



Parent Manual

Dear Parents,

Welcome to **St. John's Nursery School!** We are happy that you have chosen our school and know that your child will have many wonderful and rewarding experiences here. We look forward to sharing these moments with you and your family.

This handbook outlines the policies and procedures of St. John's Nursery School. Please read it carefully and let us know if you have any questions regarding the enclosed information.

Our goal is to keep the needs of the children our priority. To this end, the teachers are always available to answer any questions that you may have and my door is open at all times. I welcome your feedback.

We are all looking forward to a terrific school year. Thank you.

All the best,
Catherine Bucci
Director

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Philosophy

The program at St. John's Nursery School is designed to enhance a child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development within an environment created especially for preschool children. We consider all aspects of development to be critical and place a particular emphasis on fostering the social and emotional development while also nurturing cognitive and physical development and skills.

The curriculum offers a balance between planned teacher-initiated activities and supervised free play. Because children can best master and integrate information through direct, personal experience, free play using a wide variety of materials is a part of each day. At these times, the teacher serves as a resource by preparing the environment conducive to learning, encouraging children to satisfy their curiosity by choosing materials that will expand their thinking.

Teachers also work to help children define the limits of appropriate behavior and to guide the development of interpersonal and group skills. Through a diverse curriculum, children learn to work comfortably both in group and individual settings. They gain the ability to use materials available to them and develop confidence in their level of competence. By developing a secure and nurturing environment, the school helps each child to attain the following goals:

- a positive sense of self
- an interest in discovering his/her world and the world of others
- positive interaction and communication skills with children and adults
- self-expression through dramatic play, art, music, movement
- development of an age-appropriate range of motor skills

In addition, individual goals for each child are identified by parents and staff throughout the year.

Registration and Enrollment Procedures

Information about the school may be obtained by contacting the school directly. A tour of the school while in session is recommended so that prospective families have the opportunity to see the school in operation and further discuss the program. An application must be completed and submitted with the application fee in order for a child to be considered for the program. Enrollment proceedings begin in December for the following September for all programs. Spaces will be filled by receipt of applications in the following order:

- children attending the 2- or 3-year-old class during the previous year
- children of parishioners in good standing
- siblings of former students
- new applicants
- additionally, the director, with teacher input will make decisions regarding placement with respect to group dynamics, balance of girls/boys and any special circumstances

Priority will be given to parishioners and siblings until November 30 of the preceding year. A **non-refundable** deposit of 20% of the child's tuition, to be applied to the first term's tuition, will be required upon notification of acceptance.

Tuition is payable prior to the start of the school year or in two installments, June 15 and September 15. In case a child has to be withdrawn, the parents are responsible for the full year's tuition unless a replacement is available from our waiting list. It should be noted that replacements are rarely available after the school year begins. Tuition bills are mailed by the school treasurer in May and September. Tuition may be submitted by check to the school or online through our website using PayPal. (Please note that payment by check is appreciated, if convenient for you, as PayPal charges the school a 3% fee for all online payments.)

No child or his/her family shall be discriminated against because of religion, cultural heritage, sex, political affiliation, national origin, race or disability.

Home Visits

Before school begins each September every child has a home visit from his/her teachers. We have found that this is a wonderful way to introduce ourselves to the children in their environment and also helps to ease the transition into school.

Arrival and Dismissal

Drop off is at 9:00am for the morning program and 12:45pm for the afternoon program. Pick up is at 11:30am for the morning program and 3:15pm for the afternoon program. The children enrolled in the 4-year-old program have the option to stay one day a week for lunch as well. Please be on time to pick up your child. If you find that you are going to be late picking up your child, it is most important that you call the school to inform us of your situation. This will help to reassure your child as they can become anxious if you are late. At present there is no set late policy, but is noted if a child is picked up after the scheduled time. If lateness becomes a problem, the issue will be brought to the Nursery School Board and it will be dealt with on an individual basis. We understand that there are days when circumstances prevent a parent from arriving on time. The teachers want to be there for you at those times and also want to ensure that your child's transition from school to home is a pleasant one.

Communication

It is important that teachers and parents work together. The staff at St. John's Nursery School is always available should you need to contact us for any reason. Parents and teachers do share information at drop off or pick up and this is also a busy time. The teachers are greeting and communicating with all families. If you encounter a problem or concern, please do not speak in front of your child. If possible, we would rather speak privately with you, schedule an appointment to meet, or participate in a phone call. Please advise us of any change in routine at home, such as illness, travel, pregnancy, separation or divorce. These factors can affect your child. We can better understand and help with your child's adjustment if we know what may be taking place at home. Confidentiality is strictly respected.

Also let us know of any change in address or telephone numbers during the year or if there is a change in the emergency telephone information.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conversations with parents and teachers go on throughout the year, but scheduled conferences will take place in the fall and in the spring. The dates for these scheduled conferences are on your school calendar. During the fall conference, it's an opportunity for both teachers and parents to gather more information, ask questions, and discuss adjustment to school or particular goals for your child. The conference in the spring will include a written developmental assessment for your child covering all areas of development.

Snacks

Parents provide healthy snacks to supplement the crackers at school. Some ideas are cheese sticks, celery, carrot sticks, yogurt, pepper strips (all colors) and all kinds of fruit. The snacks should be ready to eat and grapes must be cut in half because of the choking hazard. Please include your child in choosing his/her favorite snacks. We will assign one week for each child on a rotating basis. Due to severe peanut allergies, we are a peanut free environment. Peanut butter and peanut products will not be served. The teachers will distribute a snack schedule at the beginning of the year. We appreciate and thank you for your help.

Birthdays

The birthday child may bring a special snack such as cookies, small cupcakes, muffins, etc. to be served at snack time with all the children. The birthday child will also make a special birthday crown and a picture will be taken and displayed at school. For those children with summer birthdays, another day in the year (usually in the spring near the end of the school year) will be chosen to celebrate their special day if they would like.

Curriculum

The program and curriculum are child centered and play based. Children are encouraged to explore and experience materials and activities in a stimulating environment. Emphasis is placed on the development of the whole child and the curriculum is designed to promote creative expression and imaginative play. Teachers facilitate problem solving skills, social skills, language and emotional development through thoughtful guidance and supervision.

In the preschool classrooms children are given many opportunities to make decisions and choices. The classrooms are set up to encourage children to decide which activities they would like to explore and enjoy. During circle time children develop the ability to sequence, count, and develop stories through the use of the calendar, music, books and games. Children are encouraged to use language skills to express their thoughts and feelings. As older preschoolers in the 4-year-old classroom, all of these skills are further strengthened. The teachers work to identify the skills that each child will need in order to be ready for Kindergarten. Because a critical factor in school readiness is self-confidence, a good deal of time is spent helping the children develop an understanding of themselves and their relationship to the world around them. Time is devoted to investigating the surrounding world by experiencing the environment and its community. Social skills become increasingly sophisticated as the children begin to negotiate complex play situations independently. The room is set up to offer increased choices to the children, encouraging them to follow their interests and explore new ideas. Language and literacy skills are nurtured through storytelling and encouraging emerging reading and writing skills. Children's understanding of beginning math and science skills are reinforced through selected materials and experimentation. Art activities and materials are also introduced and incorporated to encourage creativity and self-expression.

An additional component to our program are the varied specialists. We have Spanish once a week where the teacher incorporates music, songs and movement into the instruction, making for a lively and fun experience. Yoga and movement has been a part of the program, as well as periodic visits from Greenburgh Nature Center.

Dress

Children feel best when they are dressed in comfortable clothes that they can take care of by themselves. Please remember that the children are encouraged to be active participants in climbing, running, and other large muscle activities. Sneakers and rubber sole shoes provide safe, secure footing on the playground. Sandals are difficult to climb in and easily fill with sand. Remember to make sure that your child is dressed in clothing that he/she can manage for bathroom needs. Please DO NOT send your child to school in special clothing that you are worried about soiling. Despite smocks for painting or art projects, there is always the possibility of getting clothes dirty and we encourage the children to participate in all activities, both inside and outside. They should not have to think about or worry

about getting their clothes dirty. Please label clothes with your child's name, especially raincoats and jackets.

Each child should have a complete change of clothing (shirt, pants, underpants and socks) to keep at school in case of an accident or soiling. Please label everything.

Unless the weather is extremely cold or inclement, we will have time outside every day. Please be sure your child has warm clothing appropriate for the weather conditions.

Snow Days

Snow days and school delays will coincide with the Mamaroneck School system. Television stations 2,4,5,7 and cable 12 announce school closings as well as several radio stations. A one-hour delay means that school will start at 10 o'clock. A 2-hour delay means that the morning session is cancelled but the afternoon class will have school. No school for the Mamaroneck Schools means no school for St. John's Nursery School. Additionally, you will be notified by email from the teachers and/or director.

Health and Safety

The most important component of St. John's Nursery School's health and safety policy is a strong commitment to the prevention of injuries and illness for the children and staff at the school. All teachers are responsible for monitoring the health and safety of the children in their care as well as the appropriateness of the surrounding environments.

If your child is not feeling well, please keep him/her at home. If your child becomes ill while at school, we will contact you to pick him/her up. Please notify the school when your child is absent, and let us know if your child has any communicable illness. We will make every effort to promptly inform parents in a confidential manner when a communicable illness has been reported to the school. Children must be free of fever for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school.

Children entering St. John's Nursery School must have a physical exam prior to enrollment. An annual physical examination is required for each child enrolled in the school and medical records must include evidence of age-appropriate immunizations. Parents should inform the Director of any changes concerning a

child's medical records or health needs. Parents should be sure to inform teachers of any food sensitivities, or suspected or confirmed allergies. A list detailing the allergies of individual children will be posted in each classroom so that all teachers may have this important information at a glance. Due to severe peanut allergies we are a peanut free environment. Peanut butter and peanut products will not be served nor should they be brought to school.

State law requires that a child is immunized against rubella, polio, diphtheria, measles and mumps, and chicken pox, as well as requiring a blood level screening unless the child is exempt from this process. If your child is exempt, proper documentation must be on file in the office.

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 children are immunized. Public health law 2164 provides exemptions to the immunization requirements where immunization would be detrimental to a child's health.

Evacuation Plan

1. The teacher will ring the bell. The children stop what they are doing and listen to the teacher for directions.
2. The teacher will count the children, lead the children out of the building, and proceed to the playground. One teacher will lead, the children will follow, and one teacher will be at the end of the line.
3. The teacher will count the children, once again, and stay in the playground until it is safe to reenter the school.

In the event of an emergency or necessary evacuation, this will be followed by all classrooms.

If it is necessary to evacuate all the premises of St. John's, the teachers and children will proceed to Larchmont Temple, 75 Larchmont Ave., Larchmont, NY.

The teachers will have contact information for all the children in the event it is necessary to be in touch with parents and guardians.