



**NPNS Parent Handbook  
2019-2020**

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## **NPNS Parent Handbook**

Welcome to the Noroton Presbyterian Nursery School (NPNS). NPNS was established by the Noroton Presbyterian Church (NPC) in 1957 to meet the needs for quality early childhood education for the children of NPC and our community neighbors.

NPNS is a non-profit, self-supporting program licensed by the CT State Board of Health. The school is a Ministry of NPC and is guided by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of parent volunteers, the Director of NPNS, and a church Elder.

### **Program Philosophy- Nurturing a Love of Learning**

We believe that every early childhood experience depends upon consistent caregiving in a nurturing atmosphere. Children grow and learn best in a safe environment that provides opportunities to explore, create, and communicate with other children and adults. We desire to provide children the opportunity to function independently but cooperatively, following routines appropriate to age and individual needs.

Our school's program is designed to include both intentional and emergent activities in response to children's interests. Experiences with music, movement, art, language, and building are incorporated into daily plans. Regularly scheduled snacks, indoor and outdoor play, and routines in physical caregiving promote the child's health, comfort, and ability to care for him/herself.

Children are encouraged to develop a positive self-image, to learn inner controls, and to cooperate with peers and caregivers. Clearly defined limits help them recognize and accept their emotions and express their feelings as they grow and feel secure in the world around them.

Christian education is an important component of our program at NPNS. Children develop a sense of spirituality through exposure to songs and stories, as well as through contact with faculty who model Christian behavior. Bible stories and Christian-based themes are integrated into the weekly curriculum through our chapel program for our 4's and Pre-K classes.

We at NPNS strive to recognize and fulfill the individual needs of preschoolers and to help them grow and develop to their fullest potential. We seek to have children become aware of their abilities and to build a strong self-image. Also, our goal is to help them expand their knowledge and awareness of the world around them. Finally, we strive to promote learning as an exciting, rewarding experience.

In our preschool classes, many areas of learning are introduced in an atmosphere which is partly structured and partly open. The children are encouraged to accept routines and follow instructions as they learn to function as part of a class. There is ample free time for individual creative expression in child-initiated play situations and artistic pursuits.

Children are also taught to recognize shapes, differentiate between forms, and classify materials as a prelude to reading readiness and number work. There are arts and crafts projects in which children learn to cut, paste, and color. Experimentation with creative media is encouraged: paints, crayons, chalk, clay, and play dough are a few of the mediums used to learn from and design and to cultivate self-expression. Singing, rhythmic movements, and creative drama are all introduced throughout the day. Our outdoor games and playground activity offer the opportunity for physical growth and improvement of large muscle coordination. Cooking and science experiences are presented throughout the year. Enrichment programs for all ages include chapel, Junior Naturalists, music, field trips, and community visitors.

## **The Reggio Way**

Classrooms at NPNS reflect the Reggio Emilia Philosophy, which promotes the importance of beautiful spaces for children to learn in. Classrooms have plenty of light, natural fibers, objects of interest displayed intermittently, mirrors, access to the outdoors (birdhouses) and music.

One of the very clear distinctions between a traditional teaching philosophy where the teacher instructs the child and orchestrates play and the Reggio approach is that the teacher is required to move from play space to play space and investigates the learning that is taking place with the children. Teachers participate in the play (teacher as a learner), ask open-ended questions, make suggestions for studies to further the learning process, and document the children's activities. Teachers then revisit all the discussions that have been documented at the end of the day to develop a plan with the children if they decide to continue with a study.

## **Curriculum**

The curriculum at NPNS is based on the standards set by the Connecticut State Board of Education-Preschool Curriculum Goals and Benchmarks. It is developmentally based on the ages of the children attending the program. Our curriculum is overlaid with the Reggio Emilia philosophy of teaching. This improved curriculum allows us to maintain the integrity of sound teaching principles and at the same time have a strong influence in art, literature, and science as a basis for learning. We work in conjunction with an education coordinator to assist staff in curriculum development and implementation.

NPNS provides a print-rich, language-rich environment in which books, visual displays, and verbal interaction broaden the child's understanding of the familiar world. Active play in our gym and on our playground helps to develop gross motor skills. Songs, instruments, and creative movement in group time further enrich our comprehensive curriculum. This enhanced curriculum considers children's relationships and interactions within the system, the role of space, values of family, teachers as partners, and centrality of cooperation and collaboration.

## **Admissions Procedures**

Children enrolled in our current 2's and 3's classes are guaranteed a space in the program for the following school year. Children in our program looking at Pre-K for the next year will be evaluated by their teachers and the NPNS Director and placed in the program based on the child's birthday and needs. Please note that children already in the morning program have priority for morning spaces. Children in the afternoon program may apply for morning and will be accommodated on a space available basis.

All church members or children of the community new to the program may apply in January. Open Houses for new families are offered in early December and early January and may be scheduled using the web sign-up at NPNS.org. The deadline for registration is typically the second week of January. Notification of acceptance into the program (or placement on a waitlist) typically occurs the third week of January. If accepted, signed contracts and the first tuition installment are due by January 31st of that year.

**\*Please note: The priority list below applies to acceptance to the program only. It does not apply to placement within the program.**

Children are accepted based on a lottery system which follows this priority order:

- 1) Currently enrolled children, as noted above.
- 2) Children of NPNS staff / Children of NPC members who are siblings of current NPNS students **(i.e. applicants and siblings will both be attending in September).**
- 3) Siblings of current NPNS students **(i.e., applicants and siblings will both be attending in September).**
- 4) Siblings of current NPNS students **(i.e., only sibling will be attending in September).**
- 5) Children of NPC members who are siblings of previously enrolled students.
- 6) Children of NPC members.
- 7) Children of NPC staff / non-church members who are siblings of previously enrolled students.
- 8) Children who are registered users of Noroton Presbyterian Child Care. (MOPS and Sunday School does not count. Children must be an active and registered member of NPCC).
- 9) Children of the community at large.

**Note: A parent must be an NPC member by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the prior year in order to enroll as children of a church member.**

Within each age group, applications are arranged into the nine priority groups outlined above. The applications are further separated by gender within each priority group. A lottery is conducted, random and blind, which will determine the order of acceptance into the program. Neither the Director nor members of the NPNS Board are involved in the lottery. The assignment of lottery placement is not influenced by the ability to donate to the school, participation in NPC or NPNS activities, volunteering as an NPNS Board Member, or any other factor.

Within each age group, applications are accepted into the program until the total number of spaces for that particular age group is full. Any additional applicants are placed on a waitlist and a letter is sent to the family notifying them of placement on the waitlist.

### **Placement within Program**

Once accepted into the age-specific program, placement into a child's preferred choice number of days and morning or afternoon classes **(not a specific class placement or teacher request)** will be based on a lottery system which follows the following priority order:

- 1) Currently enrolled children, as noted above.
- 2) Children of NPNS staff / Children of NPC members who are siblings of current NPNS students **(i.e. applicants and siblings will both be attending in September).**
- 3) Siblings of current NPNS students **(i.e., applicants and siblings will both be attending in September).**
- 4) Siblings of current NPNS students **(i.e., only sibling will be attending in September).**
- 5) Children of NPC members who are siblings of previously enrolled students.
- 6) Children of NPC members.
- 7) Children of NPC staff / non-church members who are siblings of previously enrolled students.
- 8) Children who are registered users of Noroton Presbyterian Child Care. (MOPS and Sunday

School does not count. Children must be an active and registered member of NPCC).

9) Children of the community at large.

Within each age group, accepted children are arranged into the six priority groups listed above, and a lottery is then conducted. The lottery, random and blind, will determine the placement of each child.

If the child does NOT receive their first choice, they will be automatically placed on a waitlist for their first choice in the order that their name was selected by lottery and will be offered their second choice (if the second choice is unavailable, the child will be offered their third choice and so forth).

You will receive either a contract or waitlist letter by mail, no later than January 25th. Please return one signed contract, along with the first tuition payment, by 3 PM on the due date listed. If you do not choose to accept the contract offered to you, please contact NPNS and let us know you are declining the spot offered and if you would like to remain on the waitlist.

### **Provisional Enrollment Period**

The first 30 days will be regarded as a trial period, in which case either party may terminate the contract without notice. After the first 30 days of enrollment, please see the withdrawal policy.

### **Tuition Assistance**

Tuition assistance (scholarship) is available for 3's, and 4's only, not for 2's or Pre-K. **Parents seeking scholarships should indicate their need in writing to the NPNS Director.** The Director will forward the letter to the Moderator of the Deacons at NPC. The Moderator, along with clergy and a Deacon committee, shall determine if the scholarship is approved and will communicate directly with the Director when a scholarship is awarded. All scholarship requests and grants are held in complete confidence.

As the circumstances dictating the need for a scholarship may change, all families receiving a scholarship must reapply annually in order to receive subsequent scholarships.

### **Transition Schedule**

#### **Two's**

The 2's classes are Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday or Thursday/Friday from 9:00-11:45 a.m. Classes are open to children who are two years old by August 31st. A parent or caregiver must remain at school with a two-year-old for the first **two** sessions. Two's do not need to be potty trained to attend NPNS.

#### **Three's and Four's**

**Children attending the 3's and 4's program must be fully potty trained. Please see the potty policy.**

Morning classes for the 3's are from 9-11:45 a.m. in either the four day (M/T/W/Th) or five day (M-F) classes. Our afternoon class is 12:15-3:00 p.m. (M/T/Th/F).

Morning classes for the 4's meet from 9:00-11:45 a.m. and run M-F. Longer Day 4's are in class from 9:00 a.m. - 1:15 p.m., M/T/Th/F and 9:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. on Wednesdays. Longer Day 4's have lunch in their class. All afternoon classes run from 12:15-3:00 p.m. M/T/Th/F.

## **Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K)**

Our Pre-K program is for children who have completed a 4's program and would benefit from an additional year of nursery school before entering Kindergarten.

Requirements for Pre-K Acceptance:

- A child must have a letter of recommendation from their current 4's teacher if not a current NPNS student stating their need for a Pre-K program.
- Children with birthdays between September and December will be given priority acceptance.

This program meets five days per week, 9:00 a.m. – 1:55 p.m. on M/T/Th/F and 9:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. on Wednesdays. Pre-K will have lunch in their class M/T/Th/F.

The Pre-K curriculum is specifically designed to provide educational experiences for the older four and early five-year-olds who would benefit from an extra year of maturity to have a successful Kindergarten experience. We believe a child develops social and emotional competency when they are allowed to explore and experience in-depth mastery of skills and social situations in a supportive, small classroom setting. Language enrichment, mathematical game applications, and more complex dramatic play environments are among the classroom tools that support the transitional classroom. Problem-solving, planning, negotiating, and experimentation are strategies that further contribute to the classroom experience. The children have special programs and events specific to their class and playground activities offer the opportunity for additional physical growth and gross motor development.

## **Extended Day Programs**

The NPNS extended day program is a school enrichment program for children who are enrolled in the 3's and 4's classes. This program is offered on a session-basis only. Session 1 runs from late September through January and Session 2 runs from late January through May. Registration will occur in August/September and again in December/January. Parents may register children for one or both sessions and multiple days per session.

Extended day is designed for children to socialize in a relaxed atmosphere over lunch and then participate in a planned group activity. Specific Extended Day information and enrollment forms will be available on the website in August. Classes will not be held without a minimum of 8 students enrolled.

Payments for all extended day sessions must be made at the time of program registration. No make-up classes will be added or refund given due to snow days.

**Summer Camp - NPNS does not endorse ANY camps run outside of the NPNS property.**

## **Teaching Staff**

Our teaching staff is selected according to education, professionalism, personal warmth, and commitment to young children. Two teachers will co-teach each class. Ideally, NPNS strives to have all its teachers certified in Early Childhood, with a Bachelor's Degree in Education or a related field (with courses reflecting the core curriculum of Early Childhood). Present faculty and teaching candidates with this credential are the preference for Pre-K and 4's classes. Our staff includes

Classroom Teachers, Support Staff, Music Teacher, Junior Naturalist Teachers, and Part Time Nurse. Weekly staff meetings, workshops, conferences, use of the staff library, and additional college courses offer ongoing education for the staff.

## **Parent Involvement**

Parent participation is another fundamental piece of our program at NPNS. All parents with children attending NPNS are encouraged to participate. The NPNS Board of Directors (The Board) is comprised primarily of parent volunteers doing various tasks which support the school. The Board manages the finances of the school (including fundraising), arranges parent education classes, organizes school-wide functions, and much more. The Board meets monthly and follows a set of by-laws to manage the school.

Volunteer Room Parents also play a key role in acting as the liaison between the teachers and the parents. They coordinate snack for the classroom, help organize class gifts, and facilitate any other class communication as indicated by the classroom teachers.

The list of the Board of Directors is on the NPNS website, under the Parent tab.

## **The School Calendar**

NPNS uses the Darien Public School calendar as a guideline for most holidays and vacations. The NPNS Board votes on the NPNS school calendar each year. Students attend from roughly mid-September through the second week of June. The school calendar is on the NPNS website.

## **Parent Conferences**

Parent conferences are held twice throughout the year. The first conference is held in the fall. The objective is to familiarize the teacher with your child through the parents' perspective and together with the parent, set the goals for the child for the year.

The second conference is held in the spring. For the 2's and 3's the objective is to evaluate progress and set strategies for further development. The 4's and Pre-K conference is to benchmark development for Kindergarten readiness. Parents of 4's, who wish to discuss Pre-K, are invited to schedule a conference with their child's teacher in early December.

## **Communication**

There are several means of communication between parents and NPNS staff. Each classroom will email a weekly summary of activities and upcoming events and post information pertinent to your child's particular class near their classroom doorway. This includes snack calendar sign-ups, conference sign-ups, and field trip notification. Please check your child's totes on a daily basis for flyers and teacher's notes.

With day-to-day news, email is our primary mode of communication and Remind will be our secondary. In the event that the school needs to contact you within 24 hours, Remind will be the primary mode of communication. Please speak to Jessica in the office to gain additional information about Remind. Our school website is located at [www.npns.org](http://www.npns.org).



## **Family Events**

Throughout the school year, the NPNS Board will host numerous events for NPNS children and their families. Information regarding dates and times will be communicated via email invites and monthly reminders.

## **Fundraising**

Each year the NPNS Board raises funds for improvements made to the school through small events or a larger formal fundraising gala. The Director and the teachers are always included in the process to determine the needs of the school. The success of these events is determined by parent participation.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **NPNS Emergency Procedures**

**MEDICAL:** In case of a medical emergency, a qualified staff member will attend to first aid as needed. Another staff member will notify the family of the child. Attempts will be made to consult with the child's physician/dentist. If neither is available, the program's medical consultants will be contacted. For extreme emergencies, 911 will be called. An ambulance will take the child and a staff member to the nearest hospital. The child's emergency permission form will be brought with them. A staff member will notify the family or alternate pickup person to meet the child in the Emergency Room. Additional staff will be called in if necessary to maintain the required ratios. In the event a child becomes ill while at NPNS, parents will be notified and the child will be moved to a designated area where the child will be made comfortable. A staff person will remain with the child at all times.

**FIRE:** In the event of a fire, evacuation from the building will be through the closest fire exit. Staff will be responsible for supervising the children under their care and leading them immediately to the fire exit. The group will walk to the designated area safely away from the building and line up to take a name to face attendance. Teachers will be responsible for taking attendance books, emergency cards, dismissal forms, and a cell phone. Should it not be possible to return to the building, staff will walk the children to the alternate shelter. Parents will be notified.

**WEATHER:** On snow days, or during other hazardous weather emergencies, the program will follow the town Public School closing, delay, or early dismissal schedule. Parents will be notified via email and Remind to pick up their children due to early closing. Ratios will be maintained at all times and two staff 18 years or older will remain on the premises with the children until all are picked up. In the event of other serious weather emergencies, such as tornadoes or hurricanes, staff and children will remain indoors away from windows and doors. First aid staff will be on hand to administer first aid as needed until emergency personnel can arrive. Parents will be notified after the immediate danger has passed.

**EVACUATION:** In the event that we must evacuate the facility, the children will be walked to the Lawrence Funeral Home. Advanced contact has been made with the town's Civil Preparedness Unit, adding NPNS to their list for emergencies. Parents will also be notified to pick up their children via Remind. Ratios will be maintained at all times and two staff 18 years or older will remain with the children until all children are picked up.

## **About the Facility**

On the upper level, the program occupies ten teaching classrooms, Director's office, schools' office, and staff workroom. The NPNS library and indoor gym are located on the lower level.

The Nursery School's hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

## **Drop Off**

Parents are expected to park their cars and walk their child(ren) into the school and to the classroom. The teachers will be there to greet your child and help them get ready for the day. The goal is for your child to become familiar with classroom expectations and independent (as appropriate to their age) in implementing those expectations.

Parents **MUST** sign their child in and out each school day. All classes have a sign-in/out sheet posted outside the classroom. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the child's caregiver to sign it for them if they are dropping off or picking the child up. This is a state law.

## **Special Items From Home**

It is preferred that children do not bring special things from home as the sharing of such items is often difficult. If your child has difficulty separating from something (such as a special doll or security blanket), please discuss this with the teacher and together come up with a plan.

## **Clothing**

Children play hard at NPNS and need to be comfortable. We ask that parents dress children in clothes suitable for the many art, playground, and climbing activities of their day. Cold weather does not necessarily keep us indoors. **Dress your child with the assumption they will be going outdoors.** Be sure they are wearing the necessary mittens, sweaters, hats, etc. appropriate for the day's weather changes. All clothing should be labeled with the family's name to facilitate dressing and reduce loss.

One full set of extra clothes should be kept in your child's classroom, even for the oldest children, as they may get wet or messy during play. This set of clothes should be labeled. If an accident occurs, the soiled belongings go home in a plastic bag at the end of each day.

**Children's shoes need to be appropriate for indoor/outdoor play. Wet snow boots need to be replaced with indoor shoes. Sneakers or closed toed rubber-soled shoes are required for safe play. No crocs, flip-flops, or sandals please.**

## **Diaper Routines**

Diapers are checked often in the 2's classroom. Diaper changing procedures are posted above the changing table. Faculty must wear disposable plastic gloves when changing a diaper. Children in the 3's or 4's classes must be fully potty trained (no pull-ups).

## **Pick Up**

Your child will only be released to his/her parents or those adults identified on the dismissal card. Your child will only be released to another adult if parent notification has been given in writing from the

child's parent. Please send a letter in or send an email to the office manager, Jess Hoyt, [Office@NPNS.org](mailto:Office@NPNS.org), or to Kalie Riordan the Director, [Director@NPNS.org](mailto:Director@NPNS.org) . **No exceptions will be made.** Parents are expected to wait outside the child's classroom until the teacher opens the door.

**Please do not permit children to run in the hallways, lobby, or parking lot or to roam unattended.**

### **Late Pick-up Policy and Procedure:**

Timeliness and predictable routines are important for the emotional well being of young children. Therefore, prompt pick-ups at the appropriate time are a vital part of the school day. With the shared goal of ensuring a consistent, safe, and well-organized learning environment that meets the needs of both children and staff, we ask that parents and caregivers adhere to the following late pick-up policy and procedure:

Two staff members, 18 years of age or older, will remain at the program with the child at all times. If a child is not picked up after school, he/she will be brought to the Main Office. NPNS will call the parent or caregiver. If a child is still not picked up after 15 minutes, the emergency pick up procedure will be activated: Each of the emergency contacts will be called. The police will be called after 90 minutes if parents or other adults specified on the emergency/dismissal forms cannot be reached. At that time the child may be released to the police. The non-emergency number for the Darien Police Department is 203-662-5300.

First offense: A parent/caregiver who picks up a child more than 15 minutes late is given a warning. Second and subsequent offenses: You will be charged \$15.00 for the first 15 minutes and an additional \$10.00 for every 5 minutes thereafter. Fines will be paid at the time of pick-up.

**Teachers are not permitted to transport children to or from school.**

### **Safety in the Parking Lot**

NPC is a very busy place. Please use caution when walking with your children in the parking lot. Encourage hand holding and never leave younger siblings unattended in your car. **Please do not park in the fire lanes or spots designated for the elderly or handicapped spaces.**

### **Incident/Accident/Illness Reports**

If a child has a temper tantrum, gets sick during the school day, or behaves in any way that appears to be "out of their norm," it is considered an "incident" and reported and discussed with the Director to determine if it should be logged for permanent record. The teachers have "incident" forms which parents are requested to sign in acknowledgment.

In the event of an injury, the teacher-in-charge will determine what type of assistance is required. If emergency first aid is needed, the Director's office is notified. For minor injuries, basic first aid will be administered. An accident report will be filled out completely by the faculty member who observed and treated the injured child. One copy goes to the parent at the end of the day, one stays in the classroom, and one goes to the Director for the child's permanent file.

In the event of a serious injury or illness, the parents will be notified. If the parents are not available, the emergency numbers will be called. If immediate emergency medical treatment is required, Post 53 will take the child to the hospital Emergency Room accompanied the Director or the person in charge in the event of the Director's absence.

## Incident Weather

NPNS follows the Darien Public Schools (DPS) for all weather-related delays, early dismissals, and closings. We will notify NPNS families via Remind and email if possible.

- If DPS is closed, NPNS will be closed.
- If DPS has a delay no matter the length of the delay, NPNS will open at 10 am.
- If DPS has an early dismissal, NPNS will dismiss **all** classes at 11:45. No Extended Day or afternoon classes.
- If DPS has an early **emergency** dismissal that is called after school is in session, NPNS will close at 10:30. No Extended Day or afternoon classes.

If parents feel that the roads are hazardous, please feel free to pick up your child(ren) before early closing or keep them home for the day. Snow days are not made up.

## POLICIES

*The following are the policies that guide NPNS. Please read them carefully and complete the Policy Agreement Form. This form needs to be returned with your child's entry paperwork.*

### Snack and Lunch Policy - NPNS is a NUT FREE Environment

“Snack” means a light meal **containing two (2) food groups**. “Meal” means food served and eaten in one sitting **containing four (4) food groups**. Parents must supply their child's lunch box. Be sure to label their lunch and provide an ice pack for items that may be perishable.

Due to the increased number of children entering school with food allergies and our concern about children's nutrition, NPNS has developed a list of approved snacks. Room parents will coordinate the snack calendar and parents will take turns providing the snack for the class. Snack calendars will be posted outside the classroom. **ONLY snacks from the approved list will be accepted and all packaged goods coming into the classroom must be unopened and in original packaging.**

### Complaint Procedure Policy

Most issues within the nursery school are non-life threatening and can be resolved by following the order listed: discuss the issue with the classroom teacher, discuss the issue with the Director, discuss the issue with the Chair of the Board of Directors, discuss the issue with the Pastor of the Church, discuss the issue with the Department of Public Health.

All inspection reports and compliance letters for the nursery school are available for your review by contacting the Department of Health-Day Care Licensing Unit. The same process works for compliments as well!

### Health and Medical Policies

At NPNS, we are very interested in the continuing good health and safety of the children. A medical form for each child must be completed. Two emergency cards must be completed by parents and returned to the school before a child is present without a parent. As previously stated, in the case of a serious accident or illness, parents are contacted immediately. If a parent cannot be reached, we

follow emergency instructions as indicated on the emergency card.

Please keep your child at home if you notice any of the following: a runny nose, sore throat, swollen glands, pain, earache, rash, nausea, inflamed eyes, flushed face, or unusual pallor. The sneezing and coughing of a cold are contagious.

**No child should return to school until a full 24 hours has passed without fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, without the use of medication.**

Notify the school if your child has a contagious illness/disease or lice. The school will display an exposure notice outside your child's classroom as well as send an email home. This is important not just for childhood illness, but also for pregnant women or a family with a serious medical condition. The teachers will be alert for obvious symptoms when a child arrives in the morning. If the child does not seem well, the parent will be called.

**Return to school after a case lice:**

Any child with lice may return to school with a doctor's note stating they are clear of lice and are nit free.

**Return to school after an injury or surgery:**

Any child, who is not able to participate in active play indoors, is welcome to attend class accompanied by a parent or caregiver. If a child is unable to participate in outdoor or physical play in the gym, the Director will work with the parent to make arrangements that best suit the individual needs and situation. **No child should return to school with a cast or stitches/staples without a doctor's release to participate fully in school activities and the Director's approval.**

**Immunization/ Medical Health Form Policy**

NPNS requires all students to be in full compliance with the State of Connecticut Licensing requirements regarding annual physicals and immunizations. This includes the recent addition of the Flu vaccine requirement. The State of Connecticut Department of Health requires by January 1, 2019, all children aged 6-59 months attending a nursery school, must receive at least one dose of the influenza vaccine between September 1st and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019. If children are vaccinated during August, these vaccinations will be accepted and count toward the mandate requirement. All children aged 6-59 months who have never received vaccination against influenza will receive 2 doses. Proof of immunization or proof of exemption must be signed by your child's doctor and notarized as per the state requirement.

The Connecticut Medical Health Form, which can be found on the NPNS website, must be kept up to date by the parents. As your child has an annual physical, the Medical Health Form must be updated and turned into the Director's office for filing. The date of the Medical Health Form is the **"Date of the Last Exam"** as stated on the form.

The form must include the full dates of immunizations. Each form must have the physician's signature and stamp of the practice giving the printed name and address. The form is confidential and seen by the school nurse and the Director. "Labels" of conditions are not used unless it is necessary for the teacher to have information to protect the child from risk/exposures. It is a parent's responsibility to provide the school with an updated form once the current form has expired.

### **Potty Policy:**

Two-year-old children attending NPNS may come in their diapers. The staff is specifically equipped to change diapers using disposable gloves and changing pads. As each child learns to use the toilet, the teachers and staff support his/her transition. Please have extra diapers and wipes in your child's backpack.

Three and four-year-old children enrolled at NPNS MUST be toilet trained. This is defined as the child needs to be able to manage, with little help, their own clothing, to wipe themselves, and to wash their hands. Pull-ups are not permitted in our 3's and 4's programs.

We do understand your child may have an accident while at school. Our staff will try to handle these expediently and quietly. Please provide your child with a change of clothes including underwear. The school will keep extra clothes on hand to be used in emergency situations. If your child has a loose bowel movement, we will ask that you pick them up early as they may be experiencing a stomach condition which may be contagious to the rest of the class. If your child has a bowel movement accident, we will ask you or a child care provider to come in and change them.

While we try to work with families and recognize children need support during this developmental milestone, we do adhere to our policy and parents may be asked to temporarily keep their children at home until they show progression and/or meet the expectation. Should there be any medical condition which limits a child's ability in self-regulating, please have your physician note that on your child's health form.

### **Biting Policy:**

At NPNS our first concern is the health and safety of the children. We take biting very seriously. Bites are painful and may break the skin which can cause the spread of infection. If your child bites or is bitten, we will contact you immediately.

For the 2's – Two-year-olds with limited language skills may bite out of frustration. The biter will be removed from the group and told: "No, we do not ever bite our friends." He will rejoin the group when the teacher feels he or she has 'heard' her. The child will not be sent home. The parent will be encouraged to reinforce our message at home.

For the 3's – Three-year-olds seldom bite but may do so if frustrated in certain situations. The three-year-old will be removed from the group and spoken to. If the child bites again, a parent will be asked to come to pick up the child. The child can return to school the next day.

For the 4's and Pre-k – Biting is not acceptable and the parent will be asked to pick up the child from school.

To minimize the possibility of a bite, teachers will monitor their classrooms and the interactions of the children, redirecting if it seems necessary. The school can assign one of the floaters to the classroom on a short term basis to provide additional adult supervision. If, however, after reasonable efforts have been made to keep the child from biting, the school may determine that, for the safety of others, the child cannot be enrolled in school.

### **Children with Special Needs:**

The physician should note any health factors about the child that the school should know. At NPNS, we do not interview or evaluate children for acceptance into the program. We do require a visit to help ascertain any obvious special needs and to guide placement. In the case of special needs, we shall work with parents and other professional personnel. If, after reasonable accommodation, we feel that we cannot meet the needs of a child, we will ask for his/her withdrawal.

### **Medication Policy:**

NPNS will only administer emergency medications which include prescribed inhalers, premeasured commercially prepared injectable medication (i.e., Epi-pens, Auvi-Q, etc.), and EMERGENCY oral medications (i.e., Benadryl). The parental responsibilities include providing NPNS the proper medication authorization form and the medication. The medication administration form must be signed by the authorized prescriber and parent/guardian giving NPNS authorization to administer the medication. This form is available on our website, [www.NPNS.org](http://www.NPNS.org).

The medication authorization form must include the following information:

- The child's name, address, and birthdate
- The date the medication order was written
- Medication name, dose, and method of administration
- Relevant side effects and prescribers plan for management should they occur
- Notation whether the medication is a controlled drug
- Listing of allergies, if any, reactions or negative interactions with foods/drugs
- Specific instructions from prescriber how the medication is to be given
- Name, address, telephone number and signature of the authorized prescriber ordering the drug
- Name, address, telephone number, signature and relationship to the child of the parents giving permission for the administration of the drug by a staff member.

Please note that there are many variations of the medication administration form that medical providers have access to. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the medication administration form clearly states that it is for licensed child care centers. **Please understand that your child may not be able to attend if he/she does not have the proper authorization.**

All medications must be in their original child-resistant safety container and clearly labeled with the child's name, the name of prescription, date of prescription, and directions for use. Except for non-prescription medications, premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications (i.e., Epi-pens), glucagon, and asthma inhalant medications, all medications will be stored in a locked container and, if directed by a manufacturer, refrigerated. Controlled medications will be stored in accordance with 21a-262-10 of the RCSA. Medications will be stored away from food and inaccessible to children.

NPNS staff responsibilities include, but are not limited to, ensuring the medication administration form is complete, that the medication received matches the medication ordered, and that the medication is stored as directed.

NPNS staff will keep accurate documentation of all medications administered. Included, but not

limited in the documentation are:

- Name, address, and DOB of the child
- Name of the medication and dosage
- Pharmacy name and prescription number
- Name of the authorized prescriber
- The date & time the medication was administered
- The dose that was administered
- The level of cooperation of the child
- Any medications errors
- Food and medication allergies
- Signature of the staff administering
- Any comments

Parents will be notified by phone when/if a child has been administered any prescription medication. Our staff is trained in the administration of medication by a physician, physician assistant, APRN, or RN and renewed every year. Training for premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications is renewed each year. At no time is an untrained staff allowed to administer prescription medications.

All unused or expired medication shall be returned to the parent/guardian.

### **Discipline Policy**

The staff of NPNS shall not use abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child shall be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety and health of the child or others. Removal of a child from the group for disciplinary or health reasons will be to a location where visual supervision by staff can be maintained.

Generally, a teacher will take a child aside and speak to him or her about the behavior, using positive reinforcement, redirection, setting clear limits, and guidance. For example, a child may be asked to choose a different activity for a while until materials can be used with more care, in a safer manner. Children may be separated from activities until they are calm enough to rejoin the group.

Inappropriate behavior, which continues, and may cause injury to other children and/or the teachers, is cause for concern and intervention. A parent-teacher conference to discuss the behavior is the next step. In some cases, outside professional help is required in order for the child to continue in school. It is always imperative that home and school cooperate with mutual goals and procedures.

### **Abuse and Neglect Policy**

All of our staff have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children involved at NPNS and have been trained as Mandated Reporters.

Child Abuse includes:

- Any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e., shaking, beating, burning)
- Any form of sexual abuse (i.e., sexual exploitation)
- Neglect of a child (i.e., failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision)
- Emotional abuse (i.e., excessive belittling, berating, or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth)



- At risk behavior (i.e., placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect).

Child Abuse is defined as: A child who has had:

- Non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him
- Injuries which are at variance with the history given of them
- Is in a condition, which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to,
- malnutrition, sexual exploitation, and deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

Child neglect is defined as: A child who has been:

- Abandoned
- Denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally
- Allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his well-being (CT statutes 46b-120)

Specifics on reporting a suspected case of abuse or neglect

- Call the Department of Children and Families (open 24 hours a day) at 1-800-842-2288.
- The reporter's name is required, but may be kept confidential. Information needed includes:
  - Name of child/Date of birth
  - Address of child
  - Phone number of child
  - Name of parents or guardians
  - Address of parents or guardians
  - Phone number of parents or guardians
  - Relevant information such as: physical or behavioral indicators, nature, and extent of injury, maltreatment, or neglect
  - The exact description of what the reporter has observed
  - Time and date of the incident
  - Information about previous injuries, if any
  - Circumstances under which reporter learned of abuse
  - Name of any person suspected of causing injury
  - Any information reporter believes would be helpful
  - Any action taken to help or treat the child
  - Seek medical attention for the child, if needed

Staff responsibilities:

- As childcare providers, we are mandated by law to report **any suspicion** that a child is being abused, neglected or at risk.
- When an accusation of abuse or neglect by a staff member is made, the Director must immediately inform the parents or guardians that a report has been made to DCF. Health care officials may need to talk to a child's parents to access the cause of the child's injuries and offer support and guidance.
- Mandated reporters must report orally to DCF or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. Within 48 hours of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a written report (DCF – 136) to DCF.
- The staff is protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT General Statutes, Section 17a-101e).
- All phone calls to DCF shall be documented and kept on file at NPNS. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.

- The Director of NPNS supports a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child.
- The administration will protect the child and immediately notify a parent or guardian if there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child in our program.
- Any staff member accused of abuse or neglect may be immediately removed from his or her position until DCF's investigation is completed. Based on whether the allegations were substantiated or not, the employee would either be dismissed from his/her position or allowed to return to work.

Staff Training:

- Staff will be required to attend annual staff meetings, held in September, focusing on the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of a mandated reporter. All new staff will be trained in these procedures prior to their start in the classroom.
- Provisions for informing families of abuse and neglect policy:
  - A copy of this policy will be included in our parent information packet, and each family will be given a copy upon enrollment. A copy of this policy can be found in the school office.

**Field Trip Permission Policy**

All classes go on field trips during the year. This may include museums, theaters, farms, etc. Transportation will be provided by Chartered Buses.

Parents are notified in advance of any trips and a signup sheet is posted outside of the classroom, which requires a signature indicating parental notification and permission. Also, by initialing next to the field trip box on the policy agreement form, you agree to release NPNS and NPC from any liability as it relates to field trips.

Safety requirements are reviewed with parent drivers and each child must be in a seat restraint. Emergency cards also accompany the child with the driver. We use Charter Buses when attending field trips with a large group of students. When buses are provided, parents have the option of driving their own child. We cannot take your child from the premises without your permission.

Please note:

- Teachers are not permitted to transport children to or from field trips.
- Parent drivers must produce insurance cards and driver's license to transport children on a field trip.
- There is a \$150 transportation fee (paid with your first tuition payment) for 3's, 4's and Pre-K students. These children are transported by bus.

**Census Permission**

Each year the Darien Public Schools ask for our enrollment list in order to have a more accurate census. They particularly want the list of those four-year-olds who will be age-eligible to attend Kindergarten the following fall. Some years we are asked for three- and four- year old lists. The information requested includes name, address, telephone number, and date of birth. We would like your permission to comply with these requests. If we do not receive your permission, we will not include your child in the lists sent to receive Kindergarten registration information.

## **General Permission/Policy**

NPNS requires parental permission on the following items:

- Your child to use all of the play equipment and participate in all of the activities of the school unless exceptions are brought to the attention of the Director in writing.
- Your child may be included in general observations as a part of the class evaluations for accreditation, teacher coursework (with no specific identification), class pictures, and newspaper photos depicting school activities.

NPNS requires that parents acknowledge the following policies:

- The school will not be responsible for anything that may happen as a result of false information given at the time of enrollment.
- The school will not assume responsibility for a child who has not been brought into the classroom on arrival and received by the teacher.
- NPNS will take safety measures judged necessary for the care and protection of a child while under the supervision of NPNS, (i.e., evacuations for fire, weather, or other emergency or disaster).

## **Photo Use Permission**

Children's photos will be used for newspaper articles, Instagram, Facebook or the NPNS Website or Brochure. If you do not want your child's photo used, please mark "no" on the Policy Agreement Form. If you have marked the form "no" you must hand deliver it to the Director or Office Manager.

## **Directory Permission**

An NPNS Electronic Directory will be produced and include the contact information of all NPNS families. If you do not want your information included in the Directory, mark "no" on the Policy Agreement Form and hand deliver your form to the Director or Office Manager.

## **Financial Policies and Procedures**

### **Tuition**

In the fall, the Executive Committee of the NPNS board meets to determine tuition for the following year. NPNS' finances are taken into account along with the tuitions of the other Darien nursery school programs. Parents are notified in December of the tuition rates for the following school year.

A \$75 (\$100 per family) non-refundable Application Fee is due with your Application (applies to all students, new and continuing).

Upon acceptance into the program, you will receive two copies of the contract. One copy must be signed and returned with the first tuition payment. The Tuition Payment Schedule on the contract outlines the dates and amounts due. Please note that tuition is due in three installments. This is the only payment notice and you are responsible for ensure timely payment. Failure to do so may result in your child's removal from the school. As noted on the Tuition Payment Schedule there will be a late fee of \$50 applied if tuition is not received within two weeks of tuition due date.

If tuition checks bounce, a fee will be added to the tuition check to cover the bank charges.

**In addition, the following will apply:**

If tuition is not paid after two weeks, your child will be withdrawn from any extended day program(s) with no refund. If tuition is not received within four weeks of the original due date, the late fee will be raised to \$150. If tuition and late fees are not received within eight weeks of the original tuition due date, you will be asked to forfeit your placement in the program.

### **Late Fee Schedule:**

1. After 2 weeks from original due date - \$50 late fee plus removal from any extended day(s) with no refund.
2. After 4 weeks from the original due date - \$150 late fee
3. After 8 weeks from original due date – removal from all NPNS program(s).

Tuition Payment Schedule can be found on the [www.NPNS.org](http://www.NPNS.org) website. Checks are made payable to **NPNS**. Checks should be mailed to NPNS, 2011 Post Road, Darien, CT 06820, or may also be turned into the NPNS office.

The Federal Tax ID number for childcare reimbursement: 06-0720546

**Please have all requests for Dependent Care reimbursement letters for Tax purposes into the office by January 15<sup>th</sup>. Requests made by January 15<sup>th</sup> will be available by February 1<sup>st</sup>. Any request made after January 15<sup>th</sup> may take up to two weeks to process.**

### **Refunds**

The application fee is non-refundable. The first tuition payment is non-refundable and non-transferable. NPNS will not refund any part of the first tuition payment under any circumstances.

Programs are filled at:

- 14 students – Pre-K
- 56 students – 4's
- 48 students – 3's
- 32 students – 2's

### **Leaving the School**

If your child must leave NPNS during the school year, you must notify the Director in writing as soon as possible. You will not be liable for further payment as long as notification is received 30 days prior to the next tuition payment and the school is able to fill the program vacancy by the next payment date. However, if the vacancy is not filled, you are still responsible for the remaining payments.

### **Dismissal from the school**

NPNS reserves the right to dismiss a student, after reasonable accommodations, for developmental problems that are beyond the scope of care offered. If this occurs, the Board will decide if any part of the tuition is to be refunded.

### **Other Fees**

- A \$150 transportation fee is charged to all 3's, 4's and Pre-K students to cover the cost of bus rentals for field trips. This payment is made with your first tuition payment.
- A \$40 **teacher recommendation** fee shall be paid by any family who requests a teacher recommendation for application to a private school. This fee is owed on a per recommendation basis. Checks should be made payable to the teacher writing the

recommendation.

- A \$75 application fee is due at the time of the application submission.
- A \$5 copy fee for requests for **Medical /Health Forms**.