

**Community Nursery School
343 Broadway
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522**

**PARENT HANDBOOK
2023-2024**



Programs for 2s, 3s and 4s

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Director: Linda Jo Platt

****PLEASE READ AND KEEP THIS HANDBOOK
ACCESSIBLE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR**



Welcome to Community Nursery School!

I have prepared this booklet to acquaint you with our pre-school program. Please read it carefully noting that in all dealings with children we all need to maintain a sense of humor and a balanced flexibility.

As we know, COVID-19 is with us for the foreseeable future. No matter what procedures and protocols are put in place, there is simply no way to guarantee that COVID-19 or any other pathogen or communicable disease will not enter school. By the very nature of the personal interactions that take place in the early childhood environment, there is always a risk of your child contracting this or any other disease or infection. And again, we will do everything within our power to keep your child healthy and safe at school this year while following our curriculum in this unique time and circumstances.

Many of the questions you will have as the year goes on are addressed in this handbook so please keep it handy and refer to it often. Please share this information with all persons bringing your child to school.

Our program as outlined in this booklet consists of:

- A developmentally appropriate curriculum for young children which provides a comprehensive program in all areas of a child's development: physical, emotional, social, cognitive and language implemented through play and experiences.
- A caring, qualified staff members who are educated and experienced in their work with young children.
- Policies and procedures which enable us to provide a safe, well-organized program for each child.

I hope that this coming year will be one in which we will work together in meeting your child's needs. Please feel free to contact me or your child's teachers at any time.

Linda Jo Platt,
Director



2023-2024 COVID PROCEDURE

MASKS: As of now we will not require masks for staff or children indoors. We will fully support our staff and those families who want their children to wear masks. If the rates of COVID infection or a heavy flu season begin to climb in the fall, then CNS may find it in the best health interests of our children and staff to re-instate wearing masks indoors.

The time frame for returning to school after symptoms of fever, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea will be 24 hours free of symptom without medication.

If your child has a positive COVID-19 test, please follow the guidance below. Isolation Due to Positive Test:

A negative test is NOT required to return to school.

- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to isolate for five (5) days (regardless of vaccination status).
- Day 0 is the first day of symptoms or, for asymptomatic individuals, the day the COVID-19 test was performed.
- Individuals may attend school after the 5-day isolation provided symptoms (cough, runny nose) are improving and they are fever-free without fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours. If symptoms persist after day 5, further isolation will be required. Certain symptoms such as loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.
- Individuals who test positive should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at home, in school, and in public for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of their 5-day isolation period.

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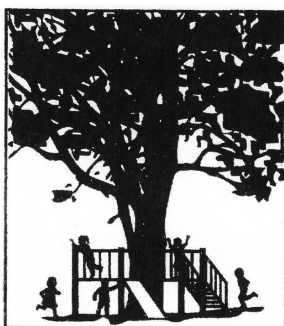
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Our Mission

Community Nursery School was established in 1945 under the ownership of the South Presbyterian Church in Dobbs Ferry as a non-profit, non-sectarian community service for families seeking developmentally appropriate pre-school education for their young children.

We welcome all families knowing that the inclusion of families from many different ethnicities, religions, cultures, abilities, and family structures enhances our program and the lives of the children who come together here.



The Community Nursery School Philosophy

We believe that:

Young children learn by doing.

Young children need a safe, nurturing, comfortable, fun, physical and emotional environment.

Young children need opportunities to develop positive self-esteem, individuality, and a healthy ego.

Young children need knowledgeable teachers who engage, encourage, respect, challenge, and model with them and who continue to grow and develop in their work with young children and their families.



Governance

Community Nursery School is owned by South Presbyterian Church and operates as a separate entity. The Nursery School Director reviews all major program, budget, and physical changes for approval by the South Presbyterian Church Board of Trustees known as Session. All educational decisions are made by the director and staff of Community Nursery School.

The Parent Committee is composed of the director and representatives of the school's current enrollment. Each spring the Parent Committee sends out a letter to all parents inviting those interested to join the committee for the next year. This committee assists the director in establishing policy and fees for the nursery school as well as planning social events for nursery school families and children. Each class parent member helps maintain communication between the parents and the school.



Staff

Community Nursery School is fortunate to have a staff of experienced women who come to school each day ready to engage their young students in the wonderful world of preschool. They are dedicated to the education of young children, multi-talented, very busy, and involved in the lives of their communities.

We meet and exceed all standards for teacher –student ratios at the appropriate age levels:

Two-year olds – 1 teacher, 1 associate or assistant teacher for 8-10 children

Three-year olds - 1 teacher, 1 associate or assistant teacher for **12** children

Four-year olds – 1 teacher, 1 associate or assistant teacher for **16** children

We require all staff members to complete 6 – 12 hours of education pertaining to work with young children each year. All staff members are required to be certified in Child First Aid and CPR. Re-certification occurs every two years.

Staff Qualifications

Teacher

Qualifications for the head teacher of the TWOS and THREES program are a BA in Early Childhood Education or a closely related field with substantial teaching experience with young children of pre-school age.

Qualifications for head teacher of the FOURS are a Master's Degree in Early Childhood or Elementary with substantial teaching experience with young children, ages 4 and 5.

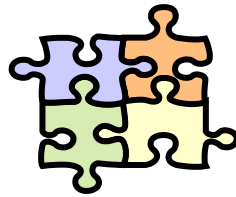
Associate Teacher

Qualifications for an associate teacher are the completion of the Child Development Associate coursework or completion of a minimum of 5 early childhood courses at the college level leading towards a Bachelor or Master's Degree in Early Childhood / Elementary or/and teaching experience with pre-school children.

Assistant Teacher

Qualifications for an assistant teacher are twenty-one years of age, completion of the equivalent of high school, substantial experience with young children, and a desire to seek further education in the field of early childhood.

All of the above must have a warm and friendly personality, be sensitive to the feelings and needs of others, be able to relate well to both children and adults and be willing to fulfill their responsibilities in accordance with the school's educational philosophy.



Curriculum

A developmentally appropriate curriculum for young children is planned to be appropriate for the age span of the children within the group and is implemented with attention to the different needs, interests, and developmental levels of those individual children.

Our curriculum goals encompass experiences provided to meet the children's needs and stimulate learning in all developmental areas – physical, social, emotional, and intellectual. All interactions and activities are designed to develop children's self-esteem and positive feeling toward learning. We use the *Creative Curriculum* goals and objectives as the foundation of our curriculum.

Physical Development: Outdoor activity is planned daily so that children can use their large muscle skills by riding, running, climbing on our exceptionally fine play area, learn about an outdoor environment and express themselves freely and loudly. We also have a large indoor playroom if bad weather keeps us inside.

Fine Motor - Small muscles skills are developed daily through play activities such as puzzles, pegboards, cutting, painting, play dough, clay and other manipulation activities. Different types and sizes of writing instruments – crayons, markers, pencils - are available daily as children expand their fine motor skills.

Social Development: Children are provided many opportunities to develop social skills including cooperating, sharing, helping others, and negotiating through activities and centers planned by the staff such as the sand, water and play dough tables, the housekeeping corner, the block area, games and more. Our playground lends itself easily to dramatic play in the boat or playhouse, games on the lawn or blacktop, and just plain fun down the tree house slide, swinging to the treetops or making pies or roads together in the sandbox, all of which enhances the growth of the give and take of socialization.

Emotional Development: Our teachers aid in the development of self-control in children by using positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to a more acceptable activity and setting clear limits. The teachers' expectations match and respect the children's developing capabilities. There is more on this topic under Classroom Management.

Cognitive Development: Learning about math, science, social studies, health, and other content areas is integrated through meaningful activities when children build with blocks, measure sand and water or ingredients in cooking, observe changes in the environment, work with wood and tools, sort objects for a purpose, explore animals, plants, water, wheels, sing and listen to music, as well as draw, paint and work with all types of modeling materials that they make themselves.

Language Development: We provide children with many opportunities to see how reading and writing are useful before they are instructed in letter names, sounds, etc. at the kindergarten level. Language and literacy are developed through listening to and reading stories and poems, playing with language through finger plays, rhymes and songs, participating in dramatic play and other experiences requiring communication, talking informally with other children and adults, seeing print in use in the classroom and experimenting with writing, drawing and copying.

(Adapted from the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Position Statement on Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs

New York State Learning Standards for Preschool

The New York State Education Department has developed standards for preschool which we incorporate into our curriculum. Take note of the word “developing” at the beginning of each standard. Go to www.usny.nysed.gov/parents/nyslearningstandards.html

The Five Goals and 21 Objectives for our Twos from The Creative Curriculum

Social/Emotional Development

To Learn About Self and Others

1. Trusts known, caring adults
2. Regulates own behavior
3. Manages own feeling
4. Responds to others' feelings with growing empathy
5. Plays with other children
6. Learns to be a member of a group
7. Uses personal care skills

Physical Development

To Learn About Moving

8. Demonstrates basic gross motor skills
9. Demonstrates basic fine motor skills

Cognitive Development

To Learn About the World

10. Sustains attention
11. Understands how objects can be used
12. Shows a beginning understanding of cause of effect
13. Shows a beginning understanding that things can be grouped
14. Uses problem-solving techniques
15. Engages in pretend play

Language Development

To Learn About Communicating

16. Develops receptive language skills
17. Develops expressive language
18. Participates in conversations
19. Enjoys books and being read to
20. Shows an awareness of pictures and print
21. Experiments with drawing and writing

The 10 Goals and 50 Curriculum Objectives for ages 3 – 5 from The Creative Curriculum

**These goals and objectives are aligned along a developmental continuum
for each stage of development**

Social/Emotional Development

Sense of Self

1. Shows ability to adjust to new situation
2. Demonstrates appropriate trust in adults
3. Recognizes own feelings and manages them appropriately
4. Stands up for rights

Responsibility for Self and Others

5. Demonstrates self-direction and independence
6. Takes responsibility for own well-being
7. Respects and cares for classroom environment and materials
8. Follows classroom routines
9. Follows classroom rules

Prosocial Behavior

10. Plays well with other children
11. Recognizes the feelings of others and responds appropriately
12. Shares and respects the rights of others
13. Uses thinking skills to resolve conflicts

Physical Development

Gross Motor

14. Demonstrates basic locomotor skills (jumping, running, hopping, galloping)
15. Shows balance while moving
16. Climbs up and down
17. Pedals and steers a tricycle (or another wheeled vehicle)
18. Demonstrates throwing, kicking, and catching skills

Fine Motor

19. Controls small muscles of hand
20. Coordinates eye-hand movement
21. Uses tools for writing and drawing

Cognitive Development

Learning and Problem Solving

22. Observes objects and events with curiosity
23. Approaches problems flexibly
24. Shows persistence in approaching tasks
25. Explores cause and effect
26. Applies knowledge or experience to a new context.

Logical Thinking

27. Classifies objects
28. Compares/measures
29. Arranges objects in a series
30. Recognizes patterns and can repeat them
31. Shows awareness of time concepts and sequence
32. Shows awareness of position in space
33. Uses one-to-one correspondence
34. Uses numbers and counting

Representation and Symbolic Thinking

35. Takes on pretend roles and situations
36. Makes believe with objects
37. Makes and interprets representations

Language Development

Listening and Speaking

38. Hears and discriminates the sounds of language
39. Expresses self using words and expanded sentences
40. Understands and follows oral directions
41. Answers questions
42. Asks questions
43. Actively participates in conversations

Reading and Writing

44. Enjoys and values reading
45. Demonstrates understanding of print concepts
46. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
47. uses emerging reading skills to make meaning from print
48. Comprehends and interprets meaning from books and other texts
49. Understands the purpose of writing
50. Writes letters and words.



Artwork

The work in creative expression for 2s, 3s and 4s is manipulative and oriented toward discovery and skill development. In their art experiences they explore and manipulate materials, use art as exploratory play and often repeat actions. They begin to name and control symbols, see shapes in their work, view final product as unimportant (may not be pleasing to adults) and may destroy product during process.

The paintings, drawing, and constructions your child makes in school are important as a process far more than they are as art products. Remember that your child sees this as an extension of himself. It has value to her because she made it. Look at it with him and help him to share with you the fun in creating it, rather than asking “What is it?”.



2023-2024 Class Structure

Class	Days	Maximum Enrollment
One 3 day AM program for 2s	Wed, Thurs, Fri	Enrollment: 10
One 4 day AM program for 2s	Monday – Thursday	Enrollment: 10
One 3 day AM program for 3s	Wed, Thurs, Fri	Enrollment: 12
One 5 day AM program for 3s	Monday - Friday	Enrollment: 12
One 5 day AM program for 4s	Monday-Friday	Enrollment: 16



First Days at School

September brings us all a new adventure in watching the future unfold. For teachers, the responsibility, the trust, and the excitement in helping shape young lives are serious, awesome, and joyful tasks. For parents and children, it is a cooperative step toward developing a larger view of the world outside the home. Some of you have been through separations with your children before; some of you have not. Before school begins you will receive several articles on the separation process. Every child is different and will approach the coming September in his/her own unique way so it is almost guaranteed that something in one of these articles will strike the right chord for you and your child.

Community Nursery School opens its doors in September on different days for different groups. Please consult the September calendar and your Orientation Schedule for exact days and times of visits, 1/2 sessions, shortened sessions, and Parent Orientation.

Visits

On visit and half-session days, 1/2 of the class will attend school for one hour and the other half will attend the next scheduled hour. We have found that starting the children in smaller groups for shorter periods helps them feel more secure about their teachers and their classmates. These smaller groups also allow the teachers the time to become acquainted with each individual child and you a chance to sit with a group of parents feeling just as you may.

One parent or primary caretaker **MUST** remain at school for the half-session or shortened days. There will be a room (or the hall) for you to wait in with the other parents. Your child will be able to see a familiar face as he/she becomes accustomed to a new room, new teachers, and new children. Each child will have immediate access to you as often as he wishes. Even at that, some of you may find yourselves right outside the classroom door or even inside the door. That's okay!!

By the time of the first full session, the teachers will know which children are ready to say goodbye for a short time and which ones may not be. Please trust them to understand your fears or concerns and communicate with them although not in front of your child - but by telephone or in the hall before or after class. Even the FOURS, who are usually old hats at this, need to make a transition, so after the visit, their first day maybe scheduled as a half-session or shortened schedule while we get acquainted and re-acquainted.

If at all possible, please arrange for siblings to remain at home during the half-day or shortened sessions. Please delay carpools until the second week of school if your child is not used to this arrangement. Return the background and health forms sent in June as soon as possible. If you need to visit your doctor and it will take time to get an appointment, please send the background form ahead to us.



Arrivals

Arrival and Dismissal times involve children and cars - a potentially dangerous combination. Please be careful, considerate, and patient as children arrive and leave.

2023-2024 Arrival Times

9:00 THREES and FOURS

9:15 TWOS

Park in the rear parking lot or on the street - **NOT IN THE CIRCLE.**

It is important to be on time for school. Most children find it difficult to walk into a classroom of children who have already begun their activities. After saying good-bye to your child, it is most helpful and considerate to leave the parking lot quickly so other parents may park and bring in their children. We have tried to stagger the arrivals and dismissals to ease the parking lot congestion but without your cooperation it is for naught. The far end of the parking lot is used as our bike area, and we close the gates at 9:15.

2023-2024 Dismissal Times

11:30 TWOS

11:45 THREES and FOURS

The children will be together in the hallway a few minutes before pick-up time. Parents will remain outside during dismissal for security reasons If someone other than the parent or designated is picking up, permission is required for those not listed on your background form as having permission to pick up your child

It is so disappointing for a child to go down the path or get into the car and not have you, the most important person in her life, greet her after her day at school. Please end or pause cell phone calls, other conversations, and turn off the radio **BEFORE** we bring your child to you. And please transmit this message to anyone who picks your child up.

If you are in the circle, please exit the car and stand beside the car on the passenger side to put your child in the car seat. It is safer and easier for children and staff if the car seat is on the right side of the car, so you do not need to go between cars. If the seat cannot be on the right side please put the child through the right side door and then buckle the child in his seat from the other side.

If the circle is full, please do not wait on the street in line - it is illegal and unsafe. Please go around the block or park in the lot or on the street and pick your child up at the end of the path by the playground, leaving the sidewalk and path clear. **If you are taking three or more children home**, please pull into the parking lot and wait at the end of the walk.



Car Seats

Staff members will not put children in the cars because of the law, liability issues and more importantly for the safety of your child(ren).

New York State Law requires that all children under the age of 4 must ride in must ride in federally approved child safety seats attached to vehicle by safety belt or LATCH systems. Children 4 – 7 must ride in approved child restraints systems. All must be in the back seat. Children are at high risk for severe injury or death if seated in front seats with or without airbags. All children under the age of sixteen **MUST** wear a seat belt.



Carpools and Play Dates

You must notify us **by email or phone call** if your child will be picked up by someone else. Without such notification we cannot let your child leave until we contact you.



Art Bags

When your child first enters Community Nursery School, he or she will receive a new canvas bag we call the **Art Bag**. At the end of each week or more often depending on the class, the bag will be filled with artwork, notices, newsletters, etc. We ask that this bag return to school each day to be refilled. No other bags are necessary until winter clothes need to be brought to school.

Please do not use backpacks for school.



Communication

Communicating with each other is at once, one of the simplest and one of the most complex things we do each day. And we never seem to have enough time to share all the things we want to let each other know. While recognizing the limits that our interactions will have at drop off or pick up, communication is the key to a successful nursery school experience as we begin to forge a partnership between home and school.

In most instances we prefer not to discuss your child in front of him. If necessary, the teacher will get coverage after children have arrived and discuss your concerns in the office or elsewhere if a phone call just won't work. Discussions in front of your child are usually not productive and can cause embarrassment or anxiety for the child so wait until you have a moment to call or arrange a time to speak with the teacher in person away from the class. **Please feel free to contact her at any time. Regular communication in person, by phone, or e-mail between you and your child's teacher is vital in building mutual understanding.**

Parents and children have a special relationship. At times, children will tell you things about themselves or their experiences at school that they have been unable or unwilling to discuss with us. If your child shares information with you that you feel could help us to be more effective, please share that information with us. If you have concerns, needs or suggestions please call your child's teacher or the director at school or at home. Please keep in touch with your child's teacher by phone or note or e-mail about events in your child's daily life - a parent's trip, a family illness, a special vacation, etc.

The teachers' phone numbers (e-mail addresses if available) will be available from your teachers at our Orientation Night. We encourage you to call if you just need to check in or discuss something of concern to you.

The teachers write weekly newsletters about events in the classroom. These newsletters are intended to keep you informed and involved in your child's classroom activities. This information gives you a starting point for conversations as well as finding out what really stirs his interest. You can enhance and extend this interest in the curriculum in many ways. At home you can re-read the books we have read, sing the songs (Who doesn't know "The Itsy Bitsy Spider?"), glue, cut, paint, make play dough, cook, explore the grocery's vegetable section when we make soup, etc. Although we have planned curriculum there are many times when the children have another interest and we go there, so outlines of what our day may be, much before it happens, are not always reliable indicators of what the future will bring that week.

The director writes a weekly emailed newsletter filled with dates, local news and informative articles on issues and topics for parents of preschoolers.

The office staff produces a directory of all students and staff about 3 weeks into the school year, which will be distributed to all families via email. Updates will be sent out as changes occur.

The CNS office will send out K12 Swift Text Alerts in case of a school delay or closure due to weather, or any other emergency that needs to be communicated immediately.



Conferences

Conferences are a more formal face-to-face time when parents and teachers can share information and observations about each child. You as parents have important knowledge of your child's history, temperament, characteristics and habits, your goals and dreams for his/her future, your child's culture, family practices, structure and more. Our teachers have had training and education in child development as well as experience in working with children in groups. That experience has given our teachers the opportunity to see many different children over time and informs them of the wide continuum of children's development, behavior and temperament. Parents know the most about their individual children; teachers know the most about children in general. So together what a great partnership we can forge with and for your child!

For the 2s, we schedule 2 conferences ; the first after children have settled in and one mid-year. Parents are in the classroom on a regular basis and the teachers are always available for conversations at home or at school when needed.

For the 3s, we schedule 2 conferences a year, The first conference, at the beginning of the year, once the class has settled in, is a time for us to gather more information about your child and his/her world. The second conference is held in March when the staff share with you their observations. At that time, we will share with you that we have learned about your child and any goals for your child for the remainder of the year. A third conference may be held in May on an as needed basis.

For the 4s, the first conference in October will gather information from you, address their growth and plan our mutual goals for them. The second conference in January will be a mid-year check in. At the conference in May, we will share together how those goals have been met as kindergarten approaches. This third 4 year old conference is optional, a summing up, a chance to review the year and say goodbye.

It is very important that you take advantage of these times so that we can work together to make the best possible experience for your child.

Our staff is available all during the year, early mornings, after school by phone or e-mail if you have concerns or questions.



Classroom Visits

In the beginning of the year, we welcome you to stay and participate in the separation process. As the year goes on, we welcome you to the classroom on many other occasions such as birthdays, Me Museums for the 3s, Parent Partners for the 4s, and other celebrations where an extra pair of hands will be welcomed.

Some children will want their parents here. Some won't. Some children will ignore their parents; some won't want to share their parents. Some behaviors - your child's and others' - may change when a parent enters the classroom to stay. Some children may want to show off, stake out territory, monopolize you, and some children may find it difficult to follow the routine of the class when a parent visits. All of the above and more are very normal.

As parents some of you will enjoy every minute; some of you may be distressed at some behaviors. Please talk to one of us for a fuller picture of the developmental behaviors. I caution you to not take out of context the behaviors of their ages and stages in a group setting. Understand that what you will see and experience is behavior necessary and normal for the various age groups to grow and experience social group behaviors. So be very careful sharing what you may perceive as negatives with other parents about individual children. It isn't fair; it's usually not the whole story and it can be harmful.

After the beginning of the year when our separation process has ended, most classes need time to develop cohesiveness, trust in the teachers and a scheduled routine. And it is a time when other visitors come to see the school much like you did when you first started the nursery school process. During this time, we will ask that visits be limited to birthdays only, although we will be flexible when in the best interest of a child. We need to keep in mind that nursery school is a time for each child to become a part of a group for a few hours a week and that there are many hours at home for you to spend with your child.

A cautionary note: Having a parent visit is a special event and too many special events may disrupt the routine. Some classes easily ignore visitors and others are thrown off by them. The teacher is the best person to make that assessment. We all understand your interest and desire to be a part of this new experience. Some of you would love to be here often and others would find it difficult. We need to be aware of equity for each child and therefore will ask you to be understanding if your requests to visit more often are unable to be granted.



Classroom Management

Emotional development, like all other learning, takes time and learning opportunities.

Young children are developing self-control and learning what behavior is acceptable and what behavior is not acceptable. How that is done may differ from the 2s to the 5s depending on their developmental needs and understanding. The 2s and 3s do not always understand the concept of sharing but we address and model it - all the while having two or three duplicates of the same item close by. The 4s understand the concept of “taking turns” – usually when it’s their turn but may still need adult encouragement to give another child a turn.

Aggression is a normal expression of emotion in young children because they are just beginning to learn acceptable ways to channel their anger. This behavior may include hitting, throwing things, name-calling, spitting, biting, pushing or pulling, threatening to not invite one to the birthday party, destroying property or taking someone else’s possessions. What happens when a child becomes aggressive can be frustrating and disturbing to adults, but we also can see it as an opportunity to teach, a chance to model self-discipline and character.

Our program recognizes the importance of dealing with aggressive behavior. Teachers help children find acceptable ways to express their anger, negotiate to get what they want or need, and handle aggression directed toward them by their peers.

We encourage children to express their feelings in words and to negotiate resolutions to conflict. We facilitate conversations between children when problems arise. We suggest words that help communicate the children’s feelings. In time, with adult support, they are able to use these social skills to solve their own problems. Here are a few things that we do in the classroom that may work at home for you as well.

We have routine: First and foremost, all children thrive on and need routine. It helps them order their world and feel secure and safe, knowing what is going to happen next.

We have clear and consistent limits: We set and discuss rules and consequences. Rules should be clear, simple and few. We have one simple rule: **You may not hurt yourself, others, or things.** If a child has hit another child or is about to, the teacher kneels and calmly states: “I cannot let you hit Ben. We don’t hit people. I know you are angry. Can you tell me why?...OK, how can you let Ben know that you want to use the fire truck?”

We offer acceptable choices and re-direction: Choice is a regular part of our classroom practice. It also can be used to diffuse a potential power struggle such as clean up time - “Would you like to put the blocks or the puzzles away first?” ; “ I could help you put away the blocks. Would you like that?” ; getting dressed - “Would you like to put your hat on first or after you put on your coat?”

There are times when a child loses control no matter what we do and then, with the adult, a walk out in the hall, a visit with Mrs. Platt, or a moment or two of quiet is just what may be needed to provide a few minutes to calm down and re-group. We do not use time-outs or exclusion in the spirit of punishment. The point here is to give the child an opportunity to regain control in a supportive environment. A positive attitude on our part is the best teacher of all.



Food

We are a peanut and tree nut free school to protect the health and well being of those children with severe and life threatening reactions to these foods. It travels on shoes, unwiped mouths and sticky hands throughout the school and cannot be controlled.

Snack Time

We ask that parents pack easily opened containers of food appropriate for snack following our current snack guidelines such as no peanut or nut products including NUTELLA , no candy, no chunky hard foods considered choke -able such as pop-corn, carrots, etc.

We will provide water as they learn to pour and use a cup.

Snack times are usually timed about the middle of each session. When selecting foods for snacks for your child, please consider those low in fat, sodium and sugar. It may take a few extra minutes but it is worth your time to make a half-sandwich of cheese, tuna, etc., a piece of fruit, a container of yogurt (no tubes of yogurt please) or home-baked breads or muffins. **The only mandatory restriction is our policy of no peanut or tree nut products or candy at school.**

Birthdays



To celebrate a birthday the only outside food is allowed will be in commercially packaged individual servings such a sealed tray of cupcakes, ice cream cups, ice cream sandwiches, yogurt cups so we can check the ingredients for allergy safety. And we will use a simulated candle to click off as blowing on a cupcake isn't what we are doing, probably never again.

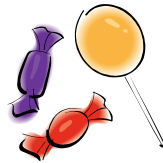
Birthdays are special events for children of all ages. We celebrate every child's birthday at snack time. A summer birthday may be celebrated during the school year as a special day.

Refreshments should be simple and easy to serve, i.e. cupcakes, brownies, ice cream cups, etc.

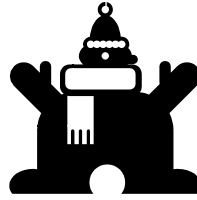
Hint: Most children really don't like thick frosting and whatever you bring, **please bring the exact same thing for each child.** For example: 6 vanilla cupcakes and 6 chocolate ones for 12 children translates to 9 children who want vanilla and only 3 want chocolate. Solomon isn't on staff.

This celebration is NOT a birthday party that you hold at home so while you may bring special packaged unsealed napkins or plates, please do not bring balloons, party favors, noisemakers, candy or goody bags. These are **not appropriate** for a party at school. **If you are planning an outside party PLEASE MAIL invitations or thank-you notes. The teachers have been asked not to hand out personal mail.**

Candy



It is our policy that no candy will be given to children at any time at school including packed in their snack brought from home. Please do not bring candy to hand out at school including birthdays and all holidays such as Halloween, Hanukkah, Christmas, Valentine's Day including valentine bags, etc. Allergies are our biggest fear, then comes choking, and then respect for others. One family's feelings about candy for their child invariably conflicts with another family's view. All candy sent in will be returned to you.



Clothing

MUD, PAINT, GLUE, CLAY, FINGER-PAINT - Hopefully, all of this will wash out. **But** nursery school clothes receive a lot of wear and tear. Make sure the clothes your child wears to school are not covered by "keep them clean" restrictions. When your child dresses in play clothes he or she feels free to participate in all activities with no restrictions. On any given day your child may play with paints, playdough, sand or water; make playdough or soup or breads.

We suggest clothing that encourages your child to become more independent in dressing and in toileting. Too many or too difficult snaps, buckles and buttons may look smart but are unwise when children are becoming more self-reliant in dressing.

Please bring outer rain gear and when needed warm appropriate winter gear for your child as we love to be outdoors as much as possible in our schedule.

Rubber soled shoes will allow a greater margin of safety on our outdoor equipment. Sandals and party shoes are unsafe outside for a multitude of reasons. **No open-toed shoes or clogs can be worn on the playground.**

In winter weather every child should bring snow pants – not a one-piece snowsuit- and boots every day since we continue a balanced indoor-outdoor program throughout the entire year.

Please purchase winter boots which can be pulled on or stepped into easily: not galoshes. Rain boots are not warm enough for winter. We need shoe boots which replace the shoe, not go over it. Children who wear shoe boots to school will also need to bring shoes or slippers to wear for inside play. These may be kept in the cubby throughout the winter.

Children are often very proud that they can put on their coat, their boots, and mittens, so when the season arrives, give them time and assistance to learn and practice those skills - a great esteem builder. Not to mention that teachers dressing multiple children in snow pants and boots will appreciate all the help they can get.

Wool-like, flexible mittens keep hands warmer than gloves and are more flexible than the snow/ski type. If they fit well, the ski type is good in snowy weather on the playground.

No scarves please. They can get caught on playground equipment, pulled by another child or tripped over. If you can find neck warmers, they are the best alternative to scarves.

Change of Clothing in Cubby

On the first visit day you will receive a large Ziploc bag in which to place a complete change of clothing: (socks, shirt, pants, underwear). This bag will be in the cubby at school to use in the event of spilled juice, active water play, toileting accidents, etc. When soiled clothes are sent home, please replenish the bag the next day. Replenish this bag for the different seasons. Shorts on a blustery January day just won't do.

PLEASE LABEL ALL SCHOOL CLOTHING for easy identification. Leaving it up to children to identify clothing which they may not be interested in or may covet is not as reliable as labels.



Diapers

For the 3s and up, it is our custom to ask that no diapers be worn during school hours. This statement usually sends about half of the 3-year-old parent readers into a panic. Calm down, take a deep breath and keep reading.

Our facilities and staffing for 3s just are not geared to change diapers on a regular basis. We ask that you dress your child in training pants and put several extra changes in the cubby. As teachers of young children, we realize that toileting accidents will happen and we will be as supportive, caring, and understanding in these circumstances as we hope to be in all others.

However, whether your child wears diapers or training pants, parents of 2s and up will be asked to come in to change children who regularly wet or have bowel movements during school time.

Most children by the age of three will be ready to wear underpants for the school day but some may not. Here are some tips from Penelope Leach's book YOUR BABY AND CHILD to help you and your child get ready.

1. *Take your child out of diapers altogether in the daytime. Those accustomed wads of padding may be concealing the whole business from his attention.*
2. *Make it clear that you want her to use the potty or toilet. You may have been so anxious to avoid toilet training pressure that you have quite neglected to convey this message.*
3. *Make sure that he sees family and friends using the bathroom. You do not want to rub his nose in the fact that everybody else stays dry, but imitation can be a great help.*

Ellen Galinsky in her book THE PRESCHOOL YEARS says, "As always, it is more effective for the child to feel he or she is accomplishing something than to feel acted upon or forced into it."

You can create a partnership by asking in the morning, "Would you like to wear underpants or diapers?" or "What day will you wear panties -- Tuesday or Wednesday?"

Use the weeks before school opens to begin establishing a toileting routine. Try not to tie together the beginning of school with toileting. The issues are separate; they really are although you may not feel that way now. The summer is a wonderful time to introduce underpants for a period of time each day when getting wet doesn't mean getting cold. Begin putting on underwear that will feel uncomfortable when wet and dirty. I know it's inconvenient and messy for a couple of weeks, but the results are worth the effort. And as important a step this may be for you, your child will also feel a wonderful sense of accomplishment and growth.

For those of you with fall birthday children, this may be a gradual process over the next few months, and we are certainly cognizant of the fact that all children regardless of their age will not always march to the same drummer on this and other issues so we will all work together on a transition that always takes place sooner or later.



Health

Please call or email the school when your child will be absent for any reason.

Today it is especially important for the safety of others, staff and children alike that you take great care in deciding whether or not to send your child to school. Please do not bring your child to school if you suspect he/she is "coming down with something" or if he/she has had a fever 100 or higher, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 24 hours.

BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Fever - Your child must be fever free for 24 hours without use of medication such as Tylenol.

Vomiting, Nausea or Diarrhea must have subsided for 24 hours after onset. We ask that you give your child an At Home Test before returning to school.

We must act as if every symptom is COVID-19 and err on the side of caution.

If your child has a positive COVID-19 test, please follow the guidance below. Isolation Due to Positive Test:

A negative test is NOT required to return to school.

- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to isolate for five (5) days (regardless of vaccination status).
- Day 0 is the first day of symptoms or, for asymptomatic individuals, the day the COVID-19 test was performed.
- Individuals may attend school after the 5-day isolation provided symptoms (cough, runny nose) are improving and they are fever-free without fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours. If symptoms persist after day 5, further isolation will be required. Certain symptoms such as loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.
- Individuals who test positive should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at home, in school, and in public for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of their 5-day isolation period.

When over 50 children gather in one place at one time, it is very likely that contagious ailments such as colds, coughs, sore throats, and flu will be passed around. However, if some practical guidelines are followed, we can keep illness at a minimum.

Many illnesses are most contagious in initial stages. Very runny noses, bad coughs, and lots of sneezes spread colds very quickly. Let such symptoms diminish before sending your child back to school. If your child has an allergy condition which results in these symptoms, and he/she is not contagious let the teacher know this too. Please notify us if your child has been diagnosed with a contagious disease such as strep throat, conjunctivitis, chicken pox or even lice so that we may alert other parents to the symptoms. We have no provisions for individual children to remain indoors during outside play so if you do not wish your child to play outdoors because of the weather or health reasons, please keep him/her at home that day.

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 requirement where immunization would be detrimental to a child's health, or where a child's parent, parents or guardian holds a sincere religious belief which is contrary to immunization practices.

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

For obvious reasons, if a sibling is ill, please do not bring him or her into the school.



Holiday Policy

The Community Nursery School acknowledges those holidays that are important in the lives of the children and their families as well as those holidays that are culturally significant to classroom curriculum goals. We want to reflect children's lives, the difference and sameness of us all, and expose children to other cultures as they grow and learn. Our curriculum will reflect equally all holidays acknowledged and celebrated in the secular versions by our families. Religious explanations are best left to the family setting. Each celebration will be limited in time and scope.



Emergencies

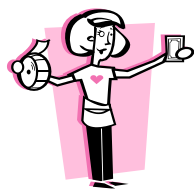
The emergency contacts must be reachable and able to pick up your child within 30 minutes of notification. We have asked you to fill out an emergency notification form online which lists the names of two people whom we could call in the event of illness or accident when you cannot be reached. It is extremely important that the names of these emergency people be kept current. Please notify us if these forms need to be changed or updated during the year.

We also ask you to fill out an emergency/disaster form so that in the event of evacuation for any reason, you or your caregiver will know where to pick up your child. These forms will be included in your summer packet.



Items from Home

NO ITEMS FROM HOME MAY BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL. Your child should be encouraged to leave her toys at home unless specifically requested by the teacher. This helps prevent mix-ups, misunderstandings, and grief over lost or broken toys. There are exceptions such as security blankets, needed friends, etc. The teachers should be made aware of your child's needs. However, under most circumstances it is not appropriate for toys to be brought in to school. A different toy every day does not fall under the needed category and just think if everyone wanted to bring in a toy! **NO PLAY WEAPONS ARE PERMITTED AT ANY TIME**



Parent Committee Events

Below is a brief description of some of our events planned by members of the Parent Committee.

The Annual Halloween Hoot for the 3s and 4s is usually the last Saturday in October. Dads OR Moms and children come dressed in costume WITHOUT MASKS, or EXCESSIVE MAKE-UP or WEAPONS - repeat - WITHOUT MASKS or EXCESSIVE MAKE-UP or WEAPONS to spend an hour sharing their costumes, doing simple crafts and of course the Hootenanny Songfest. The old tradition of only Dads coming (because they were the working parent) has long gone so either Mom or Dad is welcomed but just one of you. If a parent is not available, another adult or teenager is welcome BUT only one adult per child due to space limitations. (The Twos do not attend the Hoot for the simple reason that masks, costumes and most TWOS are an unwise combination especially in an unfamiliar situation like the HOOT so early in the year – this may be true for some 3's as well.)

Parent Parties – Our goal is that each class (sans children) holds a potluck-style party in the fall for the parents of those class members and staff, usually in the home of one of the class families. It is a great way to meet the parents of the children you hear about at the dinner table each night. And the food and company are always great.

The Fours Winter Party is held on a Saturday in February or March for the entire family with a little entertainment and a lot of food.

Our Annual Spring Fundraiser is held on a Thursday evening in March.

The Family Picnic and Carnival held in June is an old-fashioned affair on the nursery school lawn featuring a picnic supper, games of skill and chance such as The Ball Toss, The Fishing Pond, Milk Bottle Knock-down, Pin the Tail on Barney, as well as chalk drawing, face painting and spin art, plus entertainment for the whole family. A great way to end the year and say hello to summer.

Miscellaneous Information

After Hours Care by CNS Staff

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



Speech and Language Annual Screenings

When grants are available the Mercy College School of Communications Disorders will conduct speech, language screenings and hearing screenings at school for a limited number of children recommended by the teachers and/or parents. Parental permission is required for this screening.



Fundraising

The Nursery School Committee keeps fundraising events to a minimum and as pressure-free as possible. Our usual fund-raisers may include CNS-shirts, sweatshirts, water bottles available in the fall and Class and Individual Photos in May. Plus, an annual Spring Fundraiser and Auction Evening.



Tuition

We have added Zelle to enable you to pay online using our email address at cnsdobbsferry@aol.com Look for Zelle in your banking APP as it is a fast and easy to pay CNS tuition.

There will be no refunds for absence, vacation, force majeure, or reasons other than outlined above, whether voluntary or involuntary. Any student that withdraws from CNS will be credited for payments made less the contract payment and class time in session.

School tuition is paid the 1st of each month, June through February, unless another option for payment has been authorized. Checks should be made payable to **South Presbyterian Church** and mailed to:

Community Nursery School P.O. Box 35 Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522

No checks will be accepted in person by the teachers. Please use the black mailbox next to the office door for tuition payments not mailed or other communications such as Scholastic Books order forms.

\$\$\$ TAXES \$\$\$

Our Tax ID Employer Number is **13-1740405**. Your employer may offer an employee plan which allows you to deduct non-taxed money from your paycheck to pay for school tuition. We will gladly give the receipts necessary for you to claim this money. Monthly receipts are available by checking off the appropriate section on your payment coupon.

Child Abuse Policy

Community Nursery School adheres to its legal responsibility as mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect, suspected or actual, while maintaining a supportive atmosphere for the families throughout the process.



Snow Days and Snow Delays

In the event of winter weather or other severe weather conditions that necessitates a delayed opening or cancellation, we use an alert system for phone, text and email system which will advise you that there is a 1-hour delay, a 2 hour delay, or cancellation of classes. Normally we follow the Dobbs Ferry Schools' decision to delay or close. They base their decision on the village police department's recommendation for road safety. Please consult the schedule below for your child's class time.

We will make up sessions lost after one week of your program is lost to weather .i.e., if the M-T 2s miss more than 2 days because of weather we will make up the subsequent missed sessions.

2023-2024
WINTER WEATHER ALERT

**Dobbs Ferry Schools Closed:
Community Nursery School Closed**

**Dobbs Ferry Schools One Hour Delay:
4s arrive at 9:30
2s and 3s arrive at 9:45**

**Dobbs Ferry Schools Two Hour Delay:
2s - 10:15-12:00
4 & 5 day 3s- 10:15-12:15
3 Day 3s and AM 4s- 10:30-12:30**

**How Will I Know?
Watch for text or email notification from CNS
Check the Dobbs Ferry Schools website: www.dfsd.org**



Extended Weeks

We offer an optional Extended Weeks program after the close of the regular school year and before Summer Session for all of our currently enrolled children. It is a great bridge through June when your older children are still attending public school or summer camp is a long time coming.

Depending on the enrollment, we will combine children along age guidelines and groupings of children. For example, the PM 4s are combined with AM 4s or we may combine the different 2s and 3s classes. Staff may be different from the regular year as not all staff participate in the Extended Weeks. When we see the enrollment numbers and ages, we will be able to determine classes and staff.

The format is a modified summer session and runs for two weeks in the mornings only - 4 days each week. Only children currently enrolled in our school are eligible for this session. There will be a maximum of 30-40 in any one week. Enrollment will be on a first come basis as unfortunately we cannot serve our full population in the morning hours.



Summer Session

Each summer we offer a Summer Session to our currently enrolled 2s and 3s. Summer Session operates for 4 or 5 weeks, Monday – Friday, 9:15 AM to 12:10 in July. The exception is July 4.

Enrollment is limited to 30 children per session. **Although this session runs for 4 weeks, we offer an option for 2 -3 week sessions.** You may sign up for one or both sessions

Our **Summer Session** is conducted half of the time outdoors in a loosely structured setting. Please consider this when choosing camp for your child if a more structured program is needed for your child. During a portion of Session 1 the incoming 3s will begin their mornings indoors until they are familiar with their staff, the playground, the schedule and know their “home space”.

Preference for enrollment is given to:

- 1 – Children currently attending our 2s and 3s program
- 2 – Children registered for the next school year at CNS
- 3 – The general public will be enrolled **after March 30.**

Children attending our summer session must turn 3 years old by July 31. Exceptions will be for children currently attending our 2s program after consultation with the 2s teacher and parents.

All CNS families voluntarily assume all risks to exposure to COVID-19. CNS has taken enhanced health and safety measures according to the CDC and NYS Emergency Regulations, but families must realize that an inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present.