



*Share in Living the Vision...
Every Day, Every Way*

**School Program Parent Handbook –
2023-2024 School Year**



Imagine: A place where teaching and learning is always happening

Believe: Every student is capable of learning

Learn: What you need to help students succeed

Achieve: Something every day with each student

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Our Mission calls us to:

**“FOSTER THE PHYSICAL, EDUCATIONAL,
SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES SO THAT THEY MAY PLAY,
LEARN, WORK AND LIVE IN THE
COMMUNITY”**

Our History

The Feroletto Children’s Development Center is the setting for St. Vincent’s Special Needs Services school program. Certified by the State Department of Education as an approved, private, special education program, our school has been providing a special education alternative to school systems and families in Connecticut since 1960. Students are accepted without regard to race, national origin, religion or sex.

Students range in age from 3-22 years old and are challenged by multiple developmental and/or medical needs. Individualized programming focuses on improving a student’s communication, socialization, motor and academic skills. We strive to develop increased independence in daily living and functional activities, while maximizing each student’s self-esteem.

We provide a nurturing environment, quality instruction, individualized curriculum and related services that respond to your child's needs and interests. We encourage your input and participation in planning your child's program.

Our goal is to provide all students with the best education possible. We offer creative and specialized educational services that include individual and group instruction and related services such as physical, speech, occupational therapy and nursing delivered through meaningful experiences. Our services are provided in an environment that is staffed and equipped to meet each child's individual needs for support, health monitoring and personal care. Student learning is the focus of our instructional activities and the school day is structured and implemented in ways that maximize learning. Activities and materials chosen are specifically designed to be motivating and stimulating for each individual student. Our goal is to make learning fun. We recognize that each student will make progress at different rates and in different increments. It is our vision that each staff member strive to continuously learn in order to improve his/her performance and consistently seek to discover what works best for the students he or she serves.

Our Guiding Principles

- All students are capable of learning.
- All activities should be student centered and relevant to student learning.
- Related services of Physical, Speech, and Occupational therapy and Nursing are provided using an interdisciplinary model. Therapy carryover programs are incorporated within the student's day.
- Educational activities use a multi-sensory approach designed to provide each student multiple opportunities each day, using all senses, to interact with his/her environment.
- Communication, in all forms, is a key focus of every student's program.
- Teaching strategies reflect a developmental approach to student learning.
- Learning occurs in a supportive and nurturing environment using positive and motivating strategies.
- Learning occurs from experiences that include a balance between variety and consistency.
- In the process of learning, students need to be active participants.

- Students should consistently be encouraged to perform as independently as possible.
- Family needs and preferences are considered in our educational programming.
- Instruction for functional life skills is provided within the context of daily routines.
- Health needs are accommodated in all activities and environments.

School Program Administration

Director of Education

The Director of Education is responsible for the entirety of the school program, including related services and nursing, as well as budgeting, future planning and growth.

Principal

The Principal functions as Program Supervisor for the school program and is responsible for the administration and supervision of all daily activities. This includes staff assignments and supervision of instructional staff, curriculum development, IEP development and

implementation of plans, service delivery, transportation support, intake and liaison with local education agencies.

Assistant Principal

The Assistant Principal supports the Principal in supervising staff and daily activities in the school. This may include curriculum development, supervision of instructional staff, IEP development and implementation, parent communication and transportation support.

Manager of Nursing Services

The Manager of Nursing Services oversees the activities of school nursing staff. It is their responsible to ensure that nursing services comply with all requirements and that each student's health and health issues are monitored so that each student can safely attend the school program.

Manager of Rehabilitation Services

Manager of Rehabilitation Services is responsible for oversight of the agency's Physical, Speech and Occupational Therapy services.

Supervisors of Therapy Services

Some therapy departments have a clinical coordinator responsible for staff supervision, caseload management, scheduling and quality assurance. The Supervisors of Therapy Services reports to the Manager of Therapy Services.

Additional Services

Family Support Services

The Family Support Center, located in the Feroletto Children's Developmental Center, exists to connect families raising children with disabilities and/or special health care needs with the supportive services needed to successfully nurture their children and utilize community resources and opportunities to their greatest advantage.

We also offer Aquatic Therapy and Audiology Services.

School Operations

The Individual Education Plan (IEP)

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) identifies the individual goals that each student works on during the school day. The goals included in your child's IEP should reflect his or her abilities, needs and preferences and allow him/her to learn new skills. The IEP also serves as a guide to staff in planning daily activities and routines your child will enjoy.

The IEP is developed by your local school district at a Planning and Placement Team meeting. Representatives from our school program will participate in that meeting and offer recommendations, progress on goals and objectives and proposed goals for the new IEP.

If you move to a different town or city, it is necessary that a new Planning and Placement Team meeting be held. Such a move may result in a change in the current education plan or even a new school program placement as the new town you move into must agree to assume responsibility for the your child's placement in our school program.

Classroom and Instructional Resources

St. Vincent's Special Needs Services is committed to choosing staff members who are dedicated to providing the highest quality special education and related services. Throughout their employment, they receive training and participate regularly in professional development activities to ensure that curriculums and learning environments they offer at the St. Vincent's Special Needs follows the best practice in special education. Our teachers are certified by the Department of Education and our therapists and nurses are licensed by the Department of Health.

Your child will be assigned to a class according to age, abilities, needs and interests. A special education teacher, education assistants and prescribed therapist(s) form your child's instructional team. The team may call upon other resource staff at the school, including adaptive equipment, audiologist and behavior management to assist in planning and implementing your child's individual services.

Each classroom or learning environment is designed and furnished to promote opportunities for interactions with other students

and staff. Materials and equipment are selected to enhance ongoing instruction. Each classroom teacher develops a daily schedule around the needs of your child and his/her classmates. You are welcome to observe your child's program whenever you like.

Interactions with Students

At St. Vincent's Special Needs Services School Program, we expect our staff to believe in the learning potential of each student, provide opportunities for students to be as independent as possible and celebrate every achievement no matter how small. We encourage students to express their preferences and thoughts, and create an atmosphere of respect, self-expression, joy and caring. Our greatest pleasure is to achieve growth in each student and make a difference in their lives.

Behavioral Management

At St. Vincent's Special Needs Services, we have placed an emphasis on creating individualized, functional programming that builds confidence and motivation in our students. We believe in a positive approach to managing behaviors and believe that we must seek to understand the function (the why) of a behavior in order to appropriately manage it. Staff are trained in behavior management

strategies and techniques that heavily incorporate the use of positive reinforcement. The use of punishment, physical abuse, humiliation, unsupervised confinement, neglect of needs or rights are not permitted at our school.

Related Services

Related services of Physical, Speech/Language and/or Occupational Therapy may be provided to students who meet the criteria for therapeutic intervention. Therapy recommendations are based on careful evaluation of the student's needs and strengths as well as for potential growth from each therapeutic discipline.

Therapists use a standard frequency guidelines worksheet to assist them with choosing the amount of time each student will receive. Taken under consideration are: the age of the student, current level of functioning, how recent an injury/disability occurred, regression and potential for change. The ultimate decision for therapeutic recommendation rests with the evaluating therapist and is finalized at the Planning and Placement Team Meeting. Recommendations are reviewed each year at the Annual Review and changes may be made through the PPT process. A young or new student may get more therapy initially which will

slowly be reduced as he/she grows and develops to make more room for classroom instruction. Therapy can be delivered in the classroom or in one of the therapy rooms. Specific therapist recommended programs are also carried out by trained instructional staff in the student's classroom. Most therapy is delivered on a one-to-one basis, but group and/or consultation may be provided where appropriate. The goal of all therapy is to promote the student's maximum level of independence with as many therapeutic activities incorporated into the classroom as possible.

Nursing

Nursing staff is on-site and services are available during school hours to handle routine and emergency medical care, administer prescribed medications, perform required procedures and maintain medical histories. A Pediatrician/Medical Advisor is available for consultation.

Transportation

Transportation arrangements for students attending the school program will vary according to your local board of education. Several school districts directly provide or

arrange transportation for their students. In some cases we directly transport a small number of students using our vehicles. In every case the individual safety related needs of each student is accommodated.

If you are having a problem with transportation, you should call your child's transportation provider directly. If the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should then call the School Principal.

The drivers must maintain pick-up and drop-off schedules and cannot keep families waiting. You need to have your child dressed and ready to go when the vehicle arrives each morning. Drivers may not get out of the vehicle and will sound the horn to let you know they have arrived. The drivers are instructed to wait no longer than five minutes. It is necessary that someone be ready to receive your child when he or she arrives home in the afternoon.

If you are transporting your child, please join the bus lines in the rear of the Feroleto Center. Your child will be brought into and out of school by the assigned educational staff.

Please call your child's classroom teacher if your child will be arriving late to school or if he/she is absent. You may also leave a message in voicemail at our main phone

number of (203) 375-6400. In addition, you are requested to notify the Medical Department if your child is absent three or more days and/or has a communicable illness.

No child will be permitted to leave the Feroletto Center with an unauthorized person. Identification will be required of authorized persons (i.e., a grandparent, neighbor, etc.) not known to staff.

The School Calendar

The school is in session 8:30am to 2:30pm, Monday through Friday for the 180 day school year. In addition we offer a six week, full day summer program to provide a 12 month continuum of education instruction and therapeutic intervention essential to students with special needs.

Holidays and school vacations are identified on the Program Year Calendar that you will receive when your child enters the program and every year in July.

School Closings/Delays & Early Dismissals

In the event of inclement weather, we will use several methods to alert you of any school closing and delays on our Blackboard Communication System. We use this emergency system of notification to send a message to the phone number(s) and email address(es) you provide in your student information packet.

- In addition, we will use the TV stations listed below:

CHANNEL 3, EYEWITNESS NEWS.

They will announce our school as “Feroletto Center.”

NEWS CHANNEL 8/My TV 9. They will announce our school as “Feroletto Children’s Development Center.”

NBC CHANNEL 30. They will announce our school as “St. Vincent’s Special Needs, Trumbull.”

- If your town schools are closed, but St. Vincent’s Special Needs is open, your town will not transport your child to school. However, you may transport them yourself.

Medical Policies and Practices

Illness Guidelines

Illness makes it difficult for students to take part in school activities. We aim to limit the exposure of other students and staff to illness and prevent the spread of sickness.

Students will be sent home if the nurse feels that he/she should not be in school because of illness.

Students should not be sent back to school until the child is symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.

The nurse may request a Doctor's note concerning the diagnosis and treatment of the illness.

Students with the following health conditions will be restricted from school:

- 1. An infectious or contagious illness.*
- 2. Any illness with a fever greater than 100.4 degrees.*

3. *A student with vomiting and/or diarrhea. Students should be free from symptoms for 24 hours before returning to program.*
4. *A cold or cough severe enough to limit participation, especially with a lot of thick nasal drainage and sputum production.*
5. *Skin rashes which could be contagious. Suspicious rashes should be checked by a doctor.*
6. *Students who are prescribed antibiotics for an infection should take the medication for at least 24 hours before returning to program.*
7. *Students who have received an enema, suppository or laxative for constipation AND have not had results should not be sent to program.*
8. *Signs or symptoms of distress, pain, discomfort or behavior that would prevent the participant from taking part in their usual day program activities.*

**Remember that a physician's note is required for a student to return following a prolonged absence, surgery or hospitalization.*

If there are questions or concerns, please contact the Principal or the School Nurse.

Health Office

The health office is staffed by numerous Licensed Practical Nurses as well as 2 Registered Nurses. They provide daily medications, treatments and feeds as needed by our students on a daily basis.

The department also responds to all emergencies. Our Medical Director oversees the functions of the department and participates in all intakes of new students and performs annual chart reviews.

Health Office Policies and Practices

As part of the intake process, all students are required to have a complete physical performed and documented within a year of admission. It is required to submit an updated physical every two years thereafter.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency, physical assessment and care will be provided by the nurses and referral to emergency medical services if needed. If needed, student will be transported to St. Vincent's Medical Center or Bridgeport Hospital at the decision of the responding paramedic. An adult will accompany the child until a parent arrives.

Administering Medications

Annually, CT state medication administration forms need to be completed for all medicines and G-tube feedings. This form is needed for non-prescription medications as well.

A responsible adult must deliver all the medications or the school nurse may provide a locked bag.

Please notify the health office of changes in times, dosage or medication.

Allergies

In order to ensure the safety of all students, our school is considered “peanut aware”. This means that classrooms with students with severe allergies to nuts will not have any nuts consumed in that room.

Please do not send in items that contain nuts or nut products to any shared event that takes place in the cafeteria or Recreation Room.

The building is also latex free. If you wish to send in a balloon, it must be Mylar.

Medications Administered at Home

Medications can affect a child’s behavior and/or performance. It is helpful if staff working with

your child are aware of any medications your child is receiving at home or if any changes in their administration schedule.

Miscellaneous

Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that can be easily laundered. In addition, please also send in an extra set of clothing in the event that what he or she is wearing becomes soiled. All clothing, including outerwear, should be labeled or marked with a permanent laundry marker with your child's name.

Lunch and Snacks

We ask that you send in foods for your child's lunch and snack in the form he or she enjoys, and is consistent with your child's prescribed feeding guidelines that may require food to be cut up, ground and pureed. Good nutrition is very important for all children and especially children with special needs who might not eat large quantities. If you have questions about the nutritional needs of your child and how to best meet them through daily lunch and snack, the Pediatrician/Medical Advisor on staff can help you.

Birthdays

If you would like your child's classmates to celebrate his or her birthday, you are welcome to send in a special birthday treat. We are a latex-free environment, so if you want to send balloons, they must be Mylar.

Changes in Important Information

It is very important that you keep us informed regarding changes in important information. This includes changes in your address, phone numbers including home, work, cell phone, email address and all emergency contact information. Please report these changes to the School's Administrative Assistant at 203-386-2742.

St. Vincent's Special Needs Services does not discriminate against any person based on race, color, national origin, disability, age or gender in admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services, or activities.

Important Contact Numbers

Main Number (to contact staff, report an absence, reach your child's classroom teacher)
(203) 375-6400 Fax (203) 380-1308

Director of Education – Karen King (203) 386-2752

Principal – Geri Durnin (203) 386-2741

Assistant Principal – Karen Storminger (203) 386-2705

Administrative Assistant – Christine Standen
(203) 386-2742

Administrator of School Health – Kathryn Mitchell (203) 386-2748

Manager of Rehabilitation Services – Patty Hornak (203) 386-2728

Supervisor of Rehab Services – OT – Robin Smelter (203) 386-2719

Supervisor of Rehab Services – PT – Stacey Schadler (203) 386-2726

Family Center – (203) 386-2743

Please Note: *If we call you from the school, the caller ID will read or say “**Hartford Healthcare**”*