



## Parent Handbook 2022-2023

Early Childhood Programs:

Where Families Play a Part from the Start since 1974.

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Dina Ahne

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### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

Using productive play as a vehicle for learning, the nursery school helps our children grow as individuals and community members in a safe, caring and challenging environment.

**Our program is licensed by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. Our OCFS# is 458050. It is your responsibility to be well versed in the regulations that we must comply with. Please feel free to come to the office or go to [http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/regs/418-1\\_CDCC\\_regs.asp](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/regs/418-1_CDCC_regs.asp) and download the regulations. A copy of the regulations is available in the Parent Resource area at the top of the stairs next to the office.**



# Mamaroneck Community Nursery School

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MAL	Lindsey Vanyo
MAL(Diversity & Inclusion)	Shanna Ortega
MAL	Synnove Rizo-Patron
MAL	Nancy Doucette
MAL	Joanna Gonzalez

## **Administration/Chain of Command**

**Melissa O'Halloran, Director**  
**M. Charlene Abney, Assistant Director**  
**Dina Ahne, Bookkeeper**



Any reference to "he" in this manual can be assumed to refer to "she" as well for ease of communication.

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to the **Mamaroneck Community Nursery School**. We are happy that you have chosen us as your child's school this year. Your child will have many rewarding experiences here, and we look forward to sharing them with you and your child.

Because we are a cooperative, you are a **SHARE HOLDER** in the school; an equal owner with all the other parents enrolled for the coming school year. As a shareholder, you play an important role in the success of our school, as such you are asked to vote yearly to elect our Board of Directors.

We keep the needs of the children our top priority. In order to keep your child happy and content, we offer a safe, nurturing, and loving atmosphere in which your child can experience many creative activities at his or her own developmental level.

It is hoped that this handbook will help to acquaint you with our policies and procedures. We've tried to cover the different aspects of our nursery school to help you and us keep the operation running smoothly.

**PLEASE READ THIS HANDBOOK CAREFULLY AND USE IT AS A REFERENCE WHEN QUESTIONS ARISE.**

Our staff is always available to answer any questions that you may have. We will also try to answer any child-related problems that arise. If we don't have the answers, we will give you some names and numbers of those who may be able to help.

We are looking forward to a wonderful school year. Our doors are always open to you. We are also available via email and we welcome your suggestions and questions anytime.

Melissa O'Halloran, Director  
Charlie Abney, Assistant Director

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## OUR SCHOOL

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### **CO-OP PHILOSOPHY:**

As a parent cooperative, MCNS invites parents to participate in a meaningful way in the beginning educational life of their children. Our toddler classes do not have parent participation but we do welcome family members as guests when appropriate. There is the opportunity for parent participation in our 3-5 year old classrooms. As a Co-op MCNS relies on parent volunteers to keep the school functioning properly. Although the Director handles the day-to-day operation of the school, an elected group of nursery school parents, the Board of Directors, is responsible for the overall functioning of the school. All MCNS parents have an obligation to play their part in the running of the school, especially in regard to fundraising, special event planning, and attendance at the State of the School meeting. Without parents' volunteer efforts, the school cannot function properly.

### **ENROLLMENT:**

Mamaroneck Community Nursery School is open to all children who are age-eligible for the specific program. Priority enrollment is given each year to those who are presently attending the nursery and to those of sibling alumni. Remaining spots are offered to new students in the order their application is received. We admit students of any race, color, religion, and national or ethnic origin.

### **ORGANIZATION:**

The Director is responsible for the educational program at the nursery school. The Director and the professional staff meet frequently for planning sessions and evaluations.

The Board of Directors, which is an elected group of nursery school parents, is responsible for the overall functioning of the school. It is this board that selects and carries out the various fundraising events and formulates school policy. The Board is also responsible for setting tuition, salaries and approval of any major expenditures.

### **PHILOSOPHY:**

We believe that play is a child's vehicle for learning. Each child is an individual growing at his or her own rate of readiness and ability. Developing self-esteem, learning to communicate, sharing and to socializing within one's own peer group are our basic goals. We believe that learning is a natural and ongoing phenomenon, which emerges as we interact with and respond to our environment. Here at the nursery school, the child has a place to explore, create and experiment freely.

### **PURPOSE:**

Nursery school is a new and exciting adventure for a child, for it offers a first opportunity to explore the world outside of the home and family and to enter into relationships with peers and adults other than parents. Nursery school is an educational supplement to the home, offering a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences for physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development.

Our school enables the child to explore with his natural curiosity. Our purpose is to create an atmosphere for thinking, doing and experimenting, which will enrich the child as a whole and help him to become a contributing and well-adjusted group member. By doing this, we reinforce a child's respect for himself as a capable and worthwhile individual.

The child is encouraged to grow creatively and express himself through a free choice of numerous activities. He is also introduced to democratic procedures in a few simple routines including clean-up time, snack time and cooperating at story and music time.

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## MCNS' S COMMITMENT TO FAMILY

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MCNS is committed to working with families. We strongly encourage you to participate in every aspect of your child's program. Our main focus remains with your child. If you have any concerns or questions, please immediately contact us by calling the office at 914-381-2655 or by emailing Melissa at [preschool@mcnschool.org](mailto:preschool@mcnschool.org) or Charlie at [toddler@mcnschool.org](mailto:toddler@mcnschool.org)

It is vitally important that you as parents/guardians communicate your needs and desires regarding your child's development openly and honestly with your child's teachers. You are encouraged to discuss any developmental milestones you have encountered and share any other information that may be appropriate.

Parents are encouraged to share personal interests including hobbies, talents, cultural backgrounds, favorite recipes, etc. in the classroom or with the school. Parent involvement is valued and therefore encouraged.

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## GENERAL GOALS FOR CHILDREN

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- To offer a safe, nurturing and loving atmosphere in which children can experience creative activities in an atmosphere of exploration and experimentation.
- To enable children to be self-directed and exhibit self-control.
- To recognize each child's strengths and build upon them.
- To promote the building of self-esteem, the ability to communicate and the acquisition of social skills within the peer group.
- To maintain an atmosphere of the nursery school as an educational supplement to the home with an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.
- To establish a curriculum based on play as a vehicle for learning and the interests of the child presented in a developmentally appropriate manner.

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## SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY TO PARENTS/ GUARDIANS

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- To provide meaningful parenting educational opportunities.
- To establish an atmosphere that welcomes families in all their diversity.
- To establish a method of communication and maintain a dialogue between school and home.
- To create, maintain, and promote an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.
- To meet all legal regulations for health, safety, nutrition, staffing patterns, program, emergencies, illness and other matters.
- To release child only to those people designated in writing by the custodial parent or guardian.
- To plan the appropriate program for each child, taking into account language, culture, age, differing abilities, and all other pertinent factor.
- To maintain confidential records of children's development and progress, and to make these records available to the parents upon request and only to others if authorized in writing by the parent.
- To establish other policies where needed and apply them uniformly among staff, children and parents.

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## PARENT/ GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITY TO SCHOOL

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- Make tuition and all other payments according to the operational policies of the preschool and the contract in their possession.
  - Assist in the classroom on a monthly basis. If you are unable to work on your assigned day, you are to find a substitute. If you cannot do your assigned day, you must arrange a switch with another parent and notify the office. If this is not possible, a \$50.00 administration fee will be charged. There is no classroom parent participation in the toddler classes.
  - To attend Back to School night and vote on the MCNS Board of Directors slate in May.
  - Parents and children should dress in clothes that are comfortable and can get messy.
  - Parents must dress their children appropriately for outdoor play. All classes go outside every day when the temperature is over 30 degrees. On chilly days, boots, mittens, hats and warm winter coats are a must.
  - To be involved with staff in setting program's direction and daily experiences by volunteering or serving on parent boards and participating in parent meetings.
  - To agree in advance and in writing to follow all program policies.
  - To provide information about your child or family that may be affecting his development.
  - To discuss any areas of concern with the appropriate staff member or the director.
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## MCNS'S EDUCATING EVERY CHILD POLICY

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MCNS's "Educating Every Child" Policy philosophically aligns with the following definition of inclusion, based on a Joint Position Statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), April 2009:

*Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for all children and their families include: a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and the ability to reach their full learning and developmental potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs are access, participation, and supports.*

**Access** – means providing a wide range of activities and environments for every child by removing physical barriers and offering multiple ways to promote learning and development.

**Participation** – means using a range of instructional approaches to promote engagement in play and learning activities, and a sense of belonging for every child.

**Supports** – refer to broader aspects of the system such as professional development, incentives for inclusion, and opportunities for communication and collaboration among families and professionals to assure high quality inclusion.

### MCNS shall:

1. Create high expectations for every child to reach his or her full potential.
2. Develop a program philosophically consistent with the definition above.
3. Establish a system of adequate services and supports to ensure staff and parents cooperatively address the needs of every child.
4. Help the staff meet each child's needs, which may include facilitating staff participation in special education meetings on behalf of children in their care and assisting staff in integrating the recommendations from those meetings into the curriculum.
5. Incorporate ADA/IDEA guidelines in order to maintain a facility that is useable for all children

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## IMPORTANT PARENT INFORMATION

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### ABSENTEEISM, ATTENDANCE AND VACATIONS:

Our nursery school runs on an annual budget based on annual tuition rates. The contract you signed is a legally binding agreement between the family and the school. No credit can be given for absenteeism. Your tuition can be prorated following a letter of withdrawal in accordance with the contract. Please also read the section in this handbook titled "Notice of withdrawal" for more details.

Please notify the school if your child is unable to attend for any extended period of time (more than 2 sessions) and notify us immediately if your child has a contagious illness. We need to let other parents and teachers know that they or their child may have been exposed.

### ANNUAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION PROCEDURES:

The school executes the following procedure related to the annual Board of Directors Elections:

- Notification is made of nominations for officers. These notifications will be sent home via email in late-April. To be an officer on the Board of Directors the person must have a child enrolled in the preschool for the following year.
- A final slate of nominations will be presented to the general membership in May for vote.
- The Board of Director's term of office is from July 1<sup>st</sup> until June 30<sup>th</sup>.

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

	<b><u>Morning</u></b>	or	<b><u>Afternoon</u></b>
<b>Drop Off</b>	Preschool Classes 8: 45 A.M.		12: 15 P.M.
	Toddler Classes 8: 45 A.M.		12: 15 P.M.
<b>Pick Up</b>	Preschool Classes 11: 35-11: 45 A.M.		2: 35-2: 45 P.M.
	Toddler Classes 11: 35-11: 45 A.M.		2: 35-2: 45 P.M.

We are asking that all parents, with the exception of our Toddler classes, use the drop off and pickup line.

**Please follow the instructions below for a safe drop off and pick up procedure. Rain or shine, arrival and dismissal will take place outside.**

**Toddler class parents** may use the Drop Off Line or walk your child to their classroom through the playground gate to their classroom door. For our Toddler families please note that the nursery school has no parent parking in the parking lot at 501 Tompkins Avenue. Please find parking on the street. Remember to obey all the posted parking signs to avoid ticketing.

**3, 4, & 5 year olds' parents** will use the drop off /pick up line. You must **ENTER THE PARKING LOT FROM THE BOSTON POST ROAD. DO NOT** enter using the Tompkins Avenue entrance to the parking lot. **DO NOT PASS ANY CAR IN FRONT OF YOU!**

If you arrive after the scheduled drop off time, please ring the doorbell and wait at the front door. A staff member will come to check your child in.

At present there is no set late policy, but a note is made every time a child is picked up after the scheduled time. If lateness becomes a problem, the Board of Directors will deal with this issue on an individual basis. The teachers use their lunch time to prepare the classroom for the afternoon session. Your lateness will further shorten their time. While lateness inconveniences the staff, the real problem lies with the child who has to see all the other children being picked up while he sits and waits, wondering who will be coming to get him. If you cannot avoid being late, please CALL IN ADVANCE so that we can let your child know that you had a slight delay and will be coming to school as soon as possible.

#### **BABYSITTING:**

A number of parents choose to employ our teachers and assistants to care for their children outside of school. Please note that all staff members who work at the school have been screened and hired based on their suitability to work in a group setting. Parents who choose to do this must realize that they do so at their own liability. Please do not use school hours to arrange babysitting with an employee. Program liability coverage is only in effect during an employee's working hours.

#### **BIRTHDAYS:**

We do acknowledge birthdays at school. In general, birthday celebrations held at school are kept low-keyed so that they do not become disruptive to the daily routines that are so important. The teacher makes a birthday crown for each child and the class sings "Happy Birthday". Please do not send party bags, hats, favors, or sugary treats. For snack that day, why not send in 100% fruit ice pops or some special fruit snack that your child loves, such as yogurt cups or fruit salad? If you would like to donate a book for the classroom library or a game or puzzle for the classroom, please feel free to do so. We will put a special bookplate in the book to give the proper recognition to the birthday child. If you have scheduled a party outside of school, if you are inviting the whole class you may send the invitations to the school, and we will put them in the school bag. If you have a selective guest list, you must distribute them yourself.

#### **CELL PHONE USE:**

The telephones at the school are for business use. Personal calls should not be made from the telephone in the school. All cell phones should be set to vibrate during your stay at school and only answered in the event of a real emergency. Your time at school with your child is a special time and your undivided attention will reap you many benefits in the years to come.

When your child is placed in the car by the teacher, please pause your conversation and greet your child in that special manner that every parent and caregiver should. Let them know that you missed them and that you are glad that they are with you now.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

It is important that teachers and parents work together. We need to be able to communicate freely with each other. Each day, many things affect you and your child both at home and away from home. We need to know what may be troubling your child when he/she comes to school. We like to know the reasons for this excitement or gloom. Please let your child's teacher know what may be the reason for any changes of that particular day.

Our relationship is built slowly and steadily and is based on mutual respect and trust. We recognize that you are the child's main teacher and a vital part of our relationship with the child. A child will watch how we all react and speak to each other and take cues on this behavior. This is why it is important that we all model a polite, accepting, warm, open and trusting manner when we speak and interact inside and outside the classroom.

Parents and staff educate each other as they communicate together. Parents communicate a wealth of information and insight into their own child. Teachers can inform parents about child development, the

preschool curriculum and how their child is coping and learning in a group setting.

If you encounter a problem or concern, please do not speak in front of your child. We would rather speak privately with you. You may schedule an appointment to meet with us or spend some time right then away from the classroom to talk about the issue.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Information relating to your child is confidential and will not be released unless written authorization is provided by a parent or legal guardian. An exception will be made in the event of suspected child abuse. Any such suspicion will be reported to the Director for immediate investigation and action with the appropriate authorities.

All participating parents must abide by our confidentiality procedure. Please feel free to discuss any issues you may have about a specific child with the teacher or the director. The teacher and director are not authorized to discuss with you this child, but will take your information under advisement. Any parent breaching this confidentiality policy will be asked to not participate and be charged for the remaining participating days for a substitute and the cost of snack.

**DIAPERING OR UNDERWEAR CHANGING:**

It is not necessary for your child to be toilet trained to attend our school. We believe that when a child shows an interest in toileting, he is ready to begin the process. The school will support your efforts to toilet train if you let us know. Once your child is fully trained and in underwear, we will remind them to use the bathroom and supervise their toileting. Staff will assist the children in their toileting needs as appropriate. This assistance consists of buttoning, unbuttoning clothing, zipping, explaining how to wipe and encouraging, but not wiping a child's bottom, flush and wash hands. If a toilet trained child has an accident, we will change the child who is wet as long as the child has back up clothes at school. Should your child come home with borrowed clothing, please launder and return them as soon as is convenient. The child will be changed within the classroom or bathroom area under the supervision of the classroom staff using Universal Precautions.

**DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR:**

If a child attending Mamaroneck Community Nursery School exhibits behavior that is disruptive to the school (including biting), the classroom Head Teacher, together with the Director, will notify the parent(s) of the problem. A confidential meeting will be scheduled with the Head Teacher, Director and parent(s) to discuss the problem, to determine how the problem should be handled, and whether additional supportive help (evaluation, counseling, therapy) is needed. If the parent(s) fail to comply with the prescribed plan within a reasonable amount of time and the child's behavior does not improve, the child may be dismissed from the school at the Director's discretion. Additionally, if despite intervention, the child's behavior still demands extensive individual time from the school staff, the child may be dismissed from the school also at the Director's discretion.

Likewise, if a child's parent(s) while at the school are disruptive, abusive or endangering to the staff, children or other parents of the children of the school, their child can be dismissed at the Director's discretion. All dismissals will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors of the school.

If a child is dismissed from the school for any of the reasons stated above, a prorated tuition refund will be made to the family excluding any non-refundable charges as of the day of dismissal.

**DRESS CODE:**

We ask that children come to school in attire that is appropriate for the many "messy-goopy" activities in which your child may want to participate. Your child should feel free to become involved without having to worry about getting dirty. We do provide smocks for those children who want to wear them. Though we encourage the use

of smocks, there may be times when a child might feel inhibited by wearing one. Parents, staff and children would benefit if you provide your child with “school outfits” that no one needs to worry about. We do use washable art materials whenever possible.

We request that you provide your preschooler with an extra set of clothes in case of accidents. These clothes should include a complete change of clothing including underwear and socks. An extra pair of shoes would be helpful, but not mandatory. All items must be clearly labeled with your child’s name.

For safety reasons, we ask that all children wear rubber soled, closed toed shoes and sneakers only for outside play. Open toed sandals, clogs, Crocs or party shoes are not appropriate or safe for running around on the playground or for riding bikes and scooters.

### **DROP-OFF SAFETY SUGGESTIONS (See map and rules on Page 31 & 32):**

#### **When dropping your child at school:**

Have your child ready on time. Your child should be done eating breakfast or lunch by the time you get in the drop off line.

You are under obligation to the New York State Child Car Seat Law which states, “... each passenger.... Under the age of four is restrained in a specifically designed detachable or removable seat which meets the Federal motor vehicle safety standards...” The law has recently changed to state that children ages 4,5 and 6 riding in any seating position of a motor vehicle, will be required to be restrained in an appropriate child restraint system. A vehicle’s seat belt alone is not a child restraint system. *Children who are at least 4 feet 9 inches tall are exempt from this provision and should be placed in a seat belt.*

#### **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:**

Evacuation in case of an emergency will be handled much the same as for a fire drill. The children will exit the building with their teachers. Our evacuation site is the Church House (the white house in the circle of the driveway). You will receive a call, email or text message as soon as the children are safe. We will make calls, send an email or text message to you or your designated emergency person to pick up your child as soon as possible. A message will also be placed on the message machine at school, if possible. It is important for you to keep your emergency information up to date and accurate.

#### **FIRE DRILLS:**

Fire Drills are practiced with the children approximately ten times over the school year. However, if the alarms are sounding at the school when you arrive with your child or when you are picking up there is a special procedure we would ask you to follow. The children are informed that whenever the bells and lights go off, we always go to the playground. We practice this from inside the building and from outside the building.

When the bells are going off when you are dropping off your child:

1. Please leave your child in the car seat and move your car as soon as possible.
2. Park and wait for the all clear sign and then resume the drop off line.

When the bells are going off when you are picking up your child:

You will see the children lining up outside and walking away from the cars going to the playground:

- You should move your car so the emergency vehicles can get through if necessary
- You should park and walk over to the playground fence. Your child will be dismissed from there. Remember your child must be checked out so we know they are leaving.
- There should be someone at the gate to help you.

**DO NOT TAKE YOUR CHILD FROM THE LINE. ALL CHILDREN HAVE TO BE ACCOUNTED FOR IN THE PLAYGROUND.**

**FUNDRAISING:**

Why do we fundraise? The funds go directly into the operating budget to help fund those items that may not be allocated in the operating budget. This fundraising also allows us to keep our tuition affordable.

Where does the money go? The amount raised goes directly into the school's operating budget to benefit the children in their classrooms. Proceeds are used to purchase large equipment for the classrooms and/or the office.

What determines which fundraisers are used? The Board of Directors main criterion for choosing a fundraiser is if the fundraiser will bring in a profit and be related to children. The Board takes into consideration also what is asked of the members by way of time and effort required.

What types of fundraisers are used? We strive to make fundraisers family-focused, fun, creative, and useful. Possible fundraisers include but are not limited to – Parent's Night Out, Hop-A-Thon, school photos, Mabel's Labels. While fundraisers are not mandatory, it is our hope that you will cooperate to the extent that you are able in all of our endeavors.

Who determines which fundraisers are done? The Chairperson of the fundraising committee brings ideas to the school's Board of Directors. The board then either approves or disapproves of the ideas.

**GRIEVANCE:**

Parent Concerns - If you have any problem or concern about our operation or your child's progress, please contact your child's teacher or the Director immediately. Your concern is our concern.

**GUIDANCE:**

What is "Guidance"? Guidance is the means by which we help children learn about working together, self-control, decision making, problem solving, and conflict resolution in an encouraging atmosphere that maintains their self-esteem.

Young children are just learning how to get along in a group. The role of the teacher is to help children learn acceptable ways to express and meet their needs. Teachers give children cues about which behaviors to maintain or avoid and which alternative behaviors may be more successful. The overall guidance policy is aimed at creating an encouraging classroom environment that helps children develop social skills. One of our goals is to help your child develop a positive self-image. We recognize that children need clearly defined limits set in a non-threatening yet firm manner. We encourage children to be self-directed and exhibit self-control. In order to achieve these goals, we apply principles that build individual esteem and avoid any shaming practices. As such, we accomplish order and thus discipline through close supervision, gentle guidance, and redirection. This practice is rarely employed and never overused. We do not condone or employ corporal punishment as a means of discipline.

**HEALTH REGULATIONS:**

New York State Law limits services of the school staff to inspection and reporting of health data. The staff has been certified in first aid/CPR, to care for children who become ill, and to contact parents regarding health conditions on an as needed basis. The teachers and directors are unable to administer medicine to children enrolled in the school. However, the nursery school does have trained personnel to administer an Epi-Pen in the event of a life-threatening situation. If your child requires medication during the day for life threatening anaphylactic shock, the procedure is as follows:

- In the event that a child needs to have an epi-pen medication administered during the course of the day,

please be advised that medication will be dispensed under the following conditions ONLY. This information must be very clear and easy to interpret.

- Parent or guardian provides medication with clearly written instructions
- A completed food allergy plan is on file at the school. This form can be downloaded from our website at [www.mcnschool.org](http://www.mcnschool.org)
- The Epi Pen must be in the original box from the pharmacy with the expiration date clearly visible. This procedure is for life-threatening emergency administration and not for ongoing maintenance medications. If any other medication needs to be administered while the child is at school, a parent, guardian or other person designated by the parent/caregiver.

It is the school policy and a requirement of NYS OCFS that all original medical forms and certifications of immunization be on file in the office by September and updated yearly. State law requires that a child is immunized against rubella, polio, diphtheria, measles and mumps, and chicken pox as well as requiring a blood lead level screening unless the child is exempt from this process. If your child is exempt, proper documentation must be on file in the office. In the event that the nursery school is notified of an outbreak of disease by the Board of Health in our community any child who is not fully immunized will not be allowed to attend MCNS until notification is received from the Board of Health that the outbreak is over.

**Pursuant to New York Education Law §914, every child entering or attending school in the State of New York must be immunized against communicable diseases listed in public health law §2164. However, not all school children are immunized. Public health Law §2164 provides exemptions to the immunization requirements where immunization would be detrimental to a child's health. There is no longer a religious exemption.**

Be advised, therefore, that anyone working, visiting, participating and/or attending Mamaroneck Community Nursery School or any other school in the State of New York, may come in direct contact with an un-immunized child and/or adult.

#### **HEALTH RESPONSIBILITIES:**

An important way of helping in our cooperative venture is in our health program. Volunteers with colds or other symptoms of illness may not participate. And we need your help in being observant for signs of illness in your child. Parents seem to feel instinctively when their child is "coming down with something". Please keep your child home if you are in doubt about his health. Better a lost day at nursery school than to expose a lot of children and parents to the contagious beginnings of a cold. Remember, what might only be a slight illness for your child might make another child or helping parent sick for several weeks.

It is also school policy that you should notify the office if your child is unable to attend for any extended period of time and it is mandatory that you inform us if your child has a contagious illness. It is further required that you must keep your child home 24 hours after a fever has subsided without fever medicine. For example, if your child is sent home from school with a fever, he/she should not attend the next day. In regards to colds, no child may attend school for the first few days of such an infection and may return to school only if the infection is subsiding as shown by a diminishing cough and mucous discharge. All children that have chronic allergic nasal discharge or cough must have such facts stated on their health form or notification must be given to the Director.

#### **In the event the following occur, we ask you to keep your child at home:**

- A suspected or diagnosed communicable disease as defined by the NYS Department of Health until evaluated and approved for inclusion by a health care provider to participate in the program.
- A temperature of 100°
- Or any fever accompanied by:
  - a deep cough, earache or draining ear, spasms of cough, sore throat, behavior change, stiff neck, rash, unusual irritability, poor feeding, vomiting or excessive crying.
  - A rash of any kind until diagnosed, treated or declared harmless by a physician
- Early colds (coughing and sneezing), very bad colds with purulent discharge

- Diarrhea or vomiting the previous evening or before morning - child needs to be free from vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school
- Red, runny or matting eyes - may be pink eye (conjunctivitis) - please call your doctor
- Bronchitis - if your child is coughing frequently
- Looking or acting very ill or getting worse.
- Neck pain when the child's head is moved or touched.
- A stiff neck or severe headache and looking very sick
- A seizure for the first time.
- Acting unusually confused
- Unequal pupils
- Breathing so fast or hard that the child cannot play, talk, cry or drink
- A severe stomachache that causes the child to double up and scream
- A stomachache without vomiting or diarrhea after a recent injury, blow to the abdomen or hard fall.
- Stools that are black or have blood mixed through them
- Not urinating at least once in 8 hours, dry mouth, no tears, sunken-eyes.
- Continuous clear drainage from the nose after a hard blow to the head.

You are required to submit to the office an emergency form that lists two (2) different adults who could take care of your child in the event of an emergency or an illness at school if you are not available.

We are a school for "healthy" children. A child who is not well does not benefit from our program and can adversely affect the health of our other children. If you have any doubts about your child's health, please keep your child home and contact your family doctor.

**ILLNESS CHART** \*Source: US Dept. of Health & Human Services

<b>Illness:</b>	<b>May Return:</b>
Chicken Pox	24 hours after lesions have crusted
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	24 hours after start of treatment
*COVID	Please see additional Information below
Croup	After illness has subsided
Diarrhea-GastroEnteritis	48 hours after last loose stool or after 1 normal bowel movement
Rubella	At least 7 days and 24 hours after symptoms end
Hepatitis A	At least 7 days after onset of jaundice
Impetigo	24 hours after treatment has started
Fever	24 hours after temperature is normal
Influenza	24 hours after symptoms have subsided
Measles	At least 4 days after onset of rash
Lice	24 hours after treatment has begun
Whooping Cough	At least 7 days after therapy has started
Pin worms	After treatment is completed
Roseola	After illness has subsided
Scabies	24 hours after start of treatment
Strep throat	48 hours after start of treatment
Poison Ivy	After lesions have dried up
Pneumonia or Epiglottitis	Written note from physician
Bacterial (Spinal) Meningitis	When Health Dept. gives OK
Mumps	14 days after swelling begins

**\* Current Covid Protocols (Please note that these policies are for everyone despite vaccination status.)**

- Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should stay out of the program for 5 days OR until they receive a negative COVID-19 test (whichever is first). Before returning to program, symptoms should be improving and you should be fever-free for at least 24 hours;

- Anyone who comes to the program with symptoms or who develops symptoms while at the program will be sent home and encouraged to get tested. The symptomatic child will be taken out of the classroom and brought to the office to rest while waiting to get picked up;
- Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 should remain isolated at home for a period of at least 5 days and symptoms should be improved and be fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to the child care program;
- Anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 and is returning to program between days 5 and 10 must wear a well-fitting mask, up through day 10, if they are able to tolerate one; OR may remove their mask following two negative COVID tests taken 48 hours apart. Children who are unable to wear a mask may still return to the child care program if they do not have symptoms;
- Anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 (this means when they were within six feet of someone with COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes in a 24-hour period) should wear a mask for 10 days whenever feasible. If they do not have symptoms, they do not need to quarantine and can attend the child care program.

#### **HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM:**

In an effort to be more informed about the ways our families define their own race, religion, preferred language, and culture, the teachers will send home a request for information about the holidays that you celebrate at home. We would encourage you to come in and share your holiday celebration at school with the children. Since many holidays revolve around food, it is important that you talk to the teachers and provide ingredients for food items you may be bringing in for the celebration because we always have a number of allergies in our classrooms to various food ingredients. We will try to celebrate the holidays in a very low-key manner of the children enrolled in our classes and look to you for help with this.

#### **HOLIDAYS:**

The School is typically closed to children on the following holidays (Please check the school calendar carefully)

- Rosh Hashanah
- Yom Kippur
- Columbus Day
- Veteran's Day, Election Day, Thanksgiving and No PM the day before
- Holiday Recess
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Winter Recess
- Staff Training Days
- Spring Recess
- Memorial Day
- Parent Teacher conference days

#### **ILLNESS OR INJURY DURING A SCHOOL SESSION:**

In the event that a child becomes ill at school, every effort will be made to reach the parents, or the person named on the emergency form. We expect that you will come as quickly as possible to take your child home. In spite of care and supervision, children sometimes suffer injuries in the school or on the school grounds. Minor cuts and scrapes are treated with first aid in the office. You will be notified as soon as possible of any injury received at school. More serious injuries needing medical attention cannot be fully cared for at school. You will be notified immediately if your child had such an injury, but in case you are not home we will use the names you designate on your emergency form so that proper medical help can be expedited. In a serious emergency, the director and/or the child's teacher take the injured student via ambulance to the emergency room at Sound Shore Hospital in New Rochelle. Simultaneously, the parent is notified that his/her child is being taken to the emergency room at the hospital and told to meet there. The family physician is also notified, if possible, that his/her patient is in route to the hospital emergency room. If the family physician and the parents cannot be reached, the decision about what to do next will be determined by the physician who treats the child in the emergency room.

**NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS:**

At MCNS, we devote many staff hours to the training of teachers on how we can meet the NY standards and still maintain our philosophy that "Play is our vehicle for learning". If you are interested in the standards, you can find them online at the New York State Education Department website.

**NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL:**

If a parent withdraws their child on or before January 31, 2023, written notice must be received by the School at least thirty days prior to withdrawal. If thirty days' notice is not received by the School prior to withdrawal, the parent will be responsible for additional thirty days tuition. Prepaid tuition, excluding the \$750.00 registration fee and any tuition due pursuant to the contract will be credited to you. If you withdraw your child after January 31, 2023, no portion of prepaid tuition will be refunded.

**COVID FINANCIAL INFORMATION:****3, 4, & 5 YEAR OLD PROGRAMS FINANCIAL RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURES**

- In the event that an individual class, or the whole school, needs to shift to Virtual Learning due to COVID-19, we have a generous rebate policy for our Nursery School program:
- 0-29 Virtual Learning Days, pay 100% tuition
- 30-59 Virtual Learning Days, pay 75% tuition
- 25% of prorated tuition will be offered as a refund/donation
- 60+ Virtual Learning Days, pay 50% tuition
- 50% of prorated tuition will be offered as a refund/donation
- Each child's rebate will be calculated at the end of the school year, refunds will be distributed in Summer 2023.
- Rebates are given for class and school closures due to COVID-19, not based on an individual need to quarantine, personal sick days, or other reasons for staying home.

**TODDLER CLASSES FINANCIAL RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURES**

- In the event that an individual class, or the whole school, needs to shift to Virtual Learning due to COVID-19, we will assess our toddlers' needs when determining whether or not to provide Virtual Learning.
- If it is determined that Virtual Learning is not appropriate for our toddlers, it will not be offered and tuition will be refunded until in-person learning is able to resume.
- If our toddlers are offered Virtual Learning families we will follow the Nursery School rebate policy as stated above.

**PARENT PARTICIPATION:**

MCNS is committed to working with families. We strongly encourage them to participate in every aspect of their child's program. Parents are welcome to visit the school any time. Our main focus is your child. If you have any concerns or questions, please immediately contact the Director at 381-2655 or by e-mail at [preschool@mcnschool.org](mailto:preschool@mcnschool.org).

It is vitally important that you as parents/guardians communicate your needs and desires regarding your child's development openly and honestly with your child's teachers. You are encouraged to discuss any developmental milestones you have encountered and share any other information that may be appropriate. Parents are encouraged to share personal interests including hobbies, talents, cultural backgrounds, favorite recipes, etc. Parent involvement is valued and therefore encouraged.

Preschoolers: Almost every day your child is in class, a parent is scheduled to participate. You will receive the schedules for your participation day in advance via email. If you cannot do your assigned day, you must arrange a switch with another parent and notify the office. If this is not possible, a \$50.00 administration fee will be charged.

## **PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES:**

Conversations with parents and teachers go on throughout the year, but scheduled conferences will take place in Dec. and in May. Additional conferences can be scheduled when a child is having difficulty or when you need help at home. We try to schedule conferences during school time, but some conference appointments may need to be made before or after school. Phone conferences are fine if the parent agrees, but face-to-face is always better. **The dates for these scheduled conferences are on your school calendar.**

### **December Parent Teacher Conference**

During this conference, the staff will answer any questions you may have about the philosophy of the school as well as the importance of play in our curriculum. We will let you know how your child reacted to the program, how your child adjusted to the program and how your child has become involved in the activities of the program. You will have a chance to tell about your child and what your goals are for your child.

### **May Parent Teacher Conference**

Appointments are made and prepared for in the same manner as the fall conferences with the following additions. By this time, the staff will have had time to gather information about your child. This information includes artwork, photos, specific skill information and a specific list of skills learned. The teachers will also address the goals from the initial conference and how the child has progressed with them.

## **PARKING:**

As you may know, parking for the nursery school is limited. **There is no parking in the parking lot.** If you need to park, please park on Melbourne or Tompkins Avenue. Please obey all posted signs. (See map on Page 29)

## **PERMISSION TO OBSERVE A CHILD:**

Occasionally, the nursery school will be asked to facilitate an observation of a child who is presently enrolled. In order for us to allow a professional to observe your child, you were asked to sign on the Emergency and Pick up authorization form enabling us to do this. You will always be notified when this will happen.

## **PHOTOS:**

During the school year, the teachers will take pictures of your child to be used for classroom books, slide presentations to parents, workshop presentation for other teachers as well as portfolios which are used for assessment. Your signature on the emergency form gives us permission to take photos for this purpose.

## **PICK-UP SAFETY SUGGESTIONS:**

### **When picking your child up from school:**

- Start early enough so that there is no rushing.
- Enter the parking lot from the Boston Post Road.
- Wait in line until your car is opposite the dismissal sight.
- Stay in your car. Your child will be placed into the car.
- Be on time! It can be upsetting to your child to be the last one left at school.
- Pull up to the nursery school door.
- Wait in your car for the teacher to help your child into the car seat.
- Check doors after you pick up each child.
- If the children distract you when you're driving, stop and explain to them that you cannot drive until they are quieter. Songs or guessing games are very effective activities in keeping children interested during the ride. It may also be helpful to have books in the car or child oriented music that can be played during the ride.

## **SCHOOL PICTURES:**

Once a year, our school photographer will take individual and group pictures of all the children. The nursery school does get 20% of the sales but you are under no obligation to purchase pictures and can simply return any unwanted photos to our office. Notes will be sent home with all children prior to picture day so that you

may dress your child accordingly. We find that regular school clothes make for the best pictures by which to remember your child's nursery school days.

#### **SECURITY CAMERAS:**

One of the regulations states that we must tell you where the video cameras are in the building. There is a camera at the front door with the intercom system. There is a camera on the front stairs, one on the back stairs and one by the main office.

#### **SEPARATION, YOUR CHILD AND YOU:**

Your child is embarking on a new and exciting experience. For many, this may be the first regular activity with adult and peer relationships away from home and parents. For the most part, everything is new: teacher, surroundings, children, equipment, and routines. Your child will need lots of understanding from you.

Help your child by letting him know that you do not plan to simply drop him and go away. Expect to stay for at least the first day during the shortened sessions and perhaps longer if necessary. He needs you for security. Initially, he may stick very close to you. Let him do this. A familiar face, a reassuring hug, a touch from you, is all very important. Eventually, he will be ready to move away from you and will let you sit at one side of the room or in the hallway. Think of yourself as a "home base". Your child can come to you when he needs you, but is gradually able to venture further into the room by himself. Avoid following your child around the room. He may feel that you don't believe that this is an OK place to be and will not start to feel comfortable. If your child feels that you are anxious to leave him, it will be more difficult for him to make the adjustment. Next, talk with the teacher and make a plan for leaving. She will tell you when she thinks you can leave. It is important that you tell your child when you are leaving, NEVER "sneak out". Tell your child where you are going and how long you will be away. Say "Goodbye", leave immediately and return promptly at the time you told your child. (Do this even if you leave to go to the office for a cup of coffee). If your child is unhappy while you are away, the teacher will reassure him of your return and comfort him, as he needs it.

The fifteen minutes can be extended to half an hour the next day, and so on until you, the teacher, and your child work out the "trials" of separation together. REMEMBER: Be patient and do not push your child into independence. It will happen when he or she is ready.

#### **SHELTER IN PLACE DRILLS:**

Twice a year we are required by NYS OCFS to conduct a Shelter in Place Drill with all the children in the school. Shelter in Place is a response to an emergency that creates a situation in which it is safer to remain in the building rather than to evacuate.

Some situations that might require sheltering in place are:

- Severe weather conditions
- Extreme temperatures (hot/cold)
- A public disturbance that escalated to violent acts
- Chemical or biological spill
- Rabid animal sighting

#### **SNACKS:**

It is our goal that snack time is an enjoyable as well as a nutritious experience that helps foster good eating habits. **Please read the section of this handbook regarding you and your participating day for further information about snack.**

**In the interest of preventing choking and encouraging good nutrition the following list is made in accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation as well as school policy.**

#### **Recommended Foods**

The following is a suggested (but by no means exclusive) list of foods you may bring:

- Fresh fruit: apples, bananas, ripe pears, tangerines, kiwi, melon, oranges, peaches, pineapple and grapes. Grapes must be sliced lengthwise to prevent choking.

- Raw Vegetables: green or red peppers, cucumbers, or cherry tomatoes. Cherry tomatoes must be sliced in quarters.
- Cheese: spreads and slices & yogurt

**Non-acceptable foods**

- No nuts, candy or baked goods of any kind
- No popcorn or string cheese
- No raisins
- No cherries

If there is anything not on this list you would like to serve, please check with your child's teacher.

Our Toddler classes will be provided snack by the program. Please make sure to notify the staff about specific allergies or special dietary needs your child may have. Since not all children like all foods, we will provide smaller amounts of two different foods. Seeing someone else taste a new food may help develop an attitude where children are willing to try an unknown food and learn to like it. Within the parameters of dietary needs we keep snacks as healthy and nutritious as possible.

**TEACHERS AS MANDATED REPORTERS:**

All of our staff members, because they work in a school, are mandated reporters for child Abuse and Maltreatment reporting. The staff has been trained and procedures exist for reporting any case that might come to our attention. As a parent cooperative with parents in the classroom every day, we have to be alert to any appearance of procedures not being followed. As a parent at the cooperative, you may never be alone with anyone else's child but your own while in the school or on the playground. If you have any questions about the procedure, please feel free to contact the office.

**TUITION ASSISTANCE FUND:**

A tuition assistance fund was set up in the 1990's and is maintained by MCNS. The purpose of this fund is to enable a co-op family to remain active members in the event that they fall on financial hardship. The fund remains dependent on individual donations and occasionally from the profits of fundraising. Families that are requesting the assistance should submit a brief statement outlining the circumstances or need along with a copy of their most recent income tax forms to the director of the school before the money is due. All requests and circumstances will remain absolutely confidential.

**TUITION POLICIES:**

Tuition payments are due and payable as set forth in your contract. Tuition is payable by check, money order, or certified bank check on the first of the month in which it is due. No cash will be accepted.

**Late fees and delinquent tuition:**

If you expect to be late with a tuition payment, please contact the office in advance with the expected payment date. A \$10.00 late fee will be charged on tuition payments that are not received by the fifth of the month unless the office is contacted in advance with the expected payment date. If payment is not made on the expected payment date, the late fee will be reinstated at the sole discretion of the School.

In the event that the office has not been contacted and a tuition payment is not received by the fifteenth of the month in which it is due, the Director will send a late notice to the parents, and inform the Board of Directors of the delinquency. If the payment is not received within five days of the late notice, the Director will contact the parent. If, by the last day of the month in which the payment is due, the parent demonstrates good cause to the Director, the Director may, in his or her discretion, grant an extension of up to four weeks for payment, or arrange for a monthly payment schedule of equal installments for up to two months. For purpose of this paragraph, good cause means a bona fide financial, medical, employment, or family development or circumstance that was unexpected at the time the child was enrolled. If the parent does not demonstrate good

cause by the last day of the month in which the payment is due, the Director will notify the Board of Directors and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors whether or not to dismiss the child from School. The Board of Directors shall, within ten days of the Director's recommendation, either dismiss the child or approve an alternative arrangement with the parent. If no alternative arrangement has been made between the Board of Directors and the parent by the last day of the month following the month in which the payment is due, the child will be dismissed. The School reserves its right to pursue its legal remedies for any breach of this contract.

**Returned checks:**

If a check is returned from the bank without payment, a \$25.00 fee will be assessed.

**VISITING THE SCHOOL:**

Parents are welcome visitors at school. We encourage parents to visit. Please check in the office before you arrive to insure that we don't have another visitor already in the classroom. For safety reasons, the front door of the school is locked with a security camera and an intercom system for admittance. If you arrive after the door has been locked, please press the intercom button on the brick wall to the left of the door and wait for someone to respond and buzz you in.

Any parent has the right to inspect the Center and be in the room with their child at any time. However, in the event of a non-custodial parent visit, a written notification from a representative of the courts must be on file in the office authorizing impromptu visitation rights.

**WEATHER RELATED EVACUATION:**

The procedure for closing school because of inclement weather begins with the Rye Neck Public School decision. If Rye Neck has a delayed opening of one hour, we will delay our opening by one hour.

Delays of two hours or more will necessitate the closing of school for the morning session. If the school district is closed for the whole day, there will be no a.m. or p.m. sessions at MCNS. Closings will be announced on the school website at [www.mcnschool.org](http://www.mcnschool.org), via email and/or text message. School closing information is published by 6 AM of the day of the closing. If we need to close school after a session has begun, we will make calls to you or your designated emergency person to pick up your child as soon as possible.

## APPENDICES:

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### **PARTICIPATING PARENT MANUAL (Green, Red, Blue, Yellow and Rainbow Rooms Only)**

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The helping parent role in a parent-cooperative school is very important. Part of that role is being on time when it is your assigned day to participate in the classroom. Since staff is responsible for greeting children at the front door, the helping parent should be down in the classroom, with snack put away and their child's belongings in the cubby so that they can assist with the children as they arrive in the classroom. We must insist that parents make being here on time a priority. Remember also, that cell phones must be set to vibrate and we ask you to refrain from talking on your cell phone while you are here at school.

There are months when you appear on the first of the month and also near the end of the same month. Please check your calendar carefully. If you make a switch with another parent or hire a substitute, please send a note or call the office, so we can contact that person so you won't be charged for the missed day. As a part of a parent participatory program, you agreed to participate from the beginning. This is a big responsibility and also a privilege to be such an active part of your child's early schooling.

#### **What happens when you don't remember your participation day?**

- First, the teacher realizes that you have dropped your child at school and did not stay or that your child is absent that day.
- Second, the office will call your home to see if we can get you to return or at least to leave a message for you to call.
- Third, the staff is short one person at the beginning of school and the routine has to change.
- Fourth, someone has to go in the classroom to work until you or another substitute arrives.
- Fifth, you are assessed the amount it cost us for snack and the substitute for the first offence.

#### **ACTIVITY TIME:**

During this time, the teachers and parent will oversee, supervise and assist with the children's activities which will include housekeeping/dramatic play, block building, reading, playing with table toys/puzzles, exploring at the science table, drawing/coloring, painting, cooking, having art experiences, playing at the sensory table, etc. (Prior to this time you should have gotten some direction from the teacher as to your role).

#### **CIRCLE TIME:**

Parent should join the children and teachers on the carpet area. Unless you have a physical problem, we find that circle time is most enjoyable and effective when everyone is sitting on the carpet together and no one is on a chair (including teachers and parents). If there is a discussion during class time, please avoid answering questions that are meant for the children and avoid the temptation to whisper the "answer" in your child's ear.

#### **GROUP TIME:**

Whether the group is listening to a story or singing some songs, again, please sit on the carpet with the children and the teachers. If you have a special story to tell or a song to sing, please let us know. We'd love some help.

**OUTDOOR TIME:** Children must be supervised when on the playground. You are encouraged to stand by a piece of equipment that is being used by the children. Resist the temptation to "conference" with your child's teachers. They, too, should not be talking with one another but should be spaced throughout the playground so that proper supervision is maintained.

### **SNACKTIME:**

The participating parent will supply snack for the class. Teachers usually put the parent in charge of “setting up”. This will be done with the help of some children. **The first requirement of preparing snack is that everyone should wash their hands and put on gloves that are provided in the classroom.** Each teacher has her own way of doing snack and will inform you of the procedure. Try to involve the children as much as possible. They should be able to put out the napkins and cups at each place. Join the children at the table when it is time to eat. The children should be supervised at all times, especially while they eat. Children should help themselves with serving and pouring. Since children learn manners best by seeing them modeled appropriately, please sit with them and provide a positive example.

### **SNACK CLEAN UP TIME:**

The children are responsible for cleaning up their own areas. The parent should then sweep under the tables and wash the water containers and snack trays.

### **CLASSROOM CLEANUP:**

All the children help putting materials away and straightening up their classroom. The parent also helps but does not do everything for the children. You may be asked to help direct the children in putting the blocks away. Give gently guidance by asking questions. (e.g. Can you find other blocks that are the same size as the one you have?)

### **DEPARTURE TIME:**

Only staff members are permitted to release a child from school. During this time you might assist by helping a child find his/her belongings in order to get ready to go home. Your assistance throughout the day has been a tremendous help and enables us to provide your child with many enriching experiences and with special individual time. Thank you for all that you do. We appreciate you!

## **PARTICIPATING PARENT GUIDELINES**

### **BE POSITIVE:**

Children respond best to courtesy, tact, and diplomacy, just as adults do. By using the word “let’s” and “we” often, we develop a sense of togetherness. Phrasing a sentence in the positive instead of the negative produces much better results. “Please close the door” instead of “Don’t leave the door open”. We need to tell the children what we want them to do and not what we don’t want them to do.

#### **Try to say**

We all sit down to drink.  
It’s time for all of us to clean up now.  
I’ll bet you had fun making that picture.  
The legs of the chair need to be on the floor.  
That’s a big job you just finished.

#### **Instead of**

Sit down, Johnny!  
Pick up the blocks, now!  
Try putting in some windows  
Don’t tip your chair.  
You’re a good boy.

### **BE PROFESSIONAL:**

It’s fun to chat with other parents about things that happen in your neighborhood, but when it is your participation day, you assume a professional role, and are, in fact, a teacher during your time in the school. Because of this, it is well to recognize some professional attitudes that every person should adopt as a code of conduct in relation to school.

- Do not discuss happenings of the nursery school day nor report them to the child’s parent unless directed to do so. It is the teacher’s responsibility to acquaint each parent with any details of the child’s adjustment or behavior at school.
- Be professional in discussing nursery school children with other parents.

- Respect each other as an individual. Try not to show favoritism.
- Be alert to the needs of the shy, timid, or new child. Try to suggest interesting activities and be friendly to him/her. Be cautious not to overwhelm the child.
- Do not sit upon or lean against the children's equipment. They cannot use it while you are blocking it. Always use small chairs and get down to the child's level when supervising. Do not sit on tables at any time. Sitting down to supervise is a good technique to remember.
- Do not feel compelled to make children do things or to suggest what to do or make. They will be active and creative in their own way and in their own time.
- Do not take photos of any child other than your own.

With your conscientious participation, your suggestions, your constructive criticisms, and your talent, we will together build a continually improving program for parents and children.

#### **OTHER GUIDELINES:**

1. Help each child feel and understand that he/she is a worthwhile individual and that you have confidence in him/her as a person.
2. Be willing to sit back and watch the children. Avoid distracting them from their play by showing them tricks or injecting your ideas.
3. Try not to interrupt a child's activity, but encourage him/her to finish.
4. Listen when a child has something to say – squat or sit at his/her level.
5. Use a low, gentle, interested voice.
6. Expand on what a child says but do not evaluate.
7. Use positive suggestions and ask questions that can elicit a positive reply.
8. State limits in a pleasant and positive way.
9. Never ask a child "What are you making or painting?" He/she may not know. Show approval by positive comments, e.g. "That painting has beautiful colors", or "I like the way you have put those blocks together." Do not comment on children's paintings while they are working. In most cases this will break concentration and intrude on the child's ideas. If the child seems eager to talk about his painting, you might say, "Would you like to tell me about the picture?"
10. Give help when needed, but encourage children to do things themselves.
11. When children are using blocks, paints, etc. avoid making things for them – allow them the joy of making their own discoveries. Feel free to make your own lovely creations, but please remember that young children learn best by exploring and discovering things for themselves. Please allow children the freedom to use classroom materials in ways that interest them and don't fall into the trap of making buildings out of the blocks for them, showing them how the puzzle pieces fit together, showing them how to paint at the easel or making things for them out of play dough.
12. Permit a child to do what he/she wants to do as long as the activity is safe.
13. Do not watch your child exclusively. Be constantly alert.
14. Get into conflicts promptly only if there is the danger of a child being hurt. Otherwise, it is better to give the children a chance to solve things their own way. Sometimes, just moving near them (swiftly and quietly) is effective.
15. Please be patient with your child. It is difficult to share a parent with classmates.
16. Do not hesitate to ask the teacher for help.
17. Do not bring other children with you as visitors on your participation day.
18. Do not smoke or use cell phones in the school or on the playground.
19. Remember that if you cannot come on your assigned day, you are responsible for getting a replacement and letting the office know.
20. Do keep in mind that you will be involved in messy and sometimes heavy work. Flat shoes and sports clothes are most appropriate for nursery school.

## TIPS FOR SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

### **Group Behavior:**

We try to avoid too many rules and regulations—but some general guidance principles help us to avoid conflicts. These are easily understood by the children if all the participants present them with a united front.

- All playthings belong to the group.
- Things may not be taken from children who are using them – taking turns is a way of giving every child the use of everything.
- Play which is dangerous or disturbing to others may not be carried on.
- As often as possible children settle their own differences. Timid children are encouraged to defend themselves.
- Whenever guidance will help, the teacher or parent enters the situation.
- When conflicts arise let the children handle them alone if they can. Walking toward the children is sometimes enough. Speak to the children by name in an ordinary tone of voice. Be sure you have their attention before you start to talk to them. It helps to get down to their level physically. Kneel down, or sit on a low chair. Let the children take turns telling you what happened. If you saw the entire incident and understand the problem, help the children to talk over their difficulties. The time spent in trying to understand the problem is often sufficient to resolve the situation.

**Aggression** is accepted as normal in childhood, but we take steps to bring it within bounds. Stop it quickly when the safety of person, property, or relationships is involved. Talk out the situation if you can see the justice on each side. Reassure the child that you like him but not the hurting! It never helps to condemn, punish, demand an apology, withdraw your love or get angry. Get help from the teacher if you feel that you cannot handle the situation, or if your child is involved. Tell the child what you want him to do. He knows what he shouldn't do.

**Bad language** is a normal outgrowth of physical aggression that in the older nursery school child is being controlled because of social pressure. It consists mostly of words for toileting and other expressions with which children test and tease each other. Ignore it unless it leads to hurting.

**Refusal to share:** Ability to share is based on an understanding of ownership. Before a child can share he has to have something of his own that he doesn't have to share! When he thoroughly understands that something can never be taken away from him, he can integrate the concept of ownership with his developing time sense and the realization that other people own things too. We do not encourage the bringing of toys to school, but if a child wishes to bring something, either for comfort or to show others, it will be allowed. We will encourage him to leave the toy in his school bag. It is advisable to leave food, gum and candy at home.

**Discipline:** Maintaining group morale is of primary importance to good discipline. What one child may be permitted to do alone may be completely disrupting in a group situation. In all discipline, preserve the child's self-respect. Be positive and firm, but never harsh. Use the tone of your voice as a tool to show the child that you like him even though you are opposed to his actions. Never hesitate to ask the teacher to take over a situation that you don't feel capable of handling. Whenever possible try to avoid conflict with your own child by asking the teacher to take over as mediator. The purpose of this action is to assure each child that he is being treated fairly and impartially. The Director will decide what procedure is to be followed in the case of persistent aggressive or uncooperative behavior. Look for a genuine opportunity to have a pleasant contact with a child you have had to discipline. It helps him to like himself again! In nursery school, physical punishment of any kind is not used, not even with your own child.

**Play:** The nursery school provides play materials that are challenging and exciting yet limitless in their use. There is no "right" way to use blocks, clay, paint, or collage, so interest in these materials doesn't grow old. Through using and experimenting with materials, the child grows increasingly skillful and sees new possibilities for play. For example, the four-year-old uses the same materials as the three-year-old but with different results due to the

increased skill, control and imagination of the older child. Children who have been encouraged to work out their own ideas are seldom bored or without something to do.

### **Outdoor Play:**

Purpose – children need lots of freedom to use their bodies actively. Therefore, we go outdoors every day except when it is raining or unusually cold. Appropriate clothing is essential for the children’s health and comfort.

#### **Balls**

- May not be used to hit others.
- May not be indoors usually, but may be used anywhere outdoors.
- If balls are thrown outside fence, deliberately or accidentally, only an adult may retrieve it.

#### **Climbing**

- No toys in hands while climbing
- Caution children against stepping on fingers, “Hold with your hands”.
- Do not urge a child to climb or boost him up or offer help in going higher. Be ready to help child get down if he or she seems frightened.

#### **Sand Play**

- Sand may not be thrown or poured on others. “Keep sand low. It hurts when it gets in your eyes.”
- After one warning, watch the child closely and try to fend off the behavior. Please give the child another chance, but watch closely.
- See that sand toys are not broken or dangerous. Remove any that are.

### **Indoor Play:**

Purpose – to provide variety of activities to encourage learning and creative expression. Children have much freedom of choice and movement. Remember that much of the child’s satisfaction comes from the activity and not the finished product.

#### **Blocks**

- May not be used as weapons or thrown.
- Encourage block building away from the storage area so that all children will have easy access to materials.
- Protect a child’s work. No one but the builder may knock down work.
- When play deteriorates, suggest picking up or introduce a new idea.
- Remember who played in area so that they can help put blocks away.

#### **Clay**

- Sit and chat with the children and play with the clay yourself. This will encourage the children to do so. Do not make models or teach them how to make real objects. Instead you can squeeze, pull, and play pointing out the possibilities of the material.

#### **Collage Table**

- Keep supply of paste, glue, scissors, punches, stapler, and paper plentiful.

#### **Dough**

- Dough can be used with rollers, cutters, and other objects or hands.
- Dough should not be mixed with water.

#### **Easels**

- Help children with smocks. If the child does not wish a smock they should not be forced. All our art materials are washable. Print names on back of painting (before they paint) with a pencil. i.e. Carolyn – as they will print in school.
- Paintings are then hung on the drying rack. Help with the clothespins.
- “Keep brushes in the same color,” Wipe brush before you paint so they do not drip.

#### **Housekeeping**

- Help children share equipment
- Keep dress clothes, doll clothes and bedding off of the floor.
- Help remove and put back on shoes.

#### **Math Area**

- Parents who are interested are encouraged to ask the director or teacher how to use the various prepared math materials... But, children may always explore any materials in their own way.
- Children develop an understanding of numbers and number relationships by counting blocks,

people or other objects; making comparisons such as tall-short, big-tall, more-less; observing shapes such as circle, square, triangle, diamond; using play clock to set time.

#### Puzzles

- “Puzzle pieces are not good to eat”
- Have child finish one puzzle before starting another even if you have to help.
- Try to give younger children puzzles with fewest pieces

#### Science

- Observe, investigate and understand about living and non-living things such as flowers, plants, insects, rocks, magnets, etc...
- Understand more about the beauty and the wonders of the world.
- Encourage the child to become aware of the simple truths in nature and to develop an interest in the world around him.

#### **Toilet Accidents:**

Toilet accidents are taken matter-of-factly. In no instance should a child be scolded or punished for an accident. Putting him into clean clothes promptly is one of the best ways to establish a habit of dryness. In our nursery school we are proud that we do not make toilet training an issue or a condition of enrollment. This is one of the normal learning aspects of childhood, and we are here to help with it. Children should wear training pants to school and should be supplied with sufficient clothing to meet their needs.

#### **Your own child on your participation day:**

Do not be concerned if during the first few weeks of school your own child is shy, doesn't want to enter the group, hits or pushes other children, refuses to give or take turns, stands around, clings to you or cries a lot. Try to keep in the background, let the child move away from you. Many children wish to be among the group that their mother is supervising. Don't make your child feel uncomfortable if he wishes to remain with you.

Do not urge your child to take part in activities or suggest things for him to do. If possible leave the handling of your own child to the teachers. Before your child can be secure in school, he must make his own attachment to the teachers who represent the solid, secure figures in the nursery school.

In general, try to set a pattern for your participation days of cheerfulness and serenity. The grown up who understands never feels hurt at what children do or take the behavior personally but sees it as a part of his learning and is interested in the changes which growth and development brings about. As far as possible, we will see that the child has a chance to practice the behavior that seems to be of special importance to him at the time whether it is with playthings, getting along with other children, learning to control himself or learning to take care of himself. None of these things can be learned simply by telling him to do them. He must be free to fulfill his own needs and those of the group (and not be destructive of the welfare of the group). He needs much specific praise, and most of all a belief in himself and his value to others.

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## **TIPS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS**

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### The School and the Family

While the child's greatest attachment is to his family, the nursery school as an extension of the family is an important influence on the child's life. In school the child is free to “try his wings” in many ways. He can discover his own wants, know his feelings, and establish his identity. He can learn to compete and cooperate, to fight and to settle fights, to bargain and to compromise. These are techniques or social skills, which prepare the child to deal with his contemporaries on an equal footing.

These skills are learned not inherited. We all have to learn acceptable ways of expressing our feelings—our good and our bad feelings, our active feelings and our quiet feelings. Society generally makes it easy to express good feelings. We laugh, kiss, run, jump, dance and sing. However, expressing our angry feelings is more difficult. We are not permitted to hurt others or ourselves or to destroy property. What does the child do then with his bad

feelings? What do you do with your bad or “unacceptable” feelings? When our children hit, cry, push, grab or kick, it is not always clear what to do. It is important to remember that bad feelings are as real as good feelings and those, too, must be accepted.

Our role as teachers and parents is to help our children find acceptable outlets for bad thoughts and feelings as well as good ones. What are some acceptable outlets? Since we cannot physically or emotionally hurt others or ourselves we must learn to use symbolic means. Some examples of symbolic means are fantasy, such as dress up, puppets, dramatics or stories. Paint, clay, song, and dance also provide ways of expressing our feelings about ourselves and our world on a non-verbal level. We need to learn then which symbolic means are available to us and which ones are most enjoyable to us and to our children. The more means we have of expressing our thoughts and feelings, the more rich and exciting our lives will be. Of course, this is true for adults as well as children. We do not express ourselves only in words. We express ourselves in everything we do in life. By providing a relaxed, fair, cooperative and accepting atmosphere, teachers and parents together help the child to grow, develop, and express himself in creative, appropriate and enjoyable ways.

### **How to keep from getting out on a limb at home and at school!**

- Never offer a child a choice when you cannot grant a choice! Do not say: “Would you like to put your coat on?” when you know he has to, say: “Let’s put your coat on.”
- Never be afraid to admit you are wrong. Admitting your error need not weaken your authority. Too often adults say “yes” or “no” without thinking the issue through thoroughly and then feel they must stick to their word or lose face with the child.
- Never make a definite promise unless you are sure you can keep it.
- In nursery school be scrupulously honest about keeping records of turns for things that are popular. Tell a child he can go and play with something else and that you will call him for his turn and make sure you follow through.
- Never threaten or bribe a child. Promising him something in return for good behavior or threatening punishment for bad behavior clouds the issue involved and helps him learn to bargain for favors.
- Never deny a child something and then give in because he created a scene. Be very sure your denial is necessary before you make it and then stick to it.
- Help the child only when he needs help. Allow him to learn by experience. Encourage him to find out for himself. Let him go ahead on his own as much as possible. Step in only to prevent failure. Giving him alternatives may help him realize other possibilities when he is close to frustration.
- Step into a conflict only when necessary to prevent injury or to make sure desirable learning will result. Children need to learn self-reliance as well as cooperation. If left to themselves, they will often end conflicts and solve difficulties in satisfactory ways of their own. This is a valuable learning, which may be prevented when an adult interferes too hastily. Stay close in case you are needed.

### **Encouragement in the Classroom and at Home:**

We will work to create a caring, inclusive, responsive environment for your child that offers opportunities for large group, small group and individual interactions. The following are some strategies used in the classroom to create an encouraging environment that teaches social skills and cooperation. These strategies can also be used in your home.

- Avoid singling out an individual child publicly for either praise or criticism. Keep your encouragement and guidance private in order not to embarrass them or compare them to others.
- Teach children to recognize and accept how they and others are feeling, and what the names are for those feelings. This can be done using facial expression pictures or storybooks.
- When a child is upset or angry, acknowledge how that child is feeling. (e.g., “I can see that you are angry because your tower was knocked over.”)
- Teach children acceptable, non-hurting ways to express strong emotions. This can be done through techniques such as role-playing or storybooks. Reinforce this teaching with guidance or encouragement when a child is actually experiencing strong emotions.
- Teach children conflict resolution skills, such as taking turns, expressing their points of view and coming up

- with alternative solutions. Once again, this can be done through techniques such as role-playing, puppetry, and storytelling. Reinforce this teaching with guidance or encouragement when a conflict actually occurs.
- Model for the child how to work with others in a group and accept the differences between members of the group.
  - Always affirm for the children how important and special and worthy each of them is as an individual and a member of the class or group.
  - When talking with a child, get yourself in close proximity to the child, get down to their eye level and let them know they have your full attention and make sure you have theirs.
  - Focus on children’s behavior rather than attitudes or personality characteristics. Label by name the behavior of the child that is either positive or negative. Avoid labels such as you’re a “good/bad” child or that they were not nice. In addition, give the child a description of the expected behavior and the reason behind the expectation. (e.g., “Hitting is not okay, it hurts our friends. We need to use friendly, gentle touches.” instead of “You are bad for hitting.”)
  - Avoid using guilt, shame or comparisons. (e.g., “You may not hit Susie with the block.” instead of “You should be ashamed of yourself for hitting Susie, you like her.”)

### **Guiding Children’s Behavior**

Even in an encouraging environment, conflicts are going to occur. It is helpful to think of conflict in terms of *mistaken* behaviors rather than *mis*behaviors. Following are some tips for guiding children’s behavior to help them learn from their mistakes and recognize their successes. Once again, these ideas can also be applied successfully at home.

1. **Let children work it out for themselves.** Often we are tempted to jump in too soon. Give the children a chance to work it out. You can either pretend not to notice anything, or you can subtly let the children see you watching and listening. After the issue is resolved, you may want to give a specific comment to reinforce positive behaviors. (e.g., “I really appreciate how you’ve all waited your turn. Now everyone can have a chance to play.”)
2. **Comment on what you see, without offering solutions.** Often just the “reminder” will prompt children to solve the problem. (e.g., “I see the sandbox toys scattered all over the playground.”)
3. **Reinforce rules in a positive manner when possible.** (e.g., “Ride on the cement.” instead of “Don’t ride on the grass.”; “We keep the sand in the sandbox.” instead of “Don’t dump the sand out of the sandbox.”)
4. **When you need to intervene in a conflict situation, ask questions.** Instead of rushing to judge, let the children express their views about what is happening.
5. **Always go to the victim first.** If a conflict occurs between two children and one is obviously the victim, always tend to the victim first.
6. **Help children brainstorm solutions.** Without offering your own solutions, ask the children, “What could we do to fill in the blank” (e.g., “What could we do to make sure everyone gets a turn with the monkey?”) If the children need more intervention, then you could offer some solutions of your own.
7. **Do not force a child to say, “I’m sorry”.** Often this is forcing them to lie. Children are developing empathy and may not cognitively understand what it means to feel “sorry”. Instead, have the child come up with a way to make the other child feel better by making restitution. (For example, possible solutions could be to help rebuild the tower that was knocked down, or bring your friend a special “lovey” if they are sad.)
8. **Give the child a choice if you intend on leaving it up to them.** (e.g., “You may either wear your hat or your hood.”) AND don’t give them an option if there truly is not an option. For example, if asked “Do you have to go to the bathroom?” Most often the child would say “no”. Instead say, “It’s time to go to the bathroom.” Or give them a different choice that is related to the issue but does not leave an option out of the desired behavior. (e.g., “Would you like to use the big stall or the little stall in the bathroom?”)
9. **Redirect children’s behavior.** Consistently suggest alternatives to unacceptable behavior. (e.g., “You cannot throw stones, but you can throw these beanbags at a target.”)
10. **Give children a warning of what consequence will result from breaking a rule and follow through on the stated consequence if children continue to break the rule.** (e.g., “If you do not walk out to the playground, we will have to come back inside and try again.”; if necessary, followed by, “Remember I said you had to walk out

to the playground or we would have to come back in and try again? Now I need everyone to come back inside so we can practice walking out to the playground again.”)

11. **When directing children’s behavior, use statements rather than questions, and avoid tagging “OK?” on the end of sentences.** (e.g., say “It’s time to come in now.” rather than, “Do you want to come in now?” or “It’s time to come in now, OK?”)

12. **When necessary to prevent harm, use gentle restraint.** (e.g., Hold the child back from hitting another child.)

13. **Use painless removal from the situation as a last resort.**

### **Cooling Down Time**

Children can experience very intense feelings such as anger, sorrow, or excitement. Sometimes these feelings are so strong that children can no longer control their behavior. They may kick, scream, hit or sob uncontrollably in an effort to express their emotions.

When this happens you must be patient, supportive and firm in your efforts to help children regain control. In these situations, teachers usually implement a “cooling down” procedure. Cooling down means just what its name implies: children take a break from the busy classroom to regain their composure privately.

**The “cooling down time” works as follows:**

1. The teacher will take the child to a quiet place in the room, or immediately outside of it. This will be a safe place where the child has few distractions, will be less disturbing to other children, and where classmates have little opportunity to stare at or tease the child. When children are upset privacy helps calm them down. An audience prolongs the difficulty.
2. Once the child is in the quiet area the teacher will say something like “You’re still very upset. When you are calm we can talk about what’s bothering you”.
3. The teacher will remain with the child and if necessary carefully restrain the child from hurting himself/herself for the teacher.
4. Once the child has calmed down, the teacher will discuss the original concern with the child and accompany the child back into the classroom.
5. Later in the day the teacher will make sure to have some positive contact with the child to show that the teacher does not dislike the child because he lost control. Thus the purpose of the cooling down time is to help children regain control, not to punish, shame or blame children in any way.

***“Cooling Down Time” is NOT time out and is the ultimate discipline strategy used.***

### **How Can You Help?**

Parental support of the guidance strategies listed above is the key to creating a caring classroom. You are encouraged to become familiar with the encouragement and guidance strategies. We all make mistakes and it can be difficult to use the strategies at first, but with practice they will become second nature. The children will really benefit from consistency in the classroom and at home. You are also encouraged to work with the teacher as a partner in guiding your child. Through communication of ideas and feedback, we can work together to guide your child’s social development.

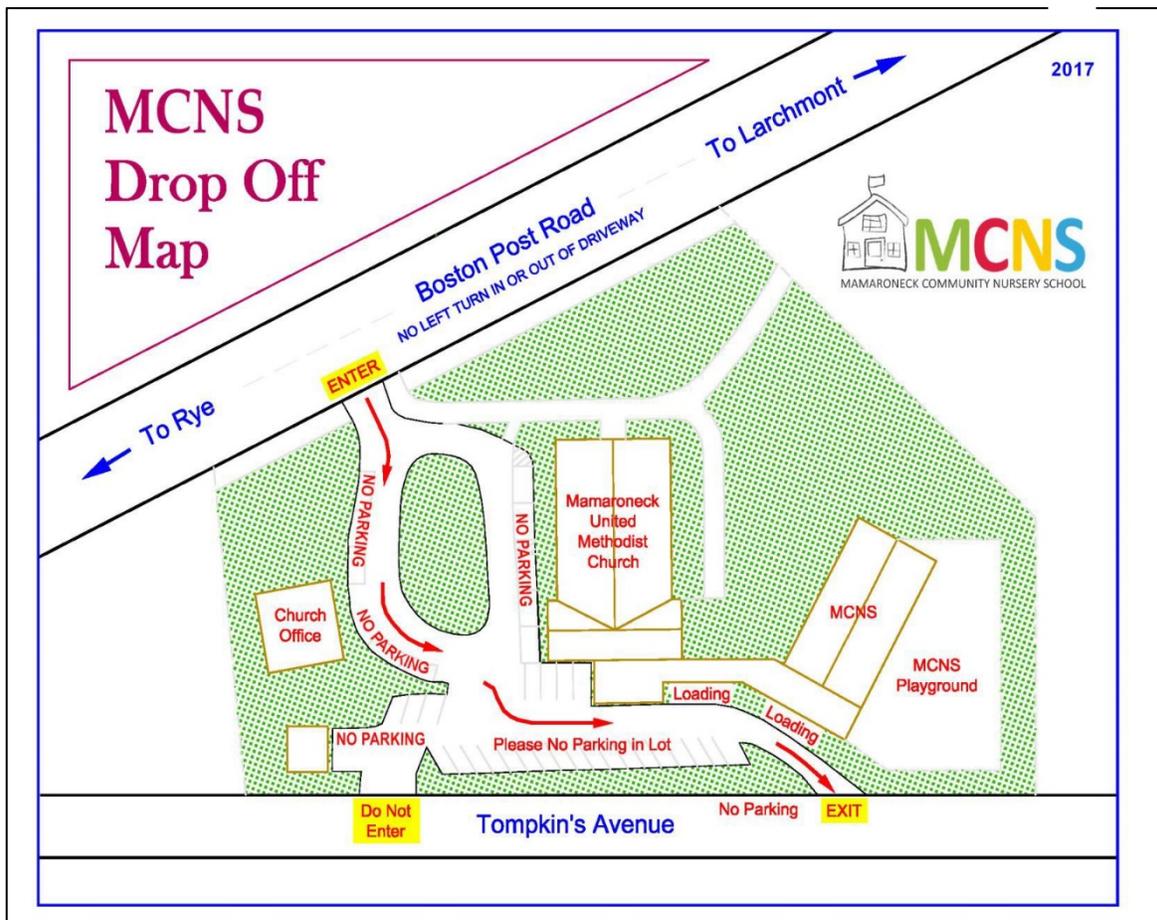


## MCNS Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures



1. Enter the line from Boston Post Road NOT from Tompkins Avenue as we have only one entrance and exit for the line.
2. Do not take a left into the parking lot if you are heading North on Boston Post Road. \*See alternate route below.
3. Stay in your car and pull up to the end of the driveway (as far as you can go) if you are in front.
4. Wait in your car until someone comes to take your child out of the car or put them in.
5. Do not park or idle your car in the pick-up line more than a few minutes before drop off/pick up.
6. When lined up on Boston Post Road, please do not block Beach Avenue, or the Briggs Antiques parking lot.

**Please inform all drivers of your child/children of these procedures so we can make the drop off & pick up time go as safely and quickly as possible.**



# MCNS School Calendar 2022-2023



\*Calendar is subject to change

## September Beginning of School

7<sup>th</sup> Back to School Night (new families 6:15 & returning  
8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Meet and Greets (more info. to come in Aug. letter  
12<sup>th</sup> Preschoolers, Butterflies & Ladybugs- Regular class  
Bumble Bees & Fireflies- 1 Hour visits  
19<sup>th</sup> Bumble Bees & Fireflies- Regular class schedule starts

## September

26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> No School- Rosh Hashanah

## October

5<sup>th</sup> No School- Yom Kippur  
10<sup>th</sup> No School- Columbus Day & Indigenous Peoples Day

## November

8<sup>th</sup> No School- Staff Development Day  
11<sup>th</sup> No School- Veteran's Day  
23<sup>rd</sup> No PM Session-Thanksgiving Break  
24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> No School- Thanksgiving Break

## December

5<sup>th</sup> Parent Teacher Conferences-*No School for Children*  
7<sup>th</sup> Registration starts for 2023-2024 School Year  
21<sup>st</sup> No AM Session- Staff Training  
22<sup>nd</sup> – Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> No School- Holiday Recess

## January

3<sup>rd</sup> School re-opens  
16<sup>th</sup> No School- Martin Luther King Jr. Day

## February

20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> No School- Winter Recess

## March

24<sup>th</sup> No School-Staff Development Day

## April

3<sup>rd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> No School- Spring Recess  
11<sup>th</sup> School re-opens

## May

10<sup>th</sup> Parent Teacher Conferences-*No School for Children*  
26<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> No School- Memorial Day

## June

8<sup>th</sup> Last Day of School: No school Friday 6/9

Please Note: We have 3 Inclement Weather/Snow Days built into the calendar. If we go over the 3 days they will be made up in the following order- 5/30, 4/10, 5/26