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Parent Handbook

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# Educational Philosophy

**At Community Preschool, we consider play the most critical component of preschool. While all children have unique learning styles, the desire to play is universal. Play is the vehicle by which children incorporate and build upon new ideas, and extend their learning. Play helps children feel safe to explore, wonder, and create. Play demonstrates the questions and interests of children that teachers can use to guide instruction. Research has shown that meaningful play in early childhood that is observed and extended by teachers is one of the most productive and useful ways for children to learn.**

**At Community Preschool children have extended, open-ended time to play throughout each school day in activity areas that include: dramatic play, science discovery, art, music, drama, literacy, and movement. Teachers use their experience of child development and classroom observation to embed skills-based activities using the Department of Education Standards for Preschool. Children at Community Preschool play at open-ended choice time, dictate and perform stories, explore the natural and urban environment, and connect to the community of their class. Teachers value the process of play and exploration and believe that open-ended play is a beginning step in the process of becoming a critical thinker.**

# Social and Emotional Growth

**Children who feel like they are part of a group are more likely to become confident learners. Community Preschool understands that all children do not develop social skills at the same rate, and that preschool is a time for learning to grow, express, and regulate emotions. For these reasons, a socially and emotionally responsive curriculum is a foundational part of our teaching.**

**Because preschool is many students’ first group learning experience, initially children learn to understand and articulate their own needs and emotions. Group experiences allow children to see that individual people have different experiences. Students learn to express challenging emotions, listen respectfully, and work as a group to solve problems and evaluate solutions. Through this practice, students become more able to recognize different experiences and feelings of their classmates. Group problem-solving, puppets, charts, role play and free play are some of the ways teachers at Community Preschool help children to become confident members of a learning group. When children learn to work together, respect each other’s differences and similarities, they come to better understand who they are as peers and learners.**

# Emergent and Experiential Curriculum

**At Community Preschool we value all learning styles. During the school day, children explore art, writing, science, and movement with a focus on open-ended exploration and layering learning as students’ ideas and understanding build.**

**We believe that students should be connected to their community – the community of our classroom, our families, and the urban environment of Somerville – and teachers plan curriculum that builds these connections.**

**Teachers also use the interests of children to create emergent curriculum. Children inspired to learn when their passions and interests are at the heart of their curriculum. Teachers combine a variety of curricular styles: emergent curriculum, The Project Approach, and Reggio Emila.**

**Students also learn through doing – whether we are dancing, painting, walking near our school, building, writing, or making use of the many community resources in Somerville Union Square -- we believe that children learn through having real experiences.**

# Statement of Purpose

**Preschool is a time of enormous growth and learning for children. During this time, children develop their personalities, their basic understanding of the world around them, their perceptions of themselves and their understanding of how others perceive them. Preschool is a time when children can learn to be part of a group, care about others, and show kindness and compassion.**

**At Community Preschool, we facilitate and support children’s growth in all areas:**

* **Social and Emotional Development: knowing oneself as a learner; understanding how to be part of the classroom community; building friendships; building trusting relationships with adults; and, exploring social dynamics – cooperation, expression of feelings, regulation of emotionality, problem solving, and empathy.**
* **Cognitive Development: growing basic mathematical and scientific inquiry and understanding, building skills of classification, sorting, pattern making, logic and prediction.**
* **Language and Literacy: developing a love of literature, story telling and writing, becoming a confident speaker, listening and expressing ideas and comprehension, thinking of oneself as a reader and a writer.**
* **Physical Development: encouraging large and small motor development through outside and inside activities, a variety of materials, and games; and growing spatial relationships and an understanding of personal space.**

**Community Preschool understands that in order to best support children in learning, they must have exposure to new materials and/or ideas, ample time and activities to practice and develop a sense of mastery and competence.**

**Community Preschool supports and stretches the development of children through open-ended, exploration, an emphasis on process (not product), a safe, caring and responsive classroom with an atmosphere of mutual respect for our similarities and differences, and the opportunity to learn through doing.**

# Code of Ethical Conduct

**Community Preschool uses the guidance of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct for those who work with young children. The following is a brief discussion of NAEYC positions on ethics and practice. (All information derived from naeyc.org.)**

## Values

* **We recognize that early childhood is a unique and valuable time of development.**
* **We base our teaching on knowledge of how children develop.**
* **We appreciate and support the bonds between children and their families.**
* **We recognize that children are taught best when their family, culture, community and society are the context for their learning.**
* **We respect the dignity and uniqueness of each child, family and teacher.**
* **We respect diversity in families, children, and colleagues.**
* **We recognize that children and adults work best in relationships based on trust and respect.**

**At Community Preschool, our teaching reflects a developmentally appropriate practice, recognizing that all the areas of development and learning (physical, social and emotional, and cognitive) are important and interrelated.**

# Administrative Structure

**The managers of Community Preschool are responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. They create and enforce school policies, implement programs, and uphold the standards mandated by the Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC).**

**The managers are certified by the DEEC: Jennifer Guptill (as Director and Lead Teacher), Zoe Stark (as Teacher).**

# Tuition

**Tuition for Community Preschool is $12,600 per year, which can be paid in two installments: $6,300 by or before July 15, and $6,300 by or before December 15 or monthly by arrangement. Tuition will be pro-rated for families who start mid-term. Tuition is nonrefundable and families who enroll are responsible for the entire term of tuition regardless of payment schedule.**

**Failure to Pay: Families will be sent a tuition reminder letter within a week of the bill due date if they fail to pay tuition on time, or fail to make a plan together with Community Preschool managers for payment. If a family does not pay tuition or make a plan for payment within 15 days of the bill due date, the child may not return to school until tuition is paid or a plan for tuition payment is made.**

# Financial Aid & Vouchers

**Please contact the managers if you have financial needs.**

# Fees for Late Pickup of Children

**Children must be picked up from school no later than 2:30pm. For many children it is upsetting to be picked up late, and Community Preschool teaching staff schedules require timely dismissal. Families who are late to pickup will be charged a late pickup fee of $10 for the first ten late minutes, plus $1 thereafter for every late minute. Late pickup fees must be paid at the time of pickup. If a parent or guardian is more than 15 minutes late to pickup without communicating with Community Preschool, that child’s emergency contact will be called to pick him or her up.**

# Admissions and Enrollment

**Community Preschool is an urban school community in Somerville, where the different perspectives, experiences, and dignity of each child, teacher, and family are respected. We welcome all applicants who are the appropriate age. Prior to enrollment, all children must visit the school with a parent or guardian.**

**Applications for admission are accepted on a rolling basis until a class is full. Community Preschool classes have no more than twenty students with two full-time teachers and one part time teacher.**

**Community Preschool understands that children grow and develop at their own pace and we believe that all children deserve a warm, nurturing preschool experience. Community Preschool does not discriminate in admissions, educational opportunities, programs, activities, or facilities on the basis of race, color, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious beliefs, national origin, ancestry, or genetics.**

# Media-Free Policy

**Children often imitate what they see on television, in apps, youtube, and in movies. This impacts children’s play at school, their behavior, and their ability to use their imaginations. Because of this, Community Preschool is a media-free environment. This means that no media-related merchandise is allowed in the classroom. For example, no lunch boxes with TV or movie characters, no clothing, toys, or books (with the exception of underwear and/or diapers) are permitted. If a child comes to school with media-related merchandise or clothing, the student’s caregiver will be asked to remove it from school.**

# School Hours and Children Served

**Enrollment is for preschool children aged 2 years 9 months old through 5 years old, or as defined by the DEEC.**

**There are a maximum of twenty children in each Community Preschool classroom, with no fewer than two full-time teachers for each class.**

**Community Preschool is open during the school year, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM. Our school year calendar is as follows (dates are approximate and subject to change):**

**Calendar 2017-2018 School Year**

**September**

**September 5 First Day of School**

**October**

**October 9 School closed for Indigenous People’s Day**

**November**

**November 10 School closed for Veteran’s Day**

**November 22-24 School closed for Thanksgiving**

**December**

**December 8 School closed for First Parent Conferences; childcare available during your child’s conference slot**

**December 25- School closed for Winter Break, return January 2**

**January 1**

**January**

**January 1 School closed for Winter Break**

**January 15 School closed for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

**February**

**February 19-23 School closed for February Break**

**April**

**April 16-20 School closed for April Break**

**April 27 School closed for Second Parent Conferences; childcare available during your child’s conference slot**

**May**

**May 28 School closed for Memorial Day**

**June**

**June 15 Last Day of School: community celebration, brown bag lunch, and dismissal at 1pm for all students.**

**When Somerville Public Schools close for weather or other emergency, Community Preschool is also closed.**

# Schedule: Arrival and Departure

**Families are responsible for transporting their students to and from school. Community Preschool does not provide transportation to school for students.**

**School is open at 8:00am and children may arrive between 8:00-9:00am. Community Preschool has a staggered drop-off time to accommodate families with different schedules. However, children arrive at school no later than 9 am, and parents and caregivers must say goodbye to their children and depart the classroom no later than 9:15am. Our school day schedule is as follows:**

**8-8:30 Morning welcome, reading, sensory experiences, table top choices, snack table for children who bring in their breakfast**

**8:30 Dramatic play and blocks open for free play**

**8:30-9:30 Morning Choice time**

**9:30-10:00 Morning Meeting**

**10:00 Hand-washing & Snack**

**10:15 Snack, Teeth brushing**

**10:45 Bathroom check, Reading, Walk to the park**

**11:00-12:00 Outside time/Community Time**

**12:15 Lunch, Bathroom check**

**1:00-1:30 Quiet Time**

**1:30-2:30 Final Circle or Small Groups**

**2:30 Pickup**

# Attendance

**Teachers take attendance in the classroom. Teachers excuse children to their caregivers at the end of the day.**

**If parents plan a different pickup person for their child, they will give the teachers any changes in writing at the start of the school day. A new pickup person will need to show a valid photo ID for the first pickup. If there is not written communication from a parent about a different adult to pick up a child, that child will not be released.**

**If a child will be absent from school, parents will inform teachers by email or by telephone call. If a child will be absent from school due to a communicable illness, parents will inform teachers so that teachers can follow the school’s health policy for reporting certain communicable illnesses.**

**On daily trips to the park, teachers carry a backpack with: first aid kit, any medications for a student’s ongoing medical condition, any emergency medication (such as Epi-pens or inhalers), emergency cards, and the attendance sheet. On field trips, children will wear a tag somewhere on their person with the school’s name and the school’s phone number. Teachers will have a cell phone for emergency communication.**

**Transportation for field trips is either public transportation, or a bus chartered by Community Preschool.**

# Communication With Teachers

**Communication with families is of utmost importance to Community Preschool. At the start of the school day, teachers will do their best to be available for brief communication, but their focus is on the morning transition with children, which does not lend itself well to in-depth conversations with adults. If you need to touch base quickly with teachers about a matter involving your child, find a teacher in the morning. If you need to have a longer conversation with teachers, please email and we will find a time to talk. Community Preschool also provides a school newsletter monthly via a private family blog.**

**We know that parents may have questions or concerns about their child’s school day. We value children’s families and seek to establish relationships of mutual respect, cooperation, and trust with parents. All communication between parents and teachers will be respectful in tone and content.**

# Family Involvement

## Communication

**Because Community Preschool understands that parents are children’s first teachers, we place great value on communicating with families. We encourage ongoing communication with parents through: (1) brief conversations at drop-off and pickup; (2) email and telephone calls after school hours; (3) monthly newsletters; (4) parent conferences; and (5) the posting of daily activities outside the classroom. We seek to work in partnership with children’s families and to encourage their connection to their school.**

## Input

**Parents ask questions and make suggestions at individual conferences and throughout the school year. Parents are permitted to visit the program at any time, and are encouraged to plan a time to visit the classroom in order to read a book, share family culture or a skill with the class. Parents are provided with a survey about their school experience at the close of each school year.**

## Meeting

**Prior to admission, parents may meet with a manager at an open house to learn about the program. Parents visit the program again during their child’s pre-enrollment visit (after an application is submitted). After enrollment, parents are given a family handbook. Parents communicate their family’s interests and their child’s development, interests, and needs through the child’s records (including the developmental history and face sheet forms). In order to facilitate transitions and coordinate services, Community Preschool requests that parents share with teachers information about a child’s other therapeutic, educational, social and support services.**

## Families Whose Primary Language is Not English

**Community Preschool seeks to communicate well with all families and works with families to find interpreters who can aid communication when a family’s primary language is not English. Community Preschool makes every effort to ensure forms will be translated into a family’s home language. Community Preschool will work with local agencies that provide translation services to facilitate every family’s communication to school.**

# Clothing, Extra Clothing, and Sunscreen

## What to Wear to School

**Children should be sent to school in comfortable clothing that can get dirty. We use paint and other messy materials, and while smocks are available, we do not require children to wear them. Every day, children should have weather-appropriate clothing (coat or raincoat, rain or snow pants, boots, mittens, hats, shorts, or sunhats) for play outside. When weather permits, we go outside every day.**

**Children must wear shoes inside the classroom, so on a day where boots are worn to school, children must also have shoes to wear while playing inside. Flip-flops and crocs are not allowed because children cannot run and climb safely with that footwear. Slippers are permitted indoors if they are secure and non-slip.**

## What Extra Clothing to Bring to School

**Parents should provide two complete changes of clothing, appropriate to the season, in each child’s bathroom cubby. If your child is prone to accidents or extreme water play, please provide several extra pairs of underwear and pants/shorts.**

**Children’s clothing should be clearly labeled with their names. Children who use diapers should have extra diapers and wipes at school, with the child’s name or initials on each separate diaper. Extra diapers are left in the child’s bathroom cubby.**

## Sunscreen

**In sunny weather, please apply sunscreen to your child and bring in a labeled bottle of sunscreen, so that teachers can apply a quick touchup. Please note per state regulations, that parents/guardians must sign a form to permit Teachers to apply sunscreen.**

# Food/Snacks

**Parents pack a lunch and a snack for their child every day. Community Preschool is a nut free school for the safety of all children.**

**Children should have a small snack and a lunch with a container of water every day. Families are encouraged to provide healthy foods and should not provide dessert in their child’s school food. If a family forgets and provides a dessert treat, it will be placed in the child’s cubby for after school.**

# Toileting/Diapering

**Children have ample opportunity to use the bathroom at Community Preschool and teachers will provide support as children grow this important self-help skill outside of their homes.**

**Children in diapers are permitted to enroll at Community Preschool. All diapers and wipes are to be provided by the child’s family and are to be labeled and placed in the child’s bathroom cubby. Teachers check for wet or soiled diapers at least every 2 hours and at regularly scheduled bathroom times. Diapers are changed immediately when wet or soiled.**

**When child’s diaper or underwear needs changing, a teacher accompanies her/him to the bathroom. The teacher wears disposable gloves. If a child cannot stand up to be changed, a mat is placed on the floor and covered by a disposable sheet. The child’s diaper is removed and bagged in the covered garbage can. The child is wiped as appropriate with a disposable wipe and a new diaper is put on. The changing mat is cleaned and sanitized between each child’s diaper changes. Both the teacher and child wash hands according to our hand washing policy. Children are never punished or ridiculed for soiling their diaper or for refusing to use the toilet.**

# Parent Visits and Teacher Conferences

**State regulations provide that parents may visit Community Preschool, unannounced, at any time. If you would like to share a skill, read a book, or help with a school project, please talk to teachers to arrange a time in advance.**

**Parent and teacher conferences are held twice each school year. Conferences are a time to exchange information and discuss your child’s development, adjustment to school, and next goals. Community Preschool uses progress reports to maintain ongoing communication with families, to observe and document a child’s progress, and to facilitate children’s transition to their next schools, where applicable. When there are special challenges or significant developments for any child, these will be brought to parents’ attention as they arise.**

# School Closings

**If public schools in the city of Somerville are closed or delayed, Community Preschool is closed. Local radio, TV stations and the Somerville Public School website post school closings beginning as early as 6:00 a.m. (sometimes even the night before).**

# Emergency Policies

## Illness, Accident or Injury at School

**If your child becomes ill at school, you (or your emergency contact if you are not available) will be called and asked to pick him or her up within 45 minutes. If the illness seems serious, we will also call your pediatrician and follow his or her instructions.**

**In the case of a minor accident at school, simple first aid is administered and a child’s parents are notified by a phone call or at dismissal. If an accident is more severe, parents are telephoned immediately and we will follow directions from you and/or your pediatrician. If you cannot be reached right away, we will call your emergency contact person and will arrange to take your child to a doctor. If the accident is more severe or life threatening, we will call 911 and request transportation to the hospital. One of the teachers will accompany the child to the hospital and meet you there.**

**In all cases of any injury at school, a teacher will fill out an accident form and you will receive a copy. Teachers are trained in first aid and CPR, and a pediatric nurse consultant is available to staff for consultation.**

## Emergency and Fire Drills

**Following the protocols of the DEEC, Community Preschool performs monthly emergency fire/evacuation drills. Teachers work with students to learn a routine so that they feel safe during fire drills. Teachers have an emergency backpack in each classroom that contains: a class list, an emergency contact sheet, medical cards for each student, a first aid kit, and medication for any life-threatening conditions, such as allergies, asthma, or others, and an authorization for medication for those children. Emergency backpacks and daily attendance sheets are taken for every emergency and fire drill.**

## Evacuation Procedure for Staff (posted at each exit)

1. **All children are moved to the closest accessible exit and line up before the stairs. A head count is taken. The emergency backpack is taken. The class attendance sheet for the day is taken. While one teacher begins to lead the children downstairs, the second teacher checks and closes each classroom, bathroom, and office door.**
2. **The children and teachers walk up Bow Street, left onto Summer Street, and enter the park at Nunziato Field. Attendance is taken.**
3. **One teacher supervises children while the other teacher telephones any emergency services, and begins to call families to pick up children.**

**If weather prevents us from safely waiting at Nunziato Field, we will walk to St. Joseph’s Parish at 264 Washington Street, Somerville.**

## Contingency Plans for Fire, Natural Disaster, or Loss of Water, Heat, or Power

**If a fire, natural disaster, or other emergency situation requires evacuation of our school building, we evacuate the same way that we practice during fire drills and we will walk to Nunziato Field, Summer Street, where we will call families and arrange for families to pick up their children. If weather prevents us from safely waiting at Nunziato Field, we will walk to St. Joseph’s Parish at 264 Washington Street, Somerville.**

# Smoking/Drugs/Alcohol/Firearms

**Smoking and/or consumption of illegal drugs or alcohol are not allowed in the school or on school grounds during any time. Firearms or weapons are prohibited in or around the school during any time.**

**No adult may enter school premises while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol. If any caregiver arrives at school to pick up a child while appearing to be impaired by the influence of drugs or alcohol, that child’s emergency contact adult will be called to provide an alternative way home.**

# Plan for Transition of a Child Between Classrooms and Programs

## Sharing of Information Between Classroom Teachers at Community Preschool

**Community Preschool teaching staff work as a team and, keeping confidentiality in mind, information about individual children is shared between teachers in two different classrooms when necessary in order facilitate the most effective teaching and nurturing for all children at the school.**

## Sharing of Information With Another Program

**Community Preschool will only share information about an individual child with a different program if a child’s parents give their written consent to that communication.**

## Assisting a Child With Transition

**Children visit Community Preschool on a Visiting Day prior to enrollment in order to first see the school space and have an opportunity to meet their teachers.**

**Children are assisted with a transition to another classroom or program in a manner consistent with a child’s ability to understand the change. Together with parents, teachers will plan when to speak with an individual child about a transition, and when to speak with a whole class about a transition. Community Preschool recognizes that saying “goodbye” is an important and meaningful part of children’s school experience and teachers guide children through these processes.**

# Positive Guidance/Plan to Avoid Suspension and Termination

**Community Preschool supports the growth of preschool children in all areas of their development. We believe that all children can be successful within a classroom: respecting their bodies and the bodies of others; listening while others talk and taking a turn; taking care of materials; and managing feelings. Community Preschool helps children find ways to express their positive and difficult feelings, and provides a specific place in the classroom where children can choose to go to calm down. Community Preschool does not give time outs. Additionally, Community Preschool works with children to develop the rules for community safety, so that they feel ownership and investment in the rules of their school.**

**Teachers have regular, ongoing communication with each family about positive guidance and discipline of children. Use of discipline and guidance is consistent and based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of each child. If it is necessary for a child to have a specific behavior management plan, teachers will continue to communicate with that child’s family. Additionally:**

* **Corporal punishment, including spanking, will not be used.**
* **No child will be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse.**
* **No child will be denied food as a form of punishment.**
* **No child will be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.**
* **No child will be forced to eat.**

**When a child needs guidance, first the teaching team works directly with the child so that he or she knows what the expected behavior is. If the behavior continues and raises concern for teachers, the teacher and the Director may further assess and document the behavior using the Incident Action Plan (606 CMR 7.11(5)(f)).**

**The teaching team then conferences with the parents about the behavior and makes a plan for working together. If more support is needed for that child, Community Preschool will work together with specialized resources within the school setting, where possible.**

**If further support is still needed, Community Preschool will begin its referral or termination procedures.**

# Referral Services

**If a teacher becomes concerned about a child’s behavior or general development, she will observe the child at different times of the day and record her observations. Documentation could include the Incident Action Plan (606 CMR 7.11(5)(f)), if applicable. Documentation will then be placed in the child’s file. These observations will then be shared with the other teacher and/or Director, one of whom will also observe the child, recording her own observations. If the concern proves to be warranted, a meeting will be set up with the parent(s) to discuss the observations. The Director and managers will determine whether a referral might be useful or if termination of enrollment is necessary.**

**If Community Preschool determines a referral is necessary to continue working with the child, the parent(s) will be given a copy of the school’s observations and the names of appropriate referral agencies. Referrals can only be made with written permission from a parent. Parental permission is also required to follow-up on the referral. Parental permission forms for referrals, along with copies of the observations will be placed in the child’s file. Referrals are maintained in writing, including parent conferences and results. Community Preschool is a member of Somerville Community Partnerships for Children, which is one resource in helping to obtain any outside expertise that may be needed.**

# Termination

**From time to time, a child’s needs may make Community Preschool the wrong school environment. Community Preschool reserves the right to terminate or not to renew a student’s enrollment contract at any time if the school concludes that it is not the correct fit for the child’s needs, or the actions of the student’s parent/guardian make a positive and constructive working relationship impossible or otherwise seriously interfere with Community Preschool’s accomplishment of its educational purposes.**

**Because Community Preschool is dedicated to partnership with families, if it is decided that the school is not the right setting for any student, the managers and teachers will work together with the child’s family to try to locate a more appropriate school environment. When possible, parents will be given a two-week notice of the school’s intention to terminate a student’s enrollment. When the school decides to terminate an enrollment contract, any tuition already paid by the student’s family will be refunded for the pro-rated remaining days of the school year.**

# Health

## Hand washing, Hygiene, and Control of Infection

**Community Preschool follows the Massachusetts guidelines for hygiene and control of infection:**

**Hand washing with soap and warm water:**

1. **Before entering the classroom, before and after eating;**
2. **After going to the bathroom or assisting in toileting or diapering;**
3. **After contact with any bodily fluid**
4. **After cleaning areas contaminated with any bodily fluids;**
5. **After handling pets or their equipment;**
6. **Before and after water play; and**
7. **Before and after administration of medication.**

## Health Forms Needed to Attend School

**Immunization Record: a physician's certificate that each child has been successfully immunized in accordance with the Department of Public Health's recommended schedule. (No child shall be required, under 102 CMR 7.00 to have any such immunization if his parent(s) object, in writing, on the grounds that if conflicts with their religious beliefs or if the child's physician submits documentation that such a procedure is contradicted. This will be maintained in the child’s file.) No child will be admitted into the program without the required documentation for immunizations.**

**The program will maintain a list of the children who have documented exemptions from immunizations and these children will be excluded from attending when a vaccine preventable disease is introduced into the program. The Massachusetts Immunization Program provides free childhood vaccines. The toll free telephone number is 1-888 658-2850.**

**Lead Screening: a physician’s certificate that each child has been screened for lead.**

**Annual physical: a written statement from your child’s physician that the child has had a complete physical examination within one year prior to admission to school.**

## Illness/Sickness Policy

**Children should attend school when healthy, and stay home when they are ill.**

**Fever: If a child has a fever, he or she must stay home until the child has been fever free (without fever-reducing medication) for twenty-four (24) hours. For example, if your child goes home with a fever at 11am on Monday, that child cannot return to school until Wednesday at the earliest (assuming he/she is fever free throughout that duration). This policy helps all children to stay healthy.**

**Colds: A child well enough to come to school with a cold will be expected to participate with the other children in the usual outside and inside activities.**

**Diarrhea: A child should not be at school if they have had two cases of diarrhea in one day and should not return to school until 24 hours after the diarrhea has stopped.**

**Vomiting: A child who has vomited must stay home until vomiting has stopped for 24 hours and the child has begun to eat again.**

**A child’s parent/caregiver will be called to pick up a child from school if the teachers feel that the child is not well enough to engage in school activities, including one or more of the following:**

* + - **The child vomits or has diarrhea.**
		- **The child complains that she/he is not feeling well, or is in pain.**
		- **The child has any of the following conditions: fever, unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, mouth sores, rash with a fever or behavior change, or other signs of serious illness.**

## Care of Mildly Ill Children

**Children who are mildly ill may remain in school if they are not contagious and they can participate in the daily program including outside time.**

**If a child’s condition worsens, or it is determined that he or she is contagious, or the teachers cannot care for the child, the parent will be asked to pick up the child. While the child is waiting for a parent or guardian to arrive, a teacher will care for him or her in a quiet area of the school.**

**Any toys, blankets or mats used by an ill child will be cleaned and disinfected before being used by other children.**

## Plan for Meeting Individual Children’s Specific Health Needs

**During intake, parents will be asked to record any known allergies on the enrollment face sheet. All allergies or important medical information will be posted in each classroom. The medical information list will be updated as necessary – as new children enroll or new medical needs become known.**

**All staff will be informed by the managers of children’s specific medical needs so that children can be protected from exposure to allergens. The names of children with life-threatening allergies will be posted in a conspicuous location with specific instructions for administering medication and calling emergency response. Staff will attend appropriate training to handle emergency allergic reactions.**

## Contagious Diseases

**A child who is suspected of having a contagious illness will be sent home from school and allowed to return to school with a doctor’s note, when the illness is no longer contagious and/or when the child has been on appropriate medication for at least 24 hours.**

**Contagious diseases include, but are not limited to:**

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* **￼strep infection, until 24 hours after treatment and the child has been without fever for 24 hours;**
* **mouth sores, unless the physician states that the child is non-infectious;**
* **rash with a fever or behavior change until the physician has determined that the illness is not a communicable disease;**
* **purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conductive with white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids) until examined by a physician and approved for re-admission, with or without treatment;**
* **tuberculosis, until the child in non-infectious;**
* **impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has started or all the sores are covered;**
* **head lice, free of all nits or scabies and free of all mites;**
* **hepatitis;**
* **conjunctivitis;**
* **pin worm;**
* **chicken pox, until last blister has healed over.**

### Doctors’ Notes:

**A child who has had one of the prior contagious diseases, must inform teachers within 24 hours, and may only return to school with a note from his/her pediatrician stating that the child is no longer contagious.**

**Community Preschool follows state guidelines for informing families when there is a contagious illness in the class. For this reason, it is important to inform teachers when your child is ill with a contagious disease. Community Preschool will inform families in writing when a communicable disease has been in the class.**

# Administration of Medication

# All Medications

**The parent or guardian must administer the first dosage of any medication at home, in case of an allergic reaction.**

**All medications must be given to the teacher directly by the parent or guardian.**

**All medications will be stored out of the reach of children (in an upper cabinet or on the refrigerator door shelf if refrigeration is necessary). All medications that are considered controlled substances will be locked and kept out of reach of children.**

**Community Preschool will maintain a written record of the administration of any medication (excluding topical ointments and sprays applied to normal skin), which will include the child's name, the time and date of each administration, the dosage, and the name of the staff person administering the medication. This completed record will become part of the child's file.**

**All unused medication will be returned to the parent/guardian.**

## Prescription Medication

**Prescription medication must be brought to school in its original container and include the child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage, the number of times per and the number of days the medication is to be administered. This prescription label will be accepted as the written authorization of the physician.**

**Community Preschool will not administer any medication contrary to the directions on the label unless so authorized by written order of the child's physician.**

**A child’s parent or guardian must fill out the Authorization For Medication Form before the medication can be administered.**

## Non-prescription Medication

**Non-prescription medication will be given only with written consent of the child's physician. Community Preschool will accept a signed statement from the physician listing the medication(s), the dosage and criteria for its administration. This statement will be valid for one year from the date that it was signed.**

**Along with the written consent of the physician, Community Preschool will also need written parental authorization. The parent or guardian must fill out the Authorization for Medication form, which allows Community Preschool to administer the non-prescription medication in accordance with the written order of the physician. The statement will be valid for one year from the date it was signed.**

**Community Preschool will attempt to contact a child’s parent or guardian prior to the child receiving the non-prescription medication (unless the child needs medication urgently or when contacting the parent will delay appropriate care).**

## Topical Ointments and Sprays

**Topical ointments and sprays such as petroleum jelly, sunscreen, and bug spray, will be administered to a child with written parental permission. The signed statement from the parent will be valid for one year.￼￼￼￼￼￼￼￼￼￼￼￼￼￼￼**

**When topical ointments and sprays are applied to wounds, rashes, or broken skin, Community Preschool will follow its written procedure for non-prescription medication which includes the written order of the physician, which is valid for a year, and the Authorization for Medication form signed by the parent.**

# Children’s Records

**Only teachers and parents will have access to their individual child’s files. Other educational professionals may have access to a child’s file with written permission from that child’s parent.**

**Community Preschool maintains complete and accurate files for each child. A child’s record will contain:**

1. **a face sheet which identifies the child, including:**

**(a) the name, date of admission, date of birth, age at admission, and primary language of the child and parents;**

**(b) the parents’ names, addresses, and telephone numbers;**

**(c) the parents’ business addresses and telephones;**

**(d) the name, address, telephone number of the child’s emergency contact person when a parent is unavailable;**

**(e) a current photograph of the child;**

**(f) the name, address, and telephone number of the child’s physician;**

**(g) information on allergies, special diets, chronic health conditions and/or any special limitations or concerns, including medications the child is taking at home or school and possible side effects of those medications;**

**(h) the child’s anticipated days and times of attendance; and**

**(i) if applicable, the name of the school the child attends**

1. **copies of custody agreements, court orders, and restraining orders pertaining to the child if provided by the parent;**
2. **consent for the child’s transportation plan;**
3. **permission to transport a child to a medical facility and consent for the child to receive emergency medical treatment;**
4. **permission to administer basic first aid and CPR;**
5. **a list of any persons authorized in writing by the parent to take the child from the program or to receive the child at the end of the day;**
6. **written parental consent for a child to participate in off-site activities;**
7. **written parental consent for observation of a child by anyone other than program staff;**
8. **written consent for the use of nonprescription medication;**
9. **medical records, including:**
	1. **certification of immunization;**
	2. **statement of complete physical examination within one year prior to admission;**
	3. **screening for lead poisoning**
10. **personal information about the child’s:**
	1. **daily schedule, developmental history, sleeping and play habits, favorite toys, accustomed mode of reassurance and comfort;**
	2. **toilet training;**
	3. **eating schedule and preferences**
11. **documentation that parents have been notified regarding their right to visit the program unannounced at any time per 606 CMR 7.08(6);**
12. **ongoing medication records as examinations and immunizations are updated through the school year;**
13. **record of any medications administered to the child at school;**
14. **documentation of parent notification of emergency treatment;**
15. **an individual health plan (if applicable);**
16. **a record of referrals made;**
17. **documentation of parental authorizations;**
18. **copies of injury and incident reports;**
19. **copies of periodic progress reports;**
20. **individual program plans for any child with a disability;**
21. **pertinent correspondence concerning the child.**

# Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

**All Community Preschool staff members are mandated reporters according to Massachusetts General Law c.119, Section 51A. This means that if a staff member has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child he/she must file a report with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).**

**If a staff member suspects abuse or neglect, she or he must document her observations including the child's name, date, time, child's injuries, child's behavior, and any other pertinent information. The staff member will discuss this information with the managers. The managers or the staff member together with the Director will make a verbal report to DEEC and DCFS, to be followed by a DCFS written report (51A) within 48 hours.**

**DCFS’ Telephone number is 800-792-5200.**

**DEEC’s Telephone number is 617-472-2881.**

**If a staff member feels that an incident should be reported to DCFS, and the managers disagree, the staff member may report to DCFS directly.**

**The managers will communicate suspected abuse and neglect that is reported to DCFS to the parents of a child, unless such a report is contra-indicated.**

# Holidays and Birthdays

**At Community Preschool we know that there are different special holidays for each child and each family. Because we value the many differences between families, we do not celebrate holidays as part of the classroom curriculum. (This includes Eid, Halloween, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukah, Easter, Mother’s Day, Valentine’s Day and other holidays).**

**We celebrate children’s birthdays at school with a special song and a special hat (if the birthday child would like a song or a hat). We do not celebrate birthdays with food and we do not permit families to provide candy or other treats on their child’s birthday. If you would like to contribute a book to the Community Preschool library in honor of your child’s birthday, we would be delighted and are happy to guide you towards books we particularly need.**

**A Special Note About Outside-of-school Birthday/Holiday Parties**

**At the heart of Community Preschool is the idea that no one is left out -- all children in our classroom are welcome and an important part of our community. It is therefore particularly important that outside-of-school celebrations and invitations are left outside of school. No invitations or cards for outside-of-school parties are permitted in the school cubby room, even if the whole class is invited. We know that children may be excited for parties and that some gatherings will only include a few friends. Please help us in keeping school a welcoming place for everyone.**

# Licensing and DEEC Parent Information

**Community Preschool is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC):**

**1250 Hancock Street, Suite 120-S**

**Quincy, MA 02169**

**Phone: 617-472-2881**

**Parents may contact the DEEC for information regarding the school’s regulatory compliance history.**

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# Handbook Acknowledgment

**By signing this form, we acknowledge that we have received a copy of Community Preschool’s Parent Handbook. We understand that it contains important information about Community Preschool’s policies, that we are expected to read the Handbook and familiarize ourselves with its contents, and that the policies in the Handbook apply to us.**

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**Parent 1/Guardian’s Signature Date**

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**Parent 1/Guardian’s Name (Print)**

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**Parent 2/Guardian’s Signature Date**

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**Parent 2/Guardian’s Name (Print)**