

Green Chimneys SCHOOL HANDBOOK



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WELCOME TO GREEN CHIMNEYS!

We are excited that you have chosen Green Chimneys School. Here at Green Chimneys, we know the collaboration of staff and parents is vital to the success of our students. We encourage you to reach out to staff, get involved and partner with us as we work together on your child's academic and social/emotional goals.

Green Chimneys School offers a structured and supportive program, a curriculum based on New York State standards, classes with a maximum of 12 students per class, special educational professionals and a world renowned nature-based program. Our natural surroundings create a therapeutic environment for our students. In addition to the traditional academic subjects, children are provided with opportunities to horseback ride, develop culinary talents, partake in woodworking class, swim, canoe, fish and much more.

TREATMENT PHILOSOPHY

Programs and services offered by Green Chimneys, whether residential, day school or community-based, are part of a continuum of care for youth who struggle with social, emotional, behavioral and academic challenges. We provide intervention services designed to equip youth, and their families, with the skills, knowledge, resources and supports that they need to live healthy, productive lives.

Our Philosophy of Care is built on the following principles:

- ***Human-Animal and Nature-Based Interactions contribute to learning and social/emotional growth.*** Green Chimneys uses its enriched environment of animals, plants and nature to support the development of therapeutic relationships and vital emotional skills including empathy, compassion, patience and responsibility for living things.
- ***Services are Trauma-Informed.*** Many of the youth we serve have experienced traumatic events or losses. Trauma can take many forms and all will have a lasting impression on a child and their family. Having to leave one's home, community, and family, will further complicate their trauma history. With this in mind, our model for delivering care takes into account the impact of trauma on individuals, families, staff and the organization and are designed to minimize the harmful effects of trauma, promote healing and create a safe and nurturing space for learning and growth.
- ***Services and treatment/learning goals are individualized and strength-based.*** Green Chimneys utilizes consistent planning meetings and assessments to identify the needs/concerns and inherent strengths of each child by incorporating the input of all treatment team members, and especially the family. An individualized plan is developed for each child, which has specific goals and objectives in all life domains – educational, behavioral, interpersonal, emotional and familial – and builds on the inherent strengths of each child.
- ***Family connections are essential to treatment and growth.*** Youth who maintain strong connections to their families and communities have greater, and more sustainable, positive outcomes than those who do not preserve these connections. Having a child return to their family and community in the shortest time possible and be able to transfer the gains made from Green Chimneys to home is our ultimate goal.

We recognize that parents/caregivers are the experts on their children – knowing what their challenges and strengths are, what works for them, and what they hope for them.

- **Positive reinforcement is essential to behavioral change.** Our behavior management practices are founded on established cognitive-behavioral theories – learning (both academic and emotional/behavioral) comes from establishing clear expectations for behaviors and providing positive reinforcement for those behaviors. As such, we employ the use of systems of positive reinforcement, including Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to support and encourage the use of pro-social, healthy and safe behaviors. When maladaptive behaviors occur, we rely on natural and logical consequences within a restorative justice framework that is based upon established learning theory.
- **We create a collaborative treatment-team culture built on professionalism, accountability, respect and the valuable contribution of each individual.** Forming collaborative relationships is vital to all the work we do and can only occur when we view children, family and staff members as unique individuals with valuable gifts and contributions, always striving to understand and respect another’s viewpoint. Allowing for open dialogue and respect for differences leads us to decisions that are for the greatest good of the children and families we serve. A person-centered approach to our work also ensure that we focus on what matters to the children and families we serve, allowing them to define their goals, respecting their readiness for change and supporting them throughout their journey.
- **We are committed to continuous quality improvement.** In order to ensure that we achieve the best possible outcomes for the children and families we serve, we collect, track and analyze data to inform our treatment decisions and practices. The information we collect helps us to individualize our treatment, modify our approaches when necessary and create policies and practices that are supported by data and research and make use of training and other resources to provide the best possible services.

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS (PBIS)

Green Chimneys’ Philosophy of Care states that **Positive reinforcement is essential to behavioral change.** Our behavior management practices are founded on established cognitive-behavioral theories – learning (both academic and emotional/behavioral) comes from establishing clear expectations for behaviors and providing positive reinforcement for those behaviors. As such, we employ the use of systems of positive reinforcement, including Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to support and encourage the use of pro-social, healthy and safe behaviors.

Behavior management systems in use in any program area *must* be based upon the principles of **positive reinforcement.** Children receive points for following both school- and dorm-wide expectations, as well as working towards meeting their individual goals which are created by the child’s treatment team, including, and most importantly, the child and their family. Positive behaviors are rewarded with additional privileges, both on and off grounds, as well as recognition and encouragement. All children are working on the tenets of **ROCK**, the acronym for Green Chimneys’ PBIS behavior guidelines:

R Respect **O** Ownership **C** Communication **K** Keep Safe

KICKBOARD

All direct care staff in the classrooms and the residential units are tasked with recognizing behaviors in real time through the Kickboard system. Kickboard is a behavior tracking system used by many schools to enhance their PBIS efforts. Kickboard allows staff to positively reinforce behaviors in the moment through the use of technology. Staff work directly with the children and log pro-social behaviors as they happen; allowing for both verbal recognition, and trackable data. "Points" awarded for positive behaviors are logged in each child's Kickboard profile and are available to them as a reward. "Points" are cashed in at the campus store for goods (hygiene products, apparel, electronics), off-grounds experiences, and extra privileges on campus. "Points" are tracked by staff through the program and all children have access to see how they are performing.

EVALUATION OF PROGRESS

Green Chimneys Treatment Teams meet regularly to discuss the progress of each student as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of their current treatment/education plan. Treatment team meetings can be held at any time – team members, including the child, his/her parents and education staff members, may request a meeting to review current educational plan or address issues of concern.

Report Cards - Report cards are distributed quarterly and include progress in academic and program areas.

Individual Education Program (IEP) Progress Marks - In addition to the academic report card, your home district determines how often Green Chimneys will report the progress made on each IEP **goal** in your child's program. We have found that most home districts ask for this report four times per year. At the end of the school year, the final IEP progress report will indicate if **goals/objectives** have been mastered. IEP progress notes are generated and mailed out by your home district according to the district's marking period schedule.

Committee on Special Education Meetings - Individual Education Programs (IEPs) are approved by the home school district and parent at least one time per year during a Committee on Special Education Meeting (CSE). Members of Green Chimneys' treatment team and parents/caregivers work together to identify appropriate goals and objectives in the areas that address a child's individual needs. The team will also identify necessary accommodations and/or modifications that will afford your child the most effective education.

To prepare yourself to be a participating member of the annual review team, we encourage parents/caregivers to contact your child's treatment team to discuss information being proposed in the IEP draft in advance of the meeting. Doing so allows you to:

- Clarify anything in the plan you may not understand
- Make sure you agree with the proposed plan
- Have time to consult with an independent third party before the meeting, if necessary.

We also encourage parents/caregivers to read through the ***NYS Parents Guide to Special Education*** to familiarize yourself with the Committee on Special Education process and your role in the final decision making about your child's education plan. Parent guides can be found online at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/parentguide.htm#free>

Connecticut parents can revisit the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) process and your role in the final decision making about your child's education plan. Find information online at: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Special/Parents_Guide_SE.pdf

If you do not have online access, please call our school office for a printed copy.

CURRICULUM

As part of our commitment to your child and to provide a sense of familiarity and consistency to their academic progression, Green Chimneys School recognizes the importance of providing our students with established instructional models that are nationally recognized and used by many of our districts. Our students also benefit from a vast array of therapeutic programs that connect them with nature, develop social skills, and improve self-esteem.

Classroom teachers develop differentiated instructional strategies for their classes whereby grade level information is delivered to students together as a group. Additionally, students' understanding of materials taught is assessed in accordance with their ability level.

Parents may access information related to the NYS Next Generation ELA and Math Curriculum by visiting the New York State Education Department (www.nysed.org). If you do not have access to the internet, please request a copy from your district special education office.

You may also access the Common Core Video Series (www.engageny.org/resource/common-core-video-series). If you do not have access to the internet, please check with your local librarian for assistance in accessing the series using their computer.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct specifies clear expectations to provide for the emotional safety of each student by way of:

- Strength-based environment
- Mutual respect
- Understanding of individual challenges
- Development of supportive peer relationships

Our treatment teams collaboratively guide students toward making positive, constructive choices that build upon their individual strengths. It is the right and responsibility of the school administration to outline and make clear the difference between the:

- Freedoms expected by students
- Restrictions (rules) necessary to maintain order and personal safety for all

While present on Green Chimneys School campus, students have the **right** to:

- A free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment with supports and services as determined by their Individual Education Program
- An educational environment that encourages regular attendance and supports freedom from fear of insult, harassment or intentional injury
- An educational environment that provides maximum opportunities for learning based on individual abilities, interests and needs
- Be provided with an effective, confidential complaint and grievance procedure to discuss matters of personal concern involving discrimination, harassment, or safety

While present on Green Chimneys School campus or while attending a school sponsored function, the student **responsibilities** are such that all students will:

- Be familiar with the rules and policies of Green Chimneys School that expect each student to respect the rights of all who are involved in the education process
- Attend classes as scheduled, on time, and be prepared to put forth best efforts to complete school work as prescribed by the teacher(s)
- Complete and return homework assignments to the best of their ability on a regular basis
- Respect the staff by obeying all reasonable requests without argument and avoiding the use of profanity and/or obscene gestures
- Practice and encourage honesty in academic work and in all other transactions
- Respect school property by caring for it and refrain from defacing/thieving any Green Chimneys School staff and/or fellow students' property; to provide for the safe return or reimbursement for such loss as directed by a school administrator
- Promote the physical safety and personal security of students, staff, or other persons by exercising self-discipline, refraining from all conduct which presents a threat to the safety and welfare of others and by not engaging in assaultive behavior, both physical and verbal in nature
- Understand that, just like the expectations put forth in a public school environment, carrying or possessing a weapon of any kind - manufactured and/or homemade (regardless of the intention to use) - on Green Chimneys grounds or in any Green Chimneys/Home School District vehicle is strictly prohibited
- Inform a trusted staff member immediately of any weapon possession or plans to use a weapon by peers

As with the expectations put forth in a public school environment, all students will refrain from possessing, selling/exchanging, being under the influence of illegal substances and/or paraphernalia and also prohibits the misrepresentation of legal substances as illegal for the purpose of same.

Students may be disciplined for conduct away from Green Chimneys campuses that violates the Code of Conduct and that *has or might have* a direct and immediate impact on the orderly and efficient operation of the school or safety of individuals in the school environment.

Parents will be informed and included in dialogues regarding their child's involvement in serious infractions of behavior expectations on campus and in the consequence determined by the treatment team which can include in-school suspension or local law enforcement assistance.

The New York State Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) Statement

No student shall be subjected to harassment by employees or students on school property or at a school function; nor shall any student be subjected to discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), or sex by school employees or students on school property or at a school function.

Safety for All Students Statement

Green Chimneys School promotes educational measures that create an environment free from harassment, bullying, cyberbullying and all forms of discrimination.

Our administration will cooperate with districts should an issue arise or an investigation is shared with our administration.

The following is the criteria used to define bullying:

- **IMBALANCE OF POWER:** People who bully use their power to control or harm and the people being bullied may have a hard time defending themselves.
- **INTENT TO CAUSE HARM:** Actions done by accident are not bullying; the person bullying has a goal to cause harm.
- **REPETITION:** Incidents of bullying happen to the same person over and over by the same person or group (Bullyproject.com).

As members of the Green Chimneys community, student **responsibilities** are to:

- Contribute to the preservation of a calm learning environment by respecting the principle that no student has the right to purposefully interfere with the education of others.
- Refrain from any conduct, intentional or implied, that discriminates against other students/staff on the basis of a person's actual or perceived: race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation or gender (including gender identity or expression).
- Promote the physical, emotional and social safety of students, staff, or other persons by exercising self-discipline, refraining from all conduct which presents a threat to the safety and welfare of others and by not engaging in assaultive behavior, both physical and verbal in nature.

In addition to the points above, Green Chimneys' staff members' **responsibilities** include:

- Modeling positive relationships that encourage confidence and growth;
- Educating students on bullying and the impact it can have on others;
- Providing supportive intervention and/or mediation through constructive conflict resolution;
- Supporting students through positive praise, e.g. verbal feedback.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Since students at Green Chimneys participate in nature-based and animal assisted activities on a regular basis, it is particularly important that children arrive at school dressed in seasonally appropriate clothing for outdoor activities.

Without exception, students may not wear clothing nor imitate an appearance at school that is disruptive or compromises the maintenance of a safe and orderly educational environment. This includes, **but is not limited to**, any manner of grooming, apparel, jewelry, emblems or badges which by virtue of color, arrangement, trademark or other attribute is:

- Discriminatory in nature
- Displays offensive/provocative language/pictures
- Is associated with membership or affiliation with an antisocial group

General dressing guidelines:

- **Pants** should be without rips or tears and fit at the waist.
- **Skirts and Shorts** should not be shorter than knee-length.
- **Shirts** should cover the shoulder, students should refrain from wearing tank tops with spaghetti straps, tube tops and midriff- baring tops.
- **Footwear** is an important part of the school dress code. Due to the nature of our campus activities/programs and to avoid injury and disease, shoes, boots or other sturdy footwear must be worn to school each day. Sandals or any other footwear design that is not sturdy or that exposes any part of the foot below the ankle may not be worn by

students in school. For the safety of each student, including your child, the administration reserves the right to temporarily suspend a student's participation in programs or activities for which proper shoes are essential. The physical education program requires sneakers. Please note the days your child has Gym and Outdoor Education so that they can be prepared with proper footwear for the class.

- **Outerwear** that is seasonally appropriate, including head and hand protection, is also paramount to the safety of each student and is subject to the same administrative privilege that may temporarily suspend a student's participation in programs or activities for which protective clothing is essential.

Families who are unable to afford school clothes that meet the above guidelines are encouraged to contact their child's social worker for assistance.

CELL PHONE/ ELECTRONICS POLICY

Green Chimneys recognizes that cell phones and other electronic devices are important to our children. However, we have learned that in school they are a major distraction. Day students are allowed to bring cell phones and electronics to school but they must be turned in to the classroom teacher as soon as the student arrives. Residential students are not allowed to bring any electronics to school. Cell phones or personal electronics may not be used at any time during the school day. Students who violate this policy may lose the privilege of bringing their cell phone or electronics to school.

Please Note: Green Chimneys is not responsible for the theft, loss or damage of any student's personal cell phone or electronics, regardless of how the loss or damage occurred.

PERSONAL SAFETY CHECKS

School Administration has the right to conduct the search of a student or his/her possessions that is reasonable in scope if the administration has cause to suspect that the student may be in possession of a weapon, illegal substance or other items prohibited by or used in violation of the Code of Conduct.

- Search of an individual and/or his/her possessions: Students must cooperate with and may not obstruct or interfere with a reasonable and authorized search of his/her possessions when on school property.
- Search of Lockers and Desks: Lockers and desks are the property of Green Chimneys School and should be used only for storage of those items necessary for the student's school-related activities such as books, coats, school assignments etc.
- Search of a Vehicle: students must cooperate with and may not obstruct or interfere with a reasonable and authorized search of a student's vehicle when it is present on school property or at a school activity.

ATTENDANCE

Absence and Late Arrival

If your child will be **absent or late**, please contact the school office at 845-279-2995 ext. 153 or 154 for the Brewster Campus and 845-225-8226 ext. 616 for the Clearpool Campus. If the office does not receive notice by 8:30am, a call home will be made and an email sent.

For parents/designees bringing their child to school, upon arrival, please accompany the child directly to the school office to sign in. The child will then be accompanied to his/her classroom.

Teachers maintain daily attendance records for all students and are responsible for reporting excessive tardiness or absenteeism to the home districts. We strongly encourage ALL parents to speak with your child's social worker if absence is due to school avoidance issues so that an intervention plan can be developed.

Early Pick Up

If you need to pick up your child early, please contact the school office (ext. 154 at Brewster Campus; ext. 616 at Clearpool Campus). Upon your arrival, please report to the school office to sign out your child. The school administrative assistant will locate your child to have him/her brought to the school lobby.

Green Chimneys administration asks that parents refrain from entering the classroom wings of the school building when dropping off late or picking up early as this tends to unnecessarily disrupt the education process for others.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Green Chimneys School enrolls children from a wide geographic area that can produce different weather patterns. In case of delays or cancellations:

- Please check the delayed opening, early dismissal or school closure as announced by your home school district as this will directly affect the availability of transportation.
- Listen to any one of these radio stations: **WHUD-FM, WSPK-FM, WBNR-WLNA, WXPk-FM or WBPM-FM** for information about any changes to the Green Chimneys School schedule. You can also opt in for text message alerts from WHUD-FM via WHUD.com, click on Storm Center to register.

VISITING CAMPUS

When visiting either school campus for a meeting or any other reason, you will need to follow the campus visitor check-in procedure. Please do not go directly to your destination before signing in and obtaining a visitor's badge.

Upon arrival to the **BREWSTER** campus, go into Building 3 - Reception to:

- Sign in as a visitor
- Receive a visitor badge
- Check the location of your meeting
- Get directions, if needed

Upon arrival to the **CLEARPOOL** campus, please park next to the Administration building and follow the above steps.

PARKING

Safety is of the utmost importance to Green Chimneys, especially in the parking lots. Due to the volume of cars that access our campus during the school day, we ask all visitors to follow these basic parking procedures.

BREWSTER Campus visitors:

Designated Visitor Parking spaces are available in both our **Horse Lot**, located next to the gymnasium, and **Otter Lot**, located across the street from the main campus. While guests may only park in designated visitor spaces in the Horse Lot during school hours, guests may use any available space in the Otter Lot across the street.

Handicap accessible parking is available in the **Camel Lot** immediately in front of reception on the main campus. Permit must be visible.

CLEARPOOL Campus visitors:

Parking for daytime visitors is available to the left of the Administration Building. If these spaces are taken, please proceed farther up the driveway and park in any available space. Handicap parking is available in the lot across from the Dining Hall. Permit must be visible.

Please make every effort to avoid parking in the **NO PARKING** zones and handicap accessible spaces if you do not have a permit. Lots are patrolled and cars may be towed. Please see maps on page 21.

MEALS AND DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

Green Chimneys' dining facilities provide students with lunch each day in addition to an afternoon snack provided at a time scheduled within each classroom. A licensed nutritionist works with our dining hall staff to carefully plan meals that provide nutritious options which are sensitive to dietary restrictions and the tastes and appetites of young people. From gluten-free, nut-free and dairy-free options to special diets, our dining staff has developed a system to meet many different needs. Every effort is made to follow a pre-scheduled meal plan, however, meals are subject to product availability or other circumstances, and adjustments sometimes must be made. Any questions or concerns should be addressed through your social worker.

- Outside Food: Day school program parents may provide a bag lunch for their child but please note that our facility does not provide refrigeration or heating appliances. Sharing of food is not allowed due to food allergies and diet restrictions.
- Allergies: Our dining services staff is fully trained in preventive practices regarding children with allergies and is notified of all children with food allergies. For peanut allergies, our serving windows are clearly marked as peanut-free areas. Posted signage and use of disposable utensils and plates are used for these areas. Signs are also posted near silverware receptacles to remind all staff and children to avoid cross-contamination.
- Dietary Restrictions: If your child has a special dietary restriction, please provide a copy of your health provider's statement that clearly outlines the source of the sensitivity and dietary restriction. Day students should provide a copy to their social worker while residential students should provide a copy to our Health and Wellness Center. The details of the restriction will be forwarded to our dining hall staff and an alternate meal will be prepared as resources allow.

HEALTH AWARENESS AND MEDICAL ISSUES

Wellness, Prescription and Non-prescription Drugs and Medical Emergencies

Every effort is made by all members of the Green Chimneys community to reduce the spread of illness on our campus by encouraging and modeling hand washing before/after meals, activities and contact with animals.

Bathrooms are checked by staff after every use to ensure that a hygienic atmosphere is available for the next user. Proper hand washing techniques are supervised if necessary.

Hand sanitizers are available campus-wide.

Universal Precaution Procedures training with annual updates is mandatory for all agency staff and is strictly enforced in all programs.

A registered nurse is on site both in the School Nurse Office and in the Health & Wellness Center during school hours. The school nurse administers first aid care and treatment, promotes health education and provides nursing assessments as well as annual vision and hearing screenings for eligible students. The nurse works collaboratively with parents/guardians, students, teachers and physicians to provide a healthy school environment for all.

In order to protect the health and safety of our students and staff, we offer the following guidelines covering the most common health-related occurrences. If your situation does not appear below, please contact the Health & Wellness Center to discuss your specific needs.

Prescription medication: If your child needs to be given any type of prescription medication during school hours, we require a doctor's order and parent/guardian's written authorization including the time of day the medication needs to be given. All medication must be in its original container with the pharmacy label attached and must be brought to the Health and Wellness Center by an adult along with a copy of the prescription and written authorization from you that allows the nurse to administer the medication. Students may not transport medications under any circumstance. In the absence of the school nurse, only properly trained administrators, trained teachers or licensed practical nurses may administer oral, topical or inhalant medications.

Injection medication/Inhalers: Injection medications, e.g. Epi-Pen and/or inhaler treatment may be administered by a trained administrator, or trained teacher, to any student with a medically diagnosed allergic condition that requires prompt essential treatment to protect the student against serious harm or death. All medication must be in its original container with the pharmacy label attached and brought to the Health & Wellness Center by an adult along with a copy of the prescription and written authorization from you that allows the nurse to administer the medication. Students may not transport medications under any circumstance. It is very important that our staff is aware of any conditions that fall into this category.

Antibiotics: Children may return to school 24 hours after the first dose of prescription antibiotics has been given. Certain illnesses require a 48 hour absence or more. At the time of treatment, please ask the nurse or your physician to document when your child may be able to resume school safely as some illnesses have different public health restrictions. This will help protect the health of all, including your child.

Lice: Green Chimneys follows the New York State School Board Associations guidelines for presence of lice. Students are allowed to attend school and are not excluded from any activity. For further information and recommendations on lice and lice removal visit www.nyssba.org/news/2017/02/02/on-board-online-february-6-2017/head-lice-what-school-leaders-need-to-know.

Crutches or Wheelchair: All students who may have suffered an injury that calls for the use of crutches or a wheelchair in school requires a doctor's note which will remain on file with the nurse. It must also contain instructions regarding any specific restrictions from physical education, recess in the playground and/or other instructions unique to the injury. Please keep the nurse informed of any changes in the doctor orders, especially when restrictions are lifted.

Open Cut, Wound, Runny Nose, Slight Cold, and Active Cold: As a precautionary measure, students may not enter the pool area if they have an open cut, wound, runny nose, slight cold, or an active cold. Thank you for your understanding with this guideline.

In the case of illness and/or injury, Green Chimneys Health & Wellness Center personnel may administer first aid only. Parents will be notified of the care given.

In the case where a child needs home care or if urgent medical care is indicated, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. Parents/guardians will also be contacted if an emergency arises that requires medical attention beyond what can be provided on our campus.

Please remember to notify the **school nurse** if your phone number(s), place of employment, and/or emergency contact information changes from the information on file to avoid unnecessary delay in reaching you. You will be asked to routinely update this information each year, as well.

VISITING THE FARM

We hope you will take advantage of the wonders of the Farm & Wildlife Center at our **BREWSTER** campus when visiting with your child. At our **CLEARPOOL** campus you can visit Popper Farm. For the safety of all, we ask that you take a moment to familiarize yourself with these guidelines for visiting the farms and with the animals:

Enjoy yourself! The farm is a great place to stroll and relax with your family. Your child will want to show you their favorite animals. Ask them about what they do at the farm. It is a very special place and the reason we have animals and plants on campus is to enhance your child's learning and development while they are here.

If you have any questions, please ask our farm staff – they are here to help you and are always eager to show off the animals and gardens.

Farm Rules:

- Please stay on paths or in the barn areas and respect signs and staff directions;
- Cages and pens may not be opened without a staff member present;
- Do not feed the animals – they are on special diets;
- Keep yourself and small children safe by not sticking hands or fingers between bars of cages – some animals may bite;

- In the Wildlife Center, please keep children quiet, these animals are sensitive to noise and spook easily;
- Please do not pick any vegetables or fruit unless staff has approved it;
- Public visiting hours: Saturdays and Sundays, 10:00am to 3:00pm.

Please Leave Personal Dogs Safely at Home

Green Chimneys is famous for the integration of many animals into campus life. However, due to the large numbers of families we serve – and the fact that not all personal dogs enjoy a busy setting like ours – we ask students and their families to leave personal dogs at home.

Hot weather, cold, rain, the animals at the farm, crowds, unpredictable children and many other distractions can make our setting unsafe for your dog and could cause your pet to react in unexpected ways.

We know how much your canine companion means to your family and it is because we value this bond that we ask you to leave personal dogs at home for visiting weekends or at any other time. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

UNIQUE NATURE-BASED PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

The nature-based programs at Green Chimneys are integral to our identity. They are a support for the school, the clinical departments, the residences and all Green Chimneys programs. The concept of an enriched treatment milieu that specifically brings people together with animals and plants in a mutually beneficial relationship lies at the foundation of the Green Chimneys approach. These activities provide opportunities for academic growth, for social development, for the advancement of life skills, and also can be recreational.

Green Chimneys students participate in **Farm Class, Wildlife Class and Garden Class** as part of their regular academic curriculum. Students also have the opportunity to participate in the **Equine Program** on a rotational basis. Our **Interactive Dog Program** is implemented by staff from various departments and involves dogs in classrooms, vocational settings and also in the residences. Three certified teachers work full time in the farm areas, along with a team of experienced animal and plant caretakers, and interns who specialize in facilitating nature settings for kids.

Many students participate at the farm and in the gardens with their Occupational Therapist, Social Worker or Classroom Staff. Students also serve as tour guides for our public **Farm Tours** and assist staff during large public campus events such as **Birds of Prey Day** and **Little Folks Farm Day**. Students learn to educate the public about the animals, lead pony rides for children, assist with hay rides, and much more. Many of our older students gain vocational skills at our **Organic Boni-Bel Farm**, planting, harvesting and selling vegetables.

Every semester, approximately 150 students participate in a weekly **Farm Job** (Learn & Earn Program) working one-on-one with a specially trained Green Chimneys staff or volunteer. Students sign up for these jobs, or may be referred by a member of their treatment team. These jobs incorporate therapeutic activities, offering each child an opportunity to work on specific issues, such as self-esteem, boundary-building, empathy, compassion, skill-building, aggression issues, loss, and listening and following directions, while working with an animal or with plants. Students are often highly motivated to participate, and can successfully work on developing new skills in the farm setting.

SUMMER SESSION/EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (ESY)

Green Chimneys is a 12-month school program and provides academic services during the months of July and August. The goals of our summer program are to review/reinforce academic material learned, as well as prevent regression of social/emotional/behavioral gains. In-class lessons, therapeutic sessions with the social worker and related services (if appropriate) continue over the six week summer program period.

In addition, students are offered enriching and esteem-building activities including fishing, kayaking, nature study, special projects, field trips and 4H Fair participation. These activities are subject to change due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances. Your classroom teacher will keep you up to date on these and other activities.

The summer session appears on your child's IEP as "ESY." Any questions can be addressed with your child's social worker.

SAFETY DRILLS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Fire Safety

Fire drills, as required by Section 807 of the New York State Education Law, will ensure rapid and orderly occupant evacuation of school buildings at the time of a real fire emergency. Our Fire Safety Drill Coordinator follows the New York State frequency guidelines that mandate our school hold 14 fire safety drills over a 12-month period.

Emergency Management

Green Chimneys adheres to all regulations regarding emergency planning and required drills that address various emergency situations. Our Emergency Management Plan provides staff with a detailed description of emergency response options that are defined based on the character of the emergency and the extent of advance warning.

All parents will be notified of any drills or emergency protocol through our School Messenger system. Parents will be notified of emergency drills **after** they take place. For a full copy of our Emergency Management Plan, please contact our Quality Assurance Department at ext. 298.

How to Prepare for a School Emergency

- Keep your child's information (i.e. emergency contacts, medical, guardian, etc.) up to date, including alternate phone numbers for you and family/friends you have authorized as your back-up for student pickup.
- Talk with children about the importance of following instructions in an emergency.
- Tell your children **not** to use cell phones during an emergency. Unauthorized cell phone use can put people at risk during an emergency and may distract students from listening to important safety instructions.
- Have a family plan for an emergency, and make sure children are familiar with the plan.

Releasing of Students

- Normal dismissal - a normal school day release of students
- Early/late dismissal - same as above but a different time than usual (earlier or later)
- Controlled dismissal - involves a situation where some or all of the students would need to be reunified directly with their parents/guardians/emergency contact. Information will be sent out via the Emergency Notification System as to which students and families may be impacted.

TERMS TO KNOW

Shelter-in-Place

A course of action when students and staff are required to remain indoors, perhaps for an extended period of time, because it is safer inside the building or a room than outside. Depending on the threat or hazard, students and staff may be required to move to rooms that can be sealed or without windows. If there is an internal incident or administrative matter such as a medical emergency, a maintenance issue, or students fighting in a hallway that would require students and staff movement to be limited, a "Hold-in-Place" may be initiated. This is intended to keep students and staff out of the affected area until the situation can be rectified.

Evacuation

Evacuation is used when students and staff need to leave the building as quickly as possible, in the case of fire or other emergency. The school has procedures for partial or complete evacuation, including a designated safe location to which students may be transported. If students are to be dismissed from that off-site location, parents/guardians/emergency contacts will be directed where to pick up their children and will be required to sign out their child, as per our reunification plan (see below). A student will be released only to an adult with proper identification and who is documented as an emergency contact.

Lockout

This is the response to an actual or potential threat from outside the school building. An example of such a threat might be a wild animal outside of the school, police activity in the nearby area, or a potential intruder of any kind. The primary objective of a lockout is to quickly ensure all students, school staff, and visitors are secured in the school building away from the outside danger. There will be very limited access to the building during a Lockout. Outside activities are terminated and the school day proceeds as normal.

Lockdown

A Lockdown is initiated when any staff member has become aware of an actual or imminent incident that poses an immediate threat in or around the school. The primary objective of a Lockdown is to quickly ensure students, school staff, and visitors are secured in rooms away from immediate danger. Individuals will be kept within locked rooms until the incident is brought to a close by law enforcement personnel.

Reunification

A formalized process to reunite students with their families. In the event of a major incident or event involving the Green Chimneys School, the agency may implement reunification protocols. During reunification, parents/guardians will be required to pick up their child at the school or another specified location. Students will not be released to any adult who is not specified under their emergency contact. Parents/guardians will be required to show a driver's license or other appropriate identification in order to have their child released. The agency may choose to do an off-site or on-site reunification depending on the situation. In some cases a full reunification is not required and the district may decide to release a specific group or groups of students via "normal" means, such as students who are walkers may have to undergo reunification while students who are bussed may be sent home normally. The safety of welfare of the Green Chimneys students is paramount and these decisions will not be made lightly.

Please note: We are required to have **four** Lockdown Drills, and **eight** Evacuation Drills per school year. While this is the minimum, there will be additional drills throughout the year.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

We strive to ensure that your child's school program is of the highest quality and effectively meets their needs; however, should you need clarification or assistance related to any matter or concern, the guidelines below may help you address issues in a productive and timely manner.

- Classroom issues should always be addressed with the teacher first. This is typically the only step that is necessary to get an answer to your question or concern about an academic issue.
- You may also contact any member of our school administrative team (Principal, Assistant Principal or Supervising Teacher) if your initial concern is not resolved or you would like further clarification or support.
- You may request a conference or program review at any time by contacting your child's social worker, who is the primary contact for communications about social/emotional issues, attendance, transportation and medical matters.
- If your concerns are still not addressed satisfactorily, please feel free to contact our Deputy Executive Director (ext. 125) or Director of Quality Assurance (ext. 324) to have your concerns addressed and/or file a complaint.
- If you would rather speak in person than on the phone or via email, please make an appointment with the appropriate person in advance.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Green Chimneys maintains policies and procedures to ensure the confidentiality of personal information by limiting access to any/all information.

All employees sign and are bound to a confidentiality agreement as part of the hiring process.

For accountability purposes, all staff members are required to document their access to student records by signing a log sheet noting purpose of access.

SAFEGUARDS FOR CHILDREN

Ensuring the safety of the children in our care is Green Chimneys' most important priority. In addition to the guidelines set forth by the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of Vulnerable Persons, Green Chimneys has developed our own practices and procedures to ensure the safety of all our children.

The following are Green Chimneys' practices:

1. An allegation of maltreatment may be made by any child, staff member, family member, or any other individual at any time.
2. If a staff member becomes aware of any allegation of maltreatment, the staff member is responsible for completing a **Child Complaint to Staff** form and forwarding this form to administrative staff members for review and follow up.
3. Family members or any other individual may make a complaint to any staff member or they may contact the Justice Center directly.

4. The Quality Assurance Department is responsible for the coordination of and follow-up on any complaint, regardless of whether or not the complaint is also reported to the Justice Center. Not every complaint, or concern, will warrant a report to the Justice Center. The Justice Center sets strict guidelines for which complaints and/or allegations are reportable and subject to investigation.
5. All staff members are required to have annual training in reporting practices. All staff in a direct care role at Green Chimneys are “mandated reporters” and must report to the Justice Center any observations or allegations of abuse, neglect or “significant incidents” (suicidal attempts, self-harm with injury, absences without leave, etc.).

What parents or guardians need to know about the Justice Center

VISION: People with special needs shall be protected from abuse, neglect, and mistreatment. This will be accomplished by assuring that the State maintains the nation’s highest standards of health, safety and dignity; and by supporting the dedicated men and women who provide services.

MISSION: The Justice Center is committed to supporting and protecting the health, safety, and dignity of all people with special needs and disabilities through advocacy of their civil rights, prevention of mistreatment, and investigation of all allegations of abuse and neglect so that appropriate actions are taken.

Who can report an allegation of abuse or neglect?

Anyone – including a parent, advocate, or guardian – can make a report to the **Vulnerable Persons Central Register (VPCR)** hotline and is encouraged to make a report when they have the knowledge or have reason to believe that a person with special needs has been abused, neglected or mistreated. All staff within agencies that serve this population are mandated to report allegations of abuse, neglect and significant incidents.

The **Vulnerable Persons Central Register (VPCR)** is a toll-free hotline and incident reporting system for allegations of abuse and neglect available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Call 855-373-2122.

Student interviews

Routinely, investigators, program advisors and regulators from the Office of Children and Families (OCFS), New York State Education Department (State Ed) and the New York State Justice Center request to speak to students about the program and/or staff members to ensure the safety of the students and to assess agency adherence to regulatory requirements. Your child may be interviewed by one of the above mentioned oversight agencies while enrolled in our program.

Further questions can be directed to Quality Assurance at x324 or www.justicecenter.ny.gov

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal statute that protects the privacy of student education records.

Per Regulations 200.7(b)(6)

Each board of education or board of trustees shall adopt written policy that establishes administrative practices and procedures for the purpose of ensuring the confidentiality of personally identifiable data, information or records pertaining to a student with a disability.

Green Chimneys complies with all FERPA requirements in relation to student education records, including maintaining a record access log. Green Chimneys maintains the records of students until the age of 27. At that time, only demographic data is maintained. As part of the treatment process, placing district/agency and parent/guardians will routinely receive the following documents, including but not limited to comprehensive treatment goals; treatment team minutes; report cards; IEP progress marks; FBA/BIP progress monitoring forms. (Request for records is not required). Upon request, Green Chimneys will forward educational records to outside schools and to the Home District for the purposes of placement.

Green Chimneys allows for the disclosure of records to the following (without consent):

- School officials with legitimate educational interest**;
- Placing district/agency;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting and regulatory organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities.

Parents and eligible students* have the right to:

- Inspect and review the student's education records
- Seek the amendment of any education record that they believe to be inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights
- Consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education record, except under certain specific conditions (e.g., disclosure to Green Chimneys staff who have a legitimate educational interest**, to officials of another school at which their child seeks to enroll, etc.)
- Receive annual written notice of their rights under FERPA
- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe that Green Chimneys has violated any of the requirements of FERPA
- Request the destruction of records when they are no longer needed for educational purposes. Please note these records can be helpful when applying for benefit applications in the future.

Procedure to inspect/amend records:

- Parents and eligible students who wish to inspect the student's records should establish an appointment with the Director of Quality Assurance and Compliance.
- Parents and eligible students who wish to have the student's records amended must write to the Director of Quality Assurance and Compliance, providing specific information about the records to which they object and the reasons for their objection.
- Parents and eligible students have the right to a hearing if they object to the school's decision.
- Green Chimneys reserves the right to charge a reasonable fee per page should the parents or eligible students request copies.

** An eligible student is one who has reached the age of 18*

*** Green Chimneys has determined that those staff who have a legitimate educational interest are school administrators, the student's teachers and support staff and any related services staff who work with the student.*

You can access the full language of the FERPA regulations by:

- Visiting www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/reg/ferpa/index.html
- Calling 202-260-3887 (voice), TDD Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339
- Writing to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5920

RECORDS RETENTION AND DISCHARGE FILES

Local school districts are responsible for complying with the guidelines that address educational records retention following a student's graduation or discharge from a non-public school agency. It is always a good idea to maintain your own copies of your child's records from year to year but should you be missing a document that you find you now need, please contact the school administration office at your local school district to make your request.

If for some unforeseen reason, your district is unable to locate a record or document for you, please contact our Quality Assurance and Compliance Office at 845-279-2995, ext. 324. We will accommodate requests as appropriate/possible.

CAMPUS MAPS

Brewster Campus



Clearpool Campus

