching staff of your child's absence.
- Please do not send your child to school if he/she has any of the following symptoms:
  - Fever (over 100.4 degrees taken by mouth);
  - Vomiting or diarrhea (reoccurring within 24 hours of the time a child would normally leave for school); or
  - Communicable disease (refer to the Virginia Department of Health Communicable Disease Reference posted in each classroom).

- A child exhibiting any of the above illnesses must be symptom free without medication for 24 hours before being readmitted to the classroom.
- If your child has a rash, Head Start requires a doctor’s note to ensure that the child is not contagious. This note must be presented to the teaching staff before the child can re-enter the classroom.
- The teaching staff will notify parents/guardians within 24 hours if any children are confirmed to have a communicable disease.

**Daily Health Observation (in accordance with State Licensing Standard VAC 22 VAC 40-185-240 and Head Start Performance Standard 1304.20, 1304.22)**

- Teaching staff will conduct a daily health observation of each child during their arrival at school.
- This check is a mandatory Head Start Performance Standard and is done to help prevent illness and disease from entering the classroom.
- Parents/guardians will be asked to pick up their child as soon as possible if any signs or symptoms of illness or communicable disease are suspected.

Common infectious illnesses that usually require a visit to the physician are: impetigo, “pink eye”, hand, foot, and mouth, scabies, whooping cough, strep throat, measles, mumps, ringworm, and pinworms. When the physician sees your child, ask for a note stating when the child can return to school.

Parents/guardians must inform Head Start within 24 hours after a child or any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease. You must pick up your child when ill or hurt as soon as possible, if requested to do so by Head Start staff (State Licensing Standard 15-30-80).

**Medication Administration**

**PRESCRIPTIONS**

The following guidelines must be followed in order to administer prescription medication during Head Start program hours (22 VAC 40-185-510).

- Parents/guardians must bring medications in person to the classroom.
- Medication must be in the original container. You may request a “school bottle” for medication from your pharmacy, which can be kept at Head Start.
- Medication must have a legible prescription label on the container.
- Medication must not exceed the expiration date.
- A “Written Medication Consent Form” must be completed by both parent/guardian and healthcare provider
- Teachers are not permitted to administer injections (with the exception of Epi-Pen Jr.)
- **Parents/guardians will be notified by teacher when prescription medication need to be replaced (within 5 school days)**

### OVER-THE-COUNTER

- Over-the-counter medication is prohibited unless prescribed by a physician.

### OVER-THE-COUNTER SKIN PRODUCTS

The following guidelines must be followed in order to administer over-the-counter skin products during Head Start program hours (22 VAC 40-185-520)

- Teachers may only administer the following over-the-counter non-prescription skin product: DIAPER OINTMENT or CREAM (sunscreen and insect repellent can only be applied by Head Start staff if prescribed by a doctor with medication consent forms)
- Over-the-counter non-prescription skin products must be brought in by the parent/guardian with a Skin Product Authorization Form signed by the parent/guardian.
- Over-the-counter non-prescription skin products must be in their original containers, have current effective dates, and Parent Authorization Form signed by the parent/guardian.
- Parents/guardians will be notified by teacher when over-the-counter non-prescription skin products need to be replaced

### **Injury Policy**

Skyline CAP Head Start policy states that should any Head Start student, staff or guest incur an injury, standard Red Cross procedures will be followed. An accident/incident report will be completed to document the event. When a student is injured a copy will be sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) and Health Manager the day of the accident/incident. When a staff member or guest are injured a completed accident/incident will be sent to the Human Resources Director the day of the accident/incident. At least one staff member at every Head Start center is trained in First Aid and safety precautions.

### **MANDATED REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Virginia Law 63.2-1509 states that, "...any Teacher or other person employed in a public or private school...who has reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, shall report the matter immediately" [ to the local Department of Welfare]. Virginia Law 63.2-1509 further states, "...failure to do shall result in a fine." It is the legal responsibility of Head Start staff to report any suspected abuse and/or neglect.

### **CUSTODIAL PARENT'S RIGHTS**

Custodial parents always have the right to be admitted to their child's classroom. If there has been a withdrawal of custody or any change, current paperwork must be on file. No admittance will be granted if paperwork is not on file.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

All adult family members are welcome and encouraged to participate in various aspects of the program. Parent/guardians have the opportunity to become a paid employee (if the need arises). You may volunteer as often as you can. If you decide to be a regular volunteer (three times a week) you are required to get a TB screening and background check which Skyline CAP Head Start will provide information for. Volunteer/substitute training is required to familiarize you with classroom policies and procedures. Head Start requests that parent(s)/guardian(s) volunteer at least once in the classroom before making the decision to become a paid substitute. All volunteer time is counted as an in-kind (donation) to the program.

**Ways to volunteer:****In the Classroom:**

1. Participate in Parents of Pre-Schoolers (POPS) Events. Events occur one a month. POPS events are made up of parents/guardian(s) whose children are enrolled in the center.
2. Read in the classroom (to an individual child, small group, or large group of children);
3. Translate for other parents/guardians; and
4. Receive training to become a paid classroom substitute

**GOVERNANCE**

1. Policy Council (PC) - Policy Council members become involved in the process of making decisions about the nature and operation of the program. At least 51% of the PC must be made up of parent(s)/guardians of Head Start children presently enrolled, plus representatives from the community. The PC attempts to schedule a minimum of six (6) meetings a year.
2. Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) - The HSAC is made up of parent(s)/guardian(s) of children enrolled in the program, community representatives, and members in the health field. HSAC meets twice a year.

Feel free to ask your Family Advocate or your child's teacher about more specific volunteer possibilities.

**Special Notes**

1. All parent(s)/guardian(s) and community representatives serving on the Policy Council must be elected yearly by parents/guardians of Head Start children currently enrolled in the program.
2. It is important that the membership of Policy Council be rotated to assure a regular influx of new ideas into the program. For this purpose, terms of membership must be limited to no more than five (5) years.

**GIFTS**

All employees are prohibited from accepting gifts or any gratuities from any person who receives services from the Head Start program.

**EMERGENCY POLICIES**

Page Head Start will respond to emergencies based on the plans listed in their Emergency Preparedness Plans in conjunction with the plans for Stanley Elementary School. A representative of Page Head Start (i.e. teacher, manager, family advocate, or director) will notify parents by phone of the details of all emergencies when safety permits.

## **Fire Safety and Evacuation Procedures**

Staff and children of all Head Start classrooms are required to conduct weekly evacuation drills the first month of school and then a monthly practice evacuation drill thereafter. Additionally, a minimum of two shelter in place drills must be conducted per year in case of tornado and school-wide lockdown. (State Licensing 22 VAC 40-185-550 D). A record that details the dates and types of these drills is maintained at the center for a period of one year (State Licensing 22 VAC 40-1850550 E). Emergency plans, along with directions for dealing with different emergency situations, are also posted in each classroom (State Licensing Standard 22 VAC 40-185-550 A). The Fire Marshall will check for proper location of exit routes, working fire extinguishers and exit signs (State Licensing Standard 15-30-610(C)). Also, 911 or local number for police, fire, emergency medical services, and the number of the regional poison control center shall be posted in a visible place at each telephone (State Licensing Standard 22 VAC 40-185-550 F).

### **Fire**

1. Page Head Start teachers will escort their students at least 300 feet away from the fire while remaining out of the way of emergency personnel
2. Teachers will continue to ensure the safety of their students until no further threat is apparent.
3. Parents, emergency contacts if necessary, and the Head Start main office will be notified of the fire and precautions taken as soon as the fire is out, and the area is cleared by emergency personnel

### **Lockdown**

1. Page Head Start teachers will determine that classrooms are to be put on lockdown
2. Lock the door to the classroom and close window shades.
3. Immediately create a list of students that are elsewhere in the building.
4. Keep students in room away from door and glass area by door.
5. If the intruder has a gun and begins shooting, EVERYONE should lie down on the floor immediately.
6. Students should be kept quiet.
7. Window shades will be left closed to avoid the threat of detection.
8. If students or staff are not in a room, they should try to hide as best as they can.
9. Notify the Head Start Director and Family Advocate about the lockdown.
10. When the threat is over, wait for a law enforcement officer to open your door.

### **Lost and Missing Children**

1. The teacher should calmly conduct a quick search of the immediate area for the child. Ask other adults in the area if they know the child's whereabouts. The teacher's assistant should ensure the other children are properly supervised.
2. The teacher should notify the Head Start main office and school office that the child is missing, and the school office will call 911.
3. The teacher should ensure that the parent or emergency contact is notified as soon as possible.
4. The teacher should continue to search the school area until the emergency personnel arrive.

### Tornado

1. Before the start of the school year, the Page Head Start teacher is responsible for determining (and discussing with the Head Start safety manager) where their “shelter in place” will be in case of a tornado.
2. The teachers will announce to prepare for a tornado.
3. Direct students to line up at the classroom door. Perform a head count.
4. Have your class list, emergency medical supplies, and emergency contact form in hand.
5. Move students to your designated shelter in place area.
6. Direct students to sit quietly facing the wall with their heads between their knees using hands and arms to cover their heads
7. **Remain there until given further instructions.**

### **REPORTING OF ALL CHANGES IN EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

**Please** notify your Family Advocate (*Monica Etter: 540-948-3916, ex. 272*) or your child’s Teacher of any change in address or telephone numbers **immediately**. For emergency situations, it is essential that Head Start has **current information** on every student.

### **GENERAL DAILY SCHEDULES**

All Head Start children will participate in the following activities (generally in order as listed):

- Morning circle time
- Breakfast
- Outdoor play
- Academic studies – including reading and movement
- Center activities – including creativity, science, construction, reading, listening centers, and dramatic play
- Lunch
- Nap time
- End-of-day circle time

### **FOOD POLICIES**

Skyline CAP Head Start will be responsible for providing breakfast and lunch to all students. Please keep in mind that on days that school starts on a two-hour delayed schedule, breakfast will **not** be served. Please feed your child at home on these days. All children’s meals are reimbursed through the USDA Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) administered by the Virginia Department of Health as mandated by the Head Start Federal Grant Performance Standards. The following practices are followed:

- Meals provided by Skyline CAP Head Start meet or exceed all USDA standards;

- Meals will be served by Head Start staff, who have been trained on USDA guidelines and requirements;
- All food is obtained through a certified Food Service Provider;
- Head Start incorporates family style eating in its daily routine and emphasizes the sharing of the same menu.
- Medically based diets or other dietary requirements must be accommodated with a note from the physician and must be followed according to the physician's recommendations; and
- Food is not used as punishment or reward, and each child is encouraged, but **not** forced, to eat or taste his or her food.

**It is against regulations to bring food into the classroom for celebrations and birthdays. Children who have a doctor's note may bring a packed lunch.**

The USDA Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

**To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14<sup>th</sup> and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.**

### **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Physical discipline by staff or parents/guardians, such as hitting, spanking, or rough handling is not permitted on Head Start property. Strong language and yelling are also not permitted.

### **Procedures for Challenging Behaviors**

To minimize behavior challenges in the classroom, teacher/assistant will ensure:

- Behavioral expectations are taught directly.
- Peer related social skills are taught directly.
- Breathing strategies are practiced frequently throughout the day, particularly during non-stressful times.
- Children with challenging behaviors who don't respond to above is being offered supports.
- Teacher/assistant establish/maintain positive connection with child, using a 5:1 ratio of positive to negative attention.
- Teacher/assistant each spend a minimum of 5 minutes per day interacting with child 1 on 1 in activity of child's choice.
- Teacher has established strong home-school connection.
- Visuals are provided to help child move through challenging times of day.
- Individual social stories are used with children

If above items are being implemented consistently with little/no change in behavior:

- Teacher/assistant will send in Behavior Incident Report for each incident of challenging behavior the day the behavior(s) occur.
- Education Manager will respond within 24 hours of receiving the Incident Report.
- Education Manager and teacher/assistant will develop further strategies to use with child. Parent will be notified of strategies being used either through phone call or conference.
- Strategies will be implemented consistently for 10 days. Teacher/assistant will complete Behavior Tracking Chart during that period. If no change, or there is a deterioration in behaviors, teacher/assistant will notify Education Manager. Teacher will set up a parent conference to discuss what further assistance the child may need. Teacher will notify Education Manager of conference date.

In the case of serious/dangerous behaviors:

- Teachers use Conscious Discipline® techniques to try and calm the child. If FA is on site, ask her to come in the classroom to help assistant carry on with the normal routine. Otherwise have the assistant do a read aloud or music activity with the other children.
- Education manager will receive a Behavior Incident Report to determine additional support and resources to address any issues the child may be facing
- Parents will be notified, and a conference will be set up to discuss a behavior plan

### **ATTENDANCE, ABSENTEEISM, AND TERMINATION**

Head Start emphasizes daily attendance of your child. **Too many absences or late arrivals can interrupt your child's learning and socialization. Please call the classroom by 8:45 a.m. if you know that your child will be late. This will insure your child is included in the lunch meal count.** If a child is absent past one hour of school starting, the Head Start teacher will attempt to make contact with the child's parent/guardian to confirm the absence. Children arriving from another program/agency will be signed-in to the Head Start classroom by the applicable program/agency. We understand that sometimes it is necessary for your child to be absent from school due to an illness or emergency. ***Please remember to call the classroom or Family Advocate when your child will be absent.***

**Chronic tardiness or absences may result in your child being dropped from the program.**

### **DISABILITIES**

Head Start reserves at least ten percent (10%) of available enrollments for children with disabilities. Children are eligible for special education services if they have a current IEP or have been identified as a child with a disability.

### **FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

The Family Advocate staff (Family Advocates and Family Advocate Manager) are trained to assist families during a crisis in a confidential manner. Areas of concern may be domestic problems, child abuse, financial difficulties, health, nutrition, or alcohol/substance abuse. Please do not hesitate to contact your Family Advocate (*Monica Etter: 540-948-3916, ext. 272*) if any assistance is needed.

The Family Partnerships service area focuses on family goal setting. A Family Partnership Agreement is completed with each family. The purpose of the Family Partnership Agreement is to support parents/guardians in identifying their own strengths, interests, and goals. This includes writing down these goals as well as setting timetables for achieving them.

### **Home Visits/Conferences**

Federal Guidelines require Head Start to conduct two home visits and two parent teacher conferences per year. Additional home visits and conferences can be made based on individual family needs. These meetings are an important way for you to communicate information with your child's Teacher and Family Advocate. **Please try to keep scheduled appointments.**

### **PRAISE/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

The **POLICY** for submitting praise and/or complaints has been developed in compliance with Head Start Performance Standards 1304.50 (d)(2)(v). The grantee Board and Policy Council are required to establish and maintain a procedure for hearing and working with the grantee to acknowledge praise and to address and resolve complaints and inquiries regarding the program or staff. This procedure is provided to all families and is available to the community served by Skyline CAP Head Start.

Skyline CAP Head Start promotes the philosophy that individuals involved should make every effort to resolve an issue between themselves as the first step in any disagreement, misunderstanding, or complaint.

The formal **PROCEDURE** for voicing praise or complaints regarding the Skyline CAP Head Start program is as follows (all procedures must be utilized):

1. Staff will give the Head Start Director the name and telephone number of anyone who wishes to voice their praise/complaint, and they will receive a call from the Head Start Director to discuss the situation.
2. Submission in writing, in person, or by telephone (540-948-3916, ext. 150) to the Head Start Director is also permitted (form attached).
3. When a complaint or inquiry is submitted, the Head Start Director will investigate and make every effort to resolve the complaint or inquiry..
4. The Head Start Director report these events on the monthly report with goes , to the Policy Council, Governing Board, and Regional Office for informational purposes as well as for possible input/resolution informational reasons.

**SKYLINE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM, INC.**

**HEAD START PRAISE/COMPLAINT FORM**

**PLEASE SEND THIS FORM TO:**

**Attn: Head Start Director - P.O. Box 588, Madison, VA 22727**

Skyline CAP Head Start welcomes constructive communication in the Head Start program. We realize that in human services there is always room for improvement, and we will always strive to improve when possible.

To ensure a voice for all who are directly involved in the activities of the Head Start program (staff/non-staff), the space below has been designed for you to document such praises, complaints, or inquiries.

Whenever a praise and/or complaint names a person or persons, it is necessary to share that praise and/or complaint with the individual(s) named in order to ensure open communication.

This is a praise and/or complaint regarding:

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If additional space is needed, please add attachment or use the back. Please be specific when writing your praise and/or complaint. We hope to serve you well with this process. If you would like, you may follow-up by phone with the Head Start Director at (540) 948-3916, ext. 150.

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Skyline CAP Head Start  
Parent Handbook Contract**

\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
(parent/guardian) (name(s) of child(ren)),

The Parent Handbook and emergency plans have been provided to me and I have received training that includes Federal regulated pedestrian safety training (review of Parking lot and Pedestrian Safety Procedure (Page 3 of Parent Handbook). I understand that I am responsible for reading and following the rules, policies, and procedures outlined in the handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Skyline CAP Head Start  
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