



MAMARONECK COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL

where
learning
begins
and
friendships
grow



PARENT HANDBOOK & FAMILY GUIDE 2026-2027

Welcome
TO THE MCNS FAMILY!

We are so happy you are here! At MCNS, we believe that children learn best through play, exploration, and meaningful relationships.

Together, we will create a safe, nurturing, and joyful community where every child feels seen, valued, and empowered to grow.

We can't wait for all the wonderful memories ahead!



WHAT'S INSIDE ♥

- Welcome & Our School
- Our Mission & Values
- Our Program
- Daily Schedule
- Arrival & Dismissal
- Health & Wellness
- Communication
- Parent Partnership
- Tuition & Payments
- Policies & Procedures
- Resources & Support
- Appendices & Forms

★ MCNS AT A quick glance

SCHOOL HOURS

8:00 – 8:45	Extended AM
8:45 – 11:45	AM Program
12:15 – 2:45	PM Program
8:45 – 2:45	Full Day
2:45 – 4:00	Extended PM



SCHOOL YEAR

September – June
(See calendar for important dates)



FOR CHILDREN

2, 3, 4 and 5 years



OUR FOCUS

Play-Based Learning
Social Growth
Independence
Kindness & Respect



A COMMUNITY

of Families,
Teachers &
Friends



OUR MISSION

To provide a nurturing, play-based learning environment where children are encouraged to explore, create, connect, and grow with confidence. ♥

OUR VALUES

- ♥ We value every child.
- ♥ We celebrate each family.
- ♥ We build community.
- ♥ We lead with kindness.
- ♥ We inspire lifelong learners.

“Children are not things to be molded, but people to be unfolded.”

– Jess Lair



PLAY • EXPLORE • DISCOVER • CONNECT • GROW



Welcome

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Welcome to Mamaroneck Community Nursery School. We are delighted that you have chosen MCNS for your child. Your child will have many rewarding experiences here, and we look forward to sharing this important year with your family.

MCNS is a parent cooperative. That means families are more than customers of the school: you are members of a community whose participation helps make MCNS the special place it is. Families vote each year to elect our Board of Directors and are encouraged to contribute through classroom participation, fundraising, special events and school life.

Children are always our first priority. We provide a safe, nurturing and loving environment where children can explore, create, experiment, build relationships and grow at their own developmental pace. This handbook is designed to make our policies and procedures easier to find and understand. Please keep it as a reference throughout the year.

QUESTIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

Office: 914-381-2655 | Melissa: preschool@mcnschool.org | Olivia: coordinator@mcnschool.org |
Dina: bookkeeper@mcnschool.org

Quick Reference

School Day	Time
Extended AM drop-off (add on)	Starting 8:00 AM
Morning drop-off	8:45 AM
Morning pick-up	11:35–11:45 AM
Afternoon drop-off	12:15 PM
Afternoon pick-up	2:35–2:45 PM
Extended Afternoon pick-up (add on)	Until 4:00 PM

How to Use This Guide

- Start with Getting Ready for School for everyday routines.
- Use Health & Safety when your child is sick, injured, or has a medical need.
- See Communication & Family Partnership for conferences, participation and concerns.
- See Policies & Practical Information for tuition, withdrawal, parking, photos and other school procedures.
- Always refer to the official school calendar and your enrollment contract when they contain more specific dates or financial terms.

1. About MCNS

Play is our vehicle for learning.

Our Cooperative Philosophy

As a parent cooperative, MCNS invites families to participate meaningfully in the beginning educational life of their children. Our 2-year-old classes do not have parent participation, although family members are welcome as guests when appropriate. Parent participation is part of our 3-, 4- and 5-year-old classrooms. All MCNS families also help sustain the school through fundraising, special-event support and voting for the Board of Directors.

Enrollment

MCNS is open to children who are age-eligible for the applicable program. Priority enrollment is given to currently enrolled children and sibling alumni; remaining spaces are offered to new students in application order. MCNS admits students without regard to race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin.

How MCNS Is Organized

The Director is responsible for the educational program and works closely with the professional staff. The elected Board of Directors, made up of nursery school parents, is responsible for policy setting, fundraising, tuition, salaries and approval of major expenditures.

Our Philosophy & Purpose

We believe play is a child's vehicle for learning. Each child grows at an individual rate of readiness and ability. Through play, children develop self-esteem, communication, social skills, curiosity, independence and self-control. Nursery school is an educational supplement to home: a place to explore, create, experiment, make choices and learn to participate in a group.

Our Goals for Children

- Provide a safe, nurturing and loving atmosphere for exploration and creativity.
- Encourage children to become self-directed and develop self-control.
- Recognize each child's strengths and build upon them.
- Support self-esteem, communication and social development.
- Create a climate of mutual respect and trust between school and home.
- Offer a developmentally appropriate, play-based curriculum responsive to children's interests.

Educating Every Child

MCNS is committed to inclusion and to helping every child participate meaningfully in school life. Our approach reflects the principles of access, participation and support: removing barriers, using varied teaching approaches, and collaborating with families and professionals. MCNS works to maintain high expectations for every child, coordinate appropriate supports, participate in special-education planning when appropriate, and incorporate ADA/IDEA guidance in our program and facility.

2. Getting Ready for School

Simple routines help children feel secure and successful.

Arrival & Dismissal

With the exception of Pink and Purple Room families, parents are encouraged to use the drop-off and pick-up line. Arrival and dismissal take place outside, rain or shine. Pink and Purple Room families may walk children through the playground gate to the classroom door during the arrival and dismissal window. There is no parent parking in the school parking lot; street parking is available on Melbourne or Tompkins Avenue.

Car Line Safety

1. Enter the line from Boston Post Road, not Tompkins Avenue.
2. Do not turn left into the parking lot when heading north on Boston Post Road.
3. Do not pass the car in front of you.
4. Stay in your car and pull forward as far as directed.
5. Wait for a staff member to take your child from or return your child to the car.
6. Do not park or idle in the line more than a few minutes before drop-off or pick-up.
7. Do not block Beach Avenue or the Briggs Antiques parking lot.
8. Make sure every person who transports your child knows these procedures.

WALKER PROCEDURE -

If you are walking your child to school, please wait near the breezeway door until school opens. We ask families to stand to the right of the door so that the stairs and sidewalk remain clear and easily accessible.

At dismissal, families should line up in the following designated areas:

- Green, Orange & Red Room families: Please line up to the left of the main entrance door.
- Blue & Yellow Room families: Please line up to the right of the breezeway door.

Once all of the children are settled and ready for dismissal, teachers will bring them outside to meet their families. Thank you for helping us keep arrival and dismissal safe, organized, and running smoothly!

If you arrive after the scheduled drop-off time, ring the front doorbell and wait for a staff member to check your child in. If you expect to be late for pick-up, call the school as soon as possible so staff can reassure your child and plan accordingly.

Car Seats

Children may not be released to a vehicle without an appropriate car seat as required by New York State law.

Dress for Play

Please send children in comfortable clothes that can get messy. Provide a complete labeled change of clothing, including underwear and socks. For playground safety, children should wear rubber-soled, closed-toe shoes or sneakers. Open-toe sandals, clogs, Crocs and party shoes are not appropriate for active outdoor play.

Parking

There is no parent parking in the school parking lot. If you need to park, please use Melbourne or Tompkins Avenue and obey all posted signs.

3. Health & Safety

When in doubt, keeping a sick child home protects the whole community.

Health Responsibilities

MCNS is a school for well children. Please notify the office when your child will be absent and immediately report a contagious illness. Volunteers with symptoms of illness should not participate in the classroom. Children must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine before returning.

Keep Your Child Home For

- A suspected or diagnosed communicable disease until cleared as appropriate by a health care provider.
- Temperature of 100°F or above.
- Yellow or green nasal discharge associated with illness.
- An undiagnosed rash.
- A disruptive cough.
- Red eyes with crust or discharge.
- Stomachache, vomiting or loose stools.
- Red or sore throat.
- A first-time seizure.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Families must keep current emergency information on file, including two different adults who can care for the child if a parent/guardian is unavailable.

Medical Forms, Immunizations & Medication

Required original medical forms and immunization documentation must be on file and updated as required by NYS OCFS. New York law provides a medical exemption when immunization would be detrimental to a child's health; there is no religious exemption. During an outbreak, a child who is not fully immunized may be excluded as directed by public health authorities.

Teachers and administrators do not administer routine medication. Trained personnel may administer an EpiPen/Auvi-Q for a life-threatening allergic emergency when the required medication, pharmacy labeling, instructions and food allergy plan are on file. If other medication must be given during school hours, a parent/guardian or another person designated by the parent/caregiver must administer it.

Common Illness Return Guide

Illness	May Return
Chicken pox	24 hours after lesions have crusted
Pink eye	24 hours after treatment begins
COVID	24 hours fever-free and symptoms have subsided
Coxsackie	24 hours fever-free and lesions have dried
Diarrhea	24 hours after last loose stool
Fever	24 hours after temperature returns to normal without fever medicine
Impetigo	24 hours after treatment begins

Influenza	24 hours after symptoms have subsided
Lice	24 hours after treatment begins
RSV	24 hours fever-free and well enough to participate
Scabies	24 hours after treatment begins
Strep throat	24 hours after treatment begins
Vomiting	24 hours after symptoms have subsided
Pneumonia / epiglottitis	Written physician clearance

For illnesses not listed here, or whenever symptoms are significant or unclear, contact your child's health care provider and the MCNS office.

Illness or Injury at School

If your child becomes ill at school, we will contact you or the person listed on the emergency form and expect prompt pick-up. Minor injuries are treated with first aid and families are notified. For a serious emergency, the Director and/or teacher will arrange ambulance transport to Montefiore Hospital in New Rochelle while the family is contacted.

Emergency Evacuation, Fire & Shelter-in-Place

Our evacuation site is the Church House (the white house in the circle of the driveway). Families will be contacted by phone, email and/or text when children are safe and if pick-up is required. Fire drills are practiced throughout the school year. During an active alarm, never remove a child from a class line; every child must first be accounted for by staff.

MCNS also conducts shelter-in-place drills as required. Situations may include severe weather, extreme temperatures, public disturbances, chemical or biological spills, or a rabid-animal sighting.

Security Cameras

Cameras are located at the front door/intercom, front stairs, back stairs and near the main office.

4. Communication & Family Partnership

Strong school-home relationships are built on openness, trust and respect.

Communication

Please keep your child's teachers informed about changes, milestones or events that may affect your child's day. Children notice how adults communicate, so we ask everyone to model a polite, accepting, warm and trusting manner. Concerns should be discussed privately, away from children.

Parent Participation

Parent participation is part of our 3-, 4- and 5-year-old classrooms. Participating parents assist teachers and interact with children. If you cannot attend on your assigned day, arrange a switch or select an open day and notify the office. If a replacement day cannot be arranged, you will be charged a \$50 missed-participation fee.

Cell Phones While Participating

Please set cell phones to vibrate and use them only for a true emergency while participating. Your attention should remain with the teachers and children.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Scheduled conferences take place in December and May, with additional conferences available as needed. Please consult the school calendar for dates. Ongoing conversation throughout the year is encouraged.

Grievances & Concerns

If you have a concern about school operations or your child's progress, contact your child's teacher or an administrator promptly. Your concern is our concern.

Confidentiality

Information relating to your child is confidential and will not be released without written authorization from a parent or legal guardian, except when reporting suspected child abuse or maltreatment as required by law.

Observation & Photos

Professional observation of an enrolled child requires the appropriate family authorization, and families will be notified when an observation occurs. Teachers may take photographs for classroom books, presentations and assessment portfolios according to the photo permission form on file.

5. Your Child's Experience

We guide children with warmth, consistency and respect.

Guidance

Guidance helps children learn cooperation, self-control, decision-making, problem-solving and conflict resolution while protecting self-esteem. Teachers use close supervision, clear limits, gentle guidance and redirection. MCNS does not use time-outs or shaming practices.

Behavior That Requires Additional Support

If a child demonstrates repeated behavior that significantly disrupts the program, the Head Teacher will communicate with the family and may schedule a confidential meeting to develop a plan and consider additional supports such as evaluation, counseling or therapy. If a family does not cooperate with an agreed plan, or if behavior continues to require extensive individual staff attention despite intervention, dismissal may be considered by the Director and reviewed by the Board of Directors. A prorated tuition refund applies as described in the handbook, excluding non-refundable charges.

Similarly, behavior by an adult that is disruptive, abusive or endangers staff, children or other families may result in dismissal of the family from the program, subject to Board review.

Toileting & Changing

Children do not need to be toilet trained to attend MCNS. We support toilet learning in partnership with families when a child shows readiness. Staff supervise and assist with clothing, explain wiping, encourage independence, flushing and handwashing, and use universal precautions when changing a child.

Birthdays

We love celebrating birthdays while following MCNS snack guidelines. Cake, cupcakes and other desserts/treats are not permitted. Pre-approved ideas include fruit and yogurt parfaits, fruit kebabs, double-cut pizza, chips with guacamole or salsa, all-natural fruit ice pops, fruit/vegetables/cheese in fun shapes, berries with whipped cream, or fruit served in an ice-cream cup. Check with your teacher before bringing a new idea.

Holiday Celebrations

Families are invited to share the holidays and traditions meaningful to them. Teachers may ask about family traditions, culture, religion and preferred language so celebrations can reflect our community. Please coordinate all food in advance and provide ingredient information because of classroom allergies.

Snacks

- Recommended: fresh fruit; raw vegetables such as peppers and cucumbers; quartered cherry tomatoes; cheese; yogurt.
- Grapes must be sliced lengthwise to reduce choking risk.
- Not permitted: nuts, candy, baked goods, popcorn, string cheese, raisins or cherries.
- Check with your child's teacher before sending an item not listed.
- Snack is provided by the program in our 2-year-old classes; always keep allergy and dietary information current.

6. Policies & Practical Information

The details families most often need during the school year.

Attendance & Vacations

MCNS operates on an annual budget based on annual tuition. No tuition credit is given for absences, illness or vacations. Please notify the school whenever your child will be absent and immediately report contagious illness.

Notice of Withdrawal

For withdrawal on or before January 31, 2027, MCNS must receive written notice at least 30 days before withdrawal. Without 30 days' notice, the family remains responsible for an additional 30 days of tuition. Prepaid tuition is credited according to the enrollment contract, excluding the \$750 registration fee and other tuition due. After January 31, 2027, no portion of prepaid tuition is refunded.

Tuition Policies

Tuition is due according to your contract. Payments are accepted by check, money order or certified bank check and cash is not accepted. A \$10 late fee may be charged when tuition is not received by the fifth of the month unless the office has been contacted in advance with an expected payment date.

If tuition has not been received by the fifteenth and the office has not been contacted, a late notice and invoice will be sent. Continued nonpayment may be referred to the Director and Board of Directors. The school may approve an alternative payment arrangement when good cause is demonstrated; failure to resolve or comply with an arrangement may result in dismissal. A returned check carries a \$25 fee.

YOUR CONTRACT

Please use your signed enrollment contract for the exact tuition schedule, payment method and financial obligations. Contact Dina at bookkeeper@mcnschool.org with questions.

Tuition Assistance

MCNS maintains a tuition assistance fund to help cooperative families experiencing financial hardship. Families seeking assistance should contact the Director and submit the requested confidential financial information before payment is due.

Babysitting

MCNS strongly discourages babysitting arrangements between MCNS employees and MCNS families outside school hours. Families who choose to make such arrangements do so at their own liability. School hours should not be used to arrange private babysitting.

Visiting School

Parents are welcome visitors. Please check with the office before arriving so classroom visits can be coordinated. The front door remains locked and uses an intercom/camera system. For a non-custodial parent visit, required court documentation must be on file when applicable.

School Pictures

A school photographer typically takes individual and group pictures once each year. Purchase is optional. The source handbook states that MCNS receives 20% of picture sales.

Fundraising

As a nonprofit school, fundraising helps support playground improvements, classroom equipment, school improvements and affordable tuition. Fundraisers are designed to be family-focused, useful and fun. Participation is not mandatory, but family support is greatly appreciated.

Board Elections

- Officer nominations are communicated in late April.
- Board officers must have a child enrolled for the following school year.
- The final slate is presented to the general membership for a vote in May.
- Board terms run July 1 through June 30.

Weather-Related Closures

MCNS generally follows the decisions of the Rye Neck and Mamaroneck public school districts. A one-hour district delay results in a one-hour MCNS delay. A delay of two hours or more closes the morning session. If the districts are closed for the day, MCNS morning and afternoon sessions are closed. Families are notified by email and/or text, generally by 6:00 AM. If school must close after a session begins, families or emergency contacts will be called for prompt pick-up.

Typical School Closures

- Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur
- Columbus/Indigenous Peoples Day
- Veterans Day and Election Day
- Thanksgiving recess (including no PM the day before, as scheduled)
- Holiday recess and winter recess
- Staff training days
- Spring recess
- Memorial Day
- Parent-teacher conference days
- Juneteenth

Always use the official 2026–2027 school calendar for exact closure dates.

New York State Learning Standards

MCNS invests in staff training to meet New York learning standards while preserving our core philosophy that play is our vehicle for learning.

7. Our Shared Responsibilities

A cooperative works best when school and families support one another.

MCNS Will

- Provide meaningful parent education opportunities.
- Welcome families in all their diversity.
- Maintain open communication between school and home.
- Create an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.
- Meet applicable health, safety, nutrition, staffing, program and emergency requirements.
- Release children only to people appropriately designated by a custodial parent or guardian.
- Plan for each child with consideration for language, culture, age and differing abilities.
- Maintain confidential developmental records and share them only as authorized or required.
- Apply school policies consistently.

Families Will

- Meet tuition and other financial obligations according to school policy and the enrollment contract.
- Complete classroom participation responsibilities for participating 3-, 4- and 5-year-old classes.
- Attend Back to School Night and vote on the Board slate in May.
- Dress children for active, messy indoor and outdoor play and changing weather.
- Support the cooperative through volunteering, school events and community participation.
- Follow program policies and keep required forms current.
- Share information that may affect a child's development or school day.
- Bring concerns to the appropriate teacher or administrator promptly and respectfully.

Mandated Reporting

MCNS staff are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and maltreatment. As part of our cooperative safety practices, a participating parent may never be alone with another family's child while at school or on the playground.

8. Before You File This Away...

A few things worth remembering.

THE MCNS ESSENTIALS

Be on time. Keep emergency and health information current. Keep sick children home. Dress for play. Communicate openly. Follow arrival and dismissal procedures. Ask questions whenever you need us.

Thank you for trusting MCNS with your child's first school experiences. We are grateful to have your family as part of our cooperative community and look forward to a joyful year of learning, friendship and play.

Mamaroneck Community Nursery School

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