

CLAPBOARDTREE NURSERY SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK

2010-2011

www.clapboardtree.com

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I. HISTORY

Clapboardtree Nursery School (CNS) is a non-profit organization established on July 1, 1972, by parents who were interested in enriching their children's nursery school experience. CNS is a program for children that must be four by September 1st of the year in which they enter the program and may not turn six before May 1st of the year of enrollment.

CNS is proud to be a NAEYC (National Association of Education of Young Children) certified pre-school.

PHILOSOPHY

Clapboardtree Nursery School is dedicated to providing excellence in early childhood education. CNS believes in an early childhood experience rich with language, social, cognitive and motor opportunities. We strive to create a secure environment which supports the individual growth of each of our students.

Our objectives include:

- To be a safe and nurturing place for children to learn and grow.
- To respect the individual differences of its students and encourages them to grow through exploration and discovery.
- To respect cultural backgrounds of our families.
- To provide developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- To provide active learning experiences which support children at a range of developmental and cognitive levels.
- To form partnerships with the parents of our students.
- To make health and safety of our students an uncompromised priority.

The school programs offer experiences in dramatic play, art, movement, science, music, language and social activities into which its unit themes are carefully woven.

The director and staff feel strongly that parent and teachers working together can offer each child a strong foundation of positive self-esteem and trust. CNS encourages parents to share their child's education by visiting or working in the classroom, reading our weekly newsletters, or becoming story transcribers. Parents may also serve as members of the Board and on other school committees.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for the smooth functioning and financial solvency of the school. It must provide competent personnel to fulfill the objectives and philosophy of the school. *The Board of Directors is comprised of parent volunteers consisting of the following positions: a president or 2 co-chairs; 2 Treasurers (Accounting; Tuition); 2 Registrars (Registrar; Assistant Registrar/Publicity and Recording Secretary); and 2 Special Events Coordinators (Special Event Coordinator; Assistant).*

Members of the Board of Directors are respectfully required to serve a minimum of two (2) years. Assignments are usually made in the early spring for the following year. The new board is voted into office annually at the September meeting.

Teaching Staff

We are very proud of the teaching staff at Clapboardtree. Our teachers all have college degrees, strong backgrounds in early childhood education and vast experience in preschool settings. Each lead teacher has been certified by the Massachusetts Office of Early Education and Care, formerly Office of Child Care Services. All teaching staff is trained in CPR and First Aid.

II. General Information

Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays in school with birthday certificates and singing. In the springtime, AM and PM classes have a special day for all of the children with summer birthdays to be honored and have a celebration in school.

The policy of CNS, learned from experience, is that birthday parties not emanate directly from school. Children who are invited understandably are excited, talk about the party, and often leave together. Those who are not included or cannot attend understandably feel left out and hurt. Thus we feel it best if all parties start after regular carpools have taken the children home.

We ask that all invitations be mailed directly to each child's house and not left in the children's cubbies.

Class Schedules

AM Classes:

The 3 hours class consists of 12 students meeting Monday through Thursday from 8:30 am to 11:30 am and is staffed by a lead teacher and an assistant teacher.

The extended class consists of 18 students meeting Monday through Thursday from 8:40 am to 12:30 pm and is staffed by two lead teachers.

The afternoon class consists of 12 students meeting Monday through Thursday from 11:45 pm to 2:45 pm and is staffed by a lead teacher and an assistant teacher.

Clothing

Children spend an active day at Clapboardtree. They will be involved in a variety of activities including art projects and outdoors play. Each of these activities may result in a spot or two on clothing. Since we do not want children to be overly concerned with the stain potential of a project, we ask that you send them in comfortable play clothing.

Discipline Policy

Classroom order is maintained at Clapboardtree through a calm manner of the teacher, who is fair, organized and consistent. When a child is showing inappropriate behavior, the teacher will remind him/her of the classroom rules. If the behavior continues, the teacher will redirect the child to another area in the classroom where he/she will be introduced to different activities. If the behavior becomes dangerous and/or disruptive, the parents will be contacted.

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

Dispensing of Medication

Since Clapboardtree is a half-day program, we will not dispense **any medication**, prescription or over-the-counter, unless it is to be used in an emergency situation. If it is necessary, the teacher must receive the medication in its original container along with directions for dispensing which should come **from the doctor with his or her signature**. The parent will also instruct the staff on the usual procedure for dispensing the medication.

Enrichment Programs

We offer a variety of enrichment programs at Clapboardtree. These programs are meant to enhance your child's preschool experience. In addition to monthly visits from our own CNS Literacy Specialist, Kris Blue and Westwood Librarian Trudy Walsh, the program has also included Music and Creative Movement with Miss Elaine, Debby Caterino's Musical Instrument Families, Diana Kane, Science with Donna Dragotakes, Rainforest Reptiles, Stranger Safety with Officer Brad Pendel, Dental Hygienist Lorraine from Dental Associates, Blue Moon Puppets and Stoney Brook Wildlife Sanctuary.

There is also a four-day enrichment program called Sprouts held in the spring following the close of school for the new students who will be entering CNS in the fall.

Special Events (formerly known as Fundraising)

Acknowledging that an excellent preschool program is costly, additional benefits are derived from our fundraising efforts. As a result of these efforts, our children have enjoyed a variety of programs, special events, and supplementary equipment. The special events/fundraising revenue is used primarily to deliver services to children in the classroom beyond that which is provided on a day-to-day basis.

Our main special event/fundraiser for the year is the annual Pumpkin Fest. This children's fair and raffle is held in October and is chaired by two board members. We depend on active parent participation on the various Pumpkin Fest subcommittees and on the day of the Pumpkin Fest to make the event a success. **This year the Pumpkin Fest will be held on Saturday, October 16, 2010.**

Illness

In consideration for the other children in the class, please keep your child at home at the first sign of cold, fever, cough or stomach ailment. Please call the school if your child will be absent.

Outside Play

We believe that outdoor play is an important part of the school day. Thus, unless the weather is sufficiently inclement, we will be going outside on a daily basis. Please dress your child appropriately. In the winter, please remember boots and snow pants. Please label all outdoor clothing and footwear.

Parent Involvement

Parents are warmly encouraged to visit and participate in our program. Each teaching team has a calendar where you can schedule a date and time to visit the program. If you have a special talent to share, that is wonderful, but it certainly is not a prerequisite to joining us.

Permission to Release Child to Other Than Parent or Regular Caregiver

If your child is going home with a different person than he/she regularly does, we **must** have a **dated note signed by you** giving permission for your child to leave with the specifically named person. Please be sure to advise the teacher at drop-off time that you are handing in such a note. This is the only way we can allow your child to be dismissed with someone other than those people named on the car pool authorization list. Parents may update their *Authorization and Consent Form* at any time.

Snack

All Classes: Children should bring a lunchbox with a snack and a drink to school each day. Children with food sensitivities can feel just like the rest of the group since everyone will have his or her own food.

Because of food allergies, some life threatening, **CNS is a nut and peanut-free school.** Please check the labels of snacks before you send them in to be sure that they do not contain peanuts or nut products.

We strongly encourage nutritious snacks in reusable containers whenever possible. We will be talking about healthy foods and recycling in school and this will be a fine extension of those concepts.

Snow Policy

Clapboardtree Nursery School will close for a snow day when the Westwood Public School System has canceled school. In addition, there may be a time when Westwood Public Schools are in session and because Clapboardtree's parking lot and walkway are impassable due to snow and ice that we will decide independently to close school. We will consider adding days into our regular school calendar to reconcile any days missed for snow.

If Westwood Public Schools are delayed for 1 hour, the AM class will be delayed by ½ hour (AM 9:00; 9:10) but will end at their regular time. PM class will meet as usual. When

surrounding towns cancel afternoon Kindergarten programs, your child's teacher will contact you if school is cancelled.

Pandemic Situation

In a pandemic situation, when 50% of the staff is not able to meet the ratios required by the EEC, the school will be closed and treated like a snow day.

“The School Day” – Nursery School AM and PM

*For safety reasons, all traffic dropping off or picking up children at Clapboardtree Nursery School must exit by the Clapboardtree Street driveway only. **Please do not exit from the Nahatan Street entrance.***

Arrival: AM and PM Classes: When you arrive with your children at CNS, please accompany them into school through the designated door (outside the playground gate for the AM classes and inside the playground gate for PM). Each child has his or her own cubby in the back room, where belongings and knapsacks may be kept. We require that each child carry a knapsack to hold the materials from their cubby each day.

Dismissal:

All Classes: Enter through the Clapboardtree Street entrance, and proceed in front of the Parish Hall and circle the Hall and wait at the upper playground gate for children to be escorted to your automobile.

All children will be given a yellow folder for important notices and newsletters that will be put in each child's cubby on Thursday. This folder should be returned to the cubby on Monday of the following week.

Toileting

Please let us know if your child is still in diapers or pull-ups. If your child should wet his/her pull-up, a teacher will take the child to the bathroom where they will be given a new pull-up to change into in the stall. After the child has changed, the teacher will properly dispose of the wet pull-up. If a child has a bowel movement in their pull-up, a parent will be called to change it. In the rare event that a parent cannot be reached, appropriate provisions will be on hand to change your child.

Tooth Brushing Policy

As of January 2010, the state requires children that stay in a program for more than four hours be required to brush their teeth. This policy will apply when a child stays for Lunch Bunch. The parent will send in their child's toothbrush and paste that day along with their lunch.

III. Communication with Your Child's Teachers

Newsletters

We will communicate with you throughout the school year in a variety of ways. One of our most effective tools is our weekly newsletter. These sheets will be placed in each child's yellow folder on Thursday. The newsletters will describe activities going on within the classroom. It will also include the names of special visitors and special events. We try to keep parents up to date on theme topics that are being covered in the classroom and thus keep our bond a strong one throughout the year. A Director's newsletter that will cover topics of interest to all school families will be distributed periodically. We hope that these various means of communicating with you will help you feel an integral part of your child's year at CNS.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences will be held twice (November and April) during the school year. We look forward to these planned opportunities to meet with each of you. Please know, however, that at any point throughout the year, if you have a concern, we are always willing to set up a conference at a mutually convenient time. We look at your child's preschool experience as a joint venture with us at Clapboardtree. Thus, the more we all communicate, the more we gain in our efforts to provide your child with a quality preschool experience. We want this to be a happy and worthwhile year for each child enrolled and we consider parents' input of vital importance to that end. For information on CNS referral services policies, please contact the CNS Director, Kris Blue.

Parent Communication and Concerns

At Clapboardtree Nursery School, our intention is to exchange information as fully and freely as possible. We encourage you to ask questions, communicate concerns and provide regular feedback about our program. Questions and concerns about your child, or about the classroom, should be directed to the classroom teacher. If a solution to the concern cannot be worked out, parents are free to meet with the director to discuss the concern. The director will work to provide a reasonable solution to any issue after communicating with all concerned parties. An Executive committee of the school board will be available to hear parent concerns after all previous attempts at resolution have failed.

Phone Calls

Teachers are available to take phone calls at school 15 minutes before school starts. During the school day, the answering machine will generally be left on. If you want to leave a message for us, please know that this avenue is available. However, should you need to get through to the school in person, please call, hang up after one ring, and then call right back again. Through this system, we will know that your call is urgent and thus a teacher will pick up the phone. If we are outside, we may not hear the phone. Please try us again in fifteen minutes. The teachers' and director's phone numbers are written on the class lists and were sent to you with the paperwork for your child to start school.. Should you need or wish to speak with them at home, please know that you are encouraged to do so.

IV. School Policies

Non-Discrimination Policy

Clapboardtree Nursery School is a non-profit school and does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual preference, or marital status.

Tuition Policies

Payment Schedule

As a convenience to our families, Clapboardtree offers a payment schedule as indicated in the registration materials. If you need to modify this schedule, please contact the Tuition Treasurer. A \$25 fee may be assessed on late payments, and a \$25 fee will be assessed on any returned checks. All payments must be sent to CNS, 340 Clapboardtree Street, Westwood, MA 02090, or deposited in the tuition box located inside the cubby room at the school.

Refund of Tuition 2010-2011

Any registered student, who withdraws between the date of the lottery and 2 weeks prior to the commencement of school may request, in writing, a refund of their tuition payment, less the \$200 tuition deposit. The tuition deposit is non-refundable. If the vacancy is filled and after the requisite tuition is received, the refund will be granted. If the vacancy is not filled, no refund of tuition paid to date will be given.

Any registered student, who withdraws between the 2 weeks prior to school and the 1st day of school and any registered student who withdraws before or after the commencement of the school year forfeits any fees or tuition paid to date.

Clapboardtree reserves the right, in its absolute and sole discretion, to decide whether to fill any vacancy. Any withdrawal must be in writing and mailed to CNS, 340 Clapboardtree Street, Westwood, MA 02090.

Termination and Suspension Policy

When a family wishes to withdraw a child from the program, the parents must send a Letter of Intent to the Director, giving a minimum of two weeks notice. The Executive Board will review the request and the letter will be left in the child's file.

When the school needs to terminate or suspend a child from the program, these procedures will be followed:

1. Teachers will document concerns.
2. The parents must be notified by phone and in writing of the circumstances and reasons for termination.
3. The Executive Board will be notified and will be given an opportunity to vote on the matter.
4. The parents will be given ample opportunity to discuss termination with the Executive Board. The parents will receive information regarding referral for other services, if necessary.
5. Documentation of and all correspondence relating to the termination will be kept in the child's file. Copies will be made available to the parents.