



Framingham Centre Nursery School

24 Vernon Street, Framingham, MA 01701

508-875-8260

2008 – 2009

PARENT HANDBOOK

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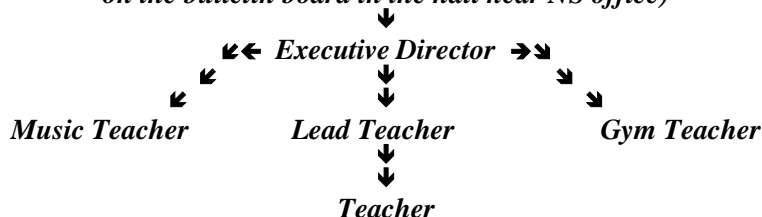
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1. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

- 1) The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is the licensing authority by which Framingham Centre Nursery School is regulated.
 - a) Two copies of *102 CMR 7.00 Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs* are available at all times for staff or parents.
 - i) One is kept on the left side of the Director's desk in a blue plastic vertical file holder.
 - ii) The other is in the red loose leaf notebook labeled *Parent Orientation* kept with other notebooks on a shelf unit between the office assistants' work spaces.
- 2) Administrative organization of FCNS, including lines of authority and supervision is as follows:

Framingham Centre Nursery School, Inc.

The Board of Directors is elected from the General Membership of FCNS and consists of 9 members, including the Executive Director (names, phone numbers are also posted on the bulletin board in the hall near NS office)



- a) In the event of the temporary absence of the Executive Director, Lead Teacher Susan O'Bryan is designated the Primary Acting Administrator of FCNS.
 - b) In Mrs. O'Bryan's absence, the full time senior Lead Teachers will rotate responsibility yearly with Peggy Bannon designated the Secondary Acting Administrator for 2008 - 2009.
- 3) Philosophy, curriculum goals and objectives
 - a) We believe that children learn from personal interaction with their peers and their world. In other words, we believe children learn best through play and through socializing with other children. Our specific goals are:
 - i) To treat each child as a unique person worthy of respect and personal attention.
 - ii) To encourage and support the development of each child cognitively, emotionally, socially and physically by providing the environment, experiences and relationships which will enable him/her to reach his/her own potential.
 - iii) To nurture the joy of learning.
 - iv) To develop programs which offer a wide variety of activities and materials that will encourage creativity, curiosity and self-reliance.
 - v) To help each child build a foundation for future success.
 - b) Curriculum at FCNS is based on the MA Department of Early Learning and Care's preschool standards that align with the MA Curriculum Frameworks. Schools such as ours that receive funding through MA Community Partnerships for Children are required to comply with these standards, which have been developed around the NAEYC accreditation process. We believe that curriculum is everything that is part of the child's experience at school – materials, the way the room is arranged, activities offered, expectations for the children, interactions between the children and with the teachers, and the tone the teachers create in the classroom.
 - i) At FCNS curriculum is concept driven rather than theme driven – it is probably the only time in these days of MCAS that a group of children and a team of teachers will have the luxury of meshing particular interests to determine exactly how concepts will be experienced. A concept can be taught in many different ways.
 - ii) We are always open to emergent curriculum and the teachable moment. Being flexible enough to occasionally set aside what was planned, maybe to get back to it another day, is our goal.
 - iii) Our philosophy of learning is developmental, sequential and considers the whole child. We know that children's chronological age and developmental age may or may not be the same. This applies to physical, cognitive, social, emotional and creative capabilities. Classes are made up of children coming to us with strengths in different areas. Our challenge is to help them all continue to grow where there is already strength, but to also support those areas that are not yet strengths, perhaps because enough physical growth or opportunities to practice have not yet occurred. For this reason, we plan activities that will cross all

developmental levels so that every child will benefit, no matter where he or she is on the learning continuum. One step will follow the next and it will be different for each child.

- iv) A child's first step is seeing him/herself as an individual who is capable of being away from family for a short time. This expands into peer influenced social learning that is the foundation upon which knowledge in other areas is built. It takes time and experience for a child to become competent making appropriate overtures to others, knowing how to be a friend, resolving conflicts, using words to express needs, waiting to take a turn, or engaging in all the give and take of group dynamics. Ultimately, to be able to acknowledge that others have a right to think and feel differently and that everyone is entitled to be treated with respect is the difference between being socially responsible and not.
- v) We believe that for nursery school age children the process is always more important than the product and that a project to take home is not always necessary for the outcome to be of great benefit. Learning by "doing" in skill based activities such as cutting with scissors and truly creative imaginative experiences such as elaborate scenarios acted out in the house or block corner are both important, as is a wealth of experience in exploring the properties of paste, glue, crayons, markers, different kinds of paint and other media. It is the child's thought that has the greatest value and the child articulates it by working to discover how that idea "plays out" in a literal sense with dramatic play or can be represented through the characteristics of an artistic medium.
- vi) We embed the "academic concepts" of letters and numbers in the regular routine of every day in a print-rich environment. We count, graph, sort, read and write for and with the children during the entire class time in an entirely natural way. They learn to associate symbol systems with letters, letters with words and words with information that is often confirmed by pictures. Children can "read" the helper chart, the reminders for dressing in winter gear, the self-monitoring cues of numbers for crowd control in various play areas, the attendance board and the daily schedule for the class. Public schools in the area assure us the children we send on to Kindergarten are well prepared, and this is without their ever realizing they have been taught anything.
- vii) Children who are with us for more than one part of the day tell us with their behavior that after the very intense and busy morning or afternoon class sessions, which have many transitions, they need to relax and engage in almost exclusively self-directed play. Low key teacher-directed activities are always available, but are often ignored because it takes a large chunk of valuable self-directed play before children are ready to participate in more organized activities again. Think of it as preparation for those times when life doesn't present a script for us.

2. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- 1) At FCNS staff, administration, governance and families work in partnership to create an environment that is the best possible for children and families. Open and honest communication between all partners is the foundation upon which program excellence is built. Parents are always welcome and are encouraged to visit while their child is present. The visit may take any form a parent wishes (dropping by to say "Hi", reading a story, playing, helping in the classroom, sharing with us and your child's classmates something from your family's culture and background, etc.). We are grateful for parent interest and involvement with all aspects of the program.
- 2) The FCNS Parent Teacher Organization was formed during the 2004-05 school year. Volunteer committees under the PTO umbrella help with various tasks important to the well-being of the school. Committees include fundraising, purchasing, health email coordinator, class parents, office assistance/parent substitute teachers and welcoming new families. Participation in the PTO is a wonderful way to meet other parents, to make a contribution and to know more about your child's experience. Please join us!
- 3) All parents are encouraged to share their ideas about the development of Nursery School policy and programs with the Executive Director, the staff and/or members of the Board of Directors (see above). This applies to problems or issues of concern, as well.
 - a) Suggestions will be discussed with the whole staff and/or the board and, if appropriate, will be adopted. Problems or issues of concern can usually be satisfactorily resolved by the Executive Director with staff input or, if warranted, with board input. Parents feeling for any reason that they need a different forum always have the option of discussing any issue with the board at any time. You will find a suggestion box in the entry room if you prefer to remain anonymous, but please know that a solution can usually be found much more quickly and effectively if we can talk about something that is not working as it should for you or your child.
 - b) When suggestions are not feasible or a resolution is not acceptable an explanation will be offered to parents, in writing if requested.

- 4) Parents have valuable insights to offer about their child that will help staff make school a more nurturing place that better meets the needs of the whole child. We want to adapt our classrooms to create more comfortable and meaningful environments for children relative to how families define their own race, religion, home language, culture, family structure and concerns and goals for their child. Input from families is welcomed and needed.
- 5) Written progress reports on their child's transition into the program, activities, participation and growth at FCNS will be shared with parents in the fall and spring during conferences scheduled during gym or music classes or at another time convenient for parents and teacher. A translator will be made available if needed. The completed reports will be kept in the child's records. A copy will be given to parents at the end of every school year or at any other time upon request. Please see Section 4. Assessment of Child Progress and Referral Services for more details.
 - a) For a child with disabilities, his/her Lead Teacher will complete a written progress report of the child's development every three months and provide it to the parents.
 - b) The Nursery School will bring special problems or significant developments to the parents' attention as soon as they arise, including day to day issues that parents would want to know about. We ask that parents do the same with information that would be helpful to us in better supporting their child.
- 6) The Nursery School staff is always available for an individual conference at the parent's request.
- 7) Resources available in the FCNS office for parent use:
 - a) Family Resource Guide - SMOG Head Start
 - b) Annual MetroWest Community Guide - Community Newspaper Co.
 - c) File of newspaper, journal and magazine articles on various topics
 - d) Our library of picture books for children and books to support parents is well-stocked. It contains books on child behavior/development and parenting, as well as books on such important life issues as death, serious illness, aging, birth of a sibling, adoption, divorce, etc.
 - e) We receive monthly Scholastic Parent and Child, Bay State Parent and The Boston Parents' Paper that are available on the table in the entry room for taking. We also have past issues of a number of magazines for parents and children, such as Child, Woman's Day, Parents and Parenting. These may be borrowed without asking and can be found on the low shelves under the large bulletin board near the office.
 - f) Other literature of interest is available on the bulletin boards outside the large bathrooms and on the tri-fold board and table in the entry room.

3. MAINTAINING CHILDREN'S RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 1) Information contained in a child's record is privileged, confidential and will not be given to anyone not directly involved in implementing the FCNS program plan for the child without the written consent of the child's parents. Children's files are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the school office. School systems typically request some part of the child's records at Kindergarten entry. The staff will notify the parents if a child's record is subpoenaed.
- 2) FCNS staff may not have access to health information about your child unless you so authorize. Various staff members have legitimate reasons to have access to such information. During the summer you will be given an in-depth explanation about which staff have reasons for access and a permission form for you to sign and return to us.
- 3) Parents are always entitled to access to a child's records. A conference is scheduled with parents and staff to facilitate the request for access.
- 4) FCNS will maintain a permanent written log in each child's record indicating any persons to whom information contained in a child's record has been released. All particulars of the release are noted in the log, which is available only to parents and staff.
- 5) FCNS will not charge for copies of any information contained in a child's record.
- 6) Parents have the right, according to standard EEC procedure, to amend their child's record in any way.
- 7) When a child is no longer enrolled at FCNS, parents may transfer the child's record by requesting that in writing.
- 8) Children's records, along with all other school records, are always available to the Department of Early Education and Care.

4. ASSESSMENT OF CHILD PROGRESS AND REFERRAL SERVICES

- 1) FCNS assesses children's progress and reports the progress to parents as an integral part of our program. We want to ensure that our process is both intentional and systematic and gives families ongoing opportunities to share results of home observations to contribute to the assessment process. We use a number of assessment tools to gather information that permits us to adjust curriculum to meet individual and group needs. The following assessment tools and timelines are used:
 - a) Observation of the child – part of daily classroom life recorded as anecdotal notes.
 - b) Collection of dated samples of children's work – often copied so that the original can go home with the child.

- c) Photographing a child engaged during the school day/year to share with parents or document a milestone.
 - d) School Transition Progress Report – used early in the new school year and discussed in a short parent-teacher conference in the fall. Basically a forum for the teacher to share general information about how a child has settled into a first FCNS experience or a new FCNS classroom and for parents to share information about the child with the teacher.
 - e) Progress Report Add-On – used fall/winter and spring. A tool developed during NAEYC self-study to make the testing process of a child more systematic for identification of shapes and colors, recognition of letters and numbers, ability to write his/her name, knowledge of his/her address and phone number, and ability to draw a person. A teacher will sit one-on-one with a child in the classroom and create a nurturing, comfortable atmosphere so that testing feels like a part of the day that’s fun.
 - f) Skills Checklist – tool developed by a teacher and used by some staff to easily record skills.
 - g) Sequential Progress Report – written progress reports on a child's activities, participation and growth at FCNS in the late fall and spring are compiled by the Lead Teacher and will be shared with parents at conferences scheduled in the spring during gym or music classes or at another time convenient for parents and the teacher. Our families over the years have always included at least one parent who is fluent in English. If that is ever not the case, we will seek an appropriate translator from Catholic Charities in Cambridge. The completed reports will be kept in the child’s records. A copy will be given to parents after the spring conference or at any other time upon request. Our goal is to align all curriculum areas with MA Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences. The Math-Science curriculum area has been aligned.
 - h) For a child with disabilities, his/her Lead Teacher will complete a written progress report of the child's development every three months and provide it to the parents.
- 2) Once children have had the chance to adjust to a new school or classroom environment and teachers have the opportunity to observe a child over time to note his/her typical behavior and mastery of developmental milestones, if a staff member observes a behavior of concern she then shares this information with the Executive Director.
 - 3) The Executive Director and Lead Teacher share information, followed by additional written observations of the behavior to determine whether there is valid reason for concern. We always allow for individual differences in young children.
 - 4) If the staff agrees there is a valid concern, the following will happen:
 - a) If the concern is about a developmental issue that bears watching, we will contact the parents, discuss the concern and share information so that we can work together as a team to facilitate the child’s experience at FCNS.
 - b) If the concern is one that we feel requires assistance in helping the child, we will contact the parent to discuss concerns the parent may also have. We will also discuss options for support services to assist us to better help the child and/or to provide assistance for the child outside of school.
 - 5) If support services are indicated, a meeting will be set up with parents and staff and the following requirements for referral will be met:
 - a) The staff will provide to the parents a written statement including the reason for recommending a referral for additional services, a brief summary of the Nursery School's observations related to the referral and any efforts we have made to accommodate the child's needs (i.e. modification of materials, activity, grouping, timing, degree of structure/teacher direction, etc.).
 - b) The staff will offer assistance to the child's parents in making the referral. Parents are encouraged to call or request an evaluation in writing. If parents need extra support, the Nursery School may, with written parental consent, contact the referral agency for them.
 - c) Please note:
 - i) ****If a child is at least 2 years 9 months (the youngest eligible for the Nursery School), the staff will inform the parents of the availability of services and their rights, including the right to appeal, under Chapter 766.**
 - ii) ****If a child is under the age of 3 years, the staff will inform the child's parent(s) of the availability of services provided by Early Intervention Programs.**
 - d) We suggest parents contact the following:
 - i) The child’s pediatrician for any input he/she may have
 - ii) Their public school system to identify the type of services that might be available
 - e) A list of possible referral resources will be reviewed (see #9 below).
 - 6) If services are granted or if a child comes to FCNS with already diagnosed disabilities or other special learning needs, with parental permission the staff will do follow up consultation for assistance in meeting the child’s needs at FCNS. A copy of the child’s IEP or other individualized plan written by the service provider and specific suggestions from the service provider for FCNS will guide us in better supporting the growth and development of the child.

- 7) If the child does not receive services, FCNS will review the child's progress every three months to determine if another referral is necessary.
- 8) FCNS will maintain a written record of any referrals, including the parent conference and results.
- 9) Referral Resources in Framingham (rev. 7/08)
 - a) *Safety* - If we are concerned with the safety or welfare of one of our children we will contact one of the these agencies (see Policy and Procedures for Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect)
 - i) Department of Social Services - 63 Fountain St. - 1-800-445-6020 or 508-424-0100/Children at Risk Hot Line 800-792-5200
 - ii) Framingham Police Department - 81 Union Ave. - 508-872-1212
 - b) *Education*
 - i) Early Intervention Program (Criterion Child Enrichment - Child Care Information) - Donna Jaworek, Coordinator - 651 Franklin St. - 508-620-1442
 - ii) Early Childhood Program - Rosie Alvarez O'Neil, Director - Framingham Public Schools, 454 Water St. - 508-877-9521
 - iii) Early Childhood Special Education - Andrea Ferrar, Team Evaluation Coordinator - Framingham Public Schools, 454 Water St. - 508-626-9125/9126
 - c) *Health*
 - i) Metro West Medical Center (Framingham Campus) - 115 Lincoln St. - Pediatric Clinic - 508-383-1130 (have to apply first for Mass Health or free care) - all problems including vision except mental health
 - ii) Immunizations and lead screening at the Framingham Health Department - 508-532-5470 - Memorial Building at 150 Concord St. Residents free.
 - iii) Dr. Mel Ehrlich - dentistry for children, including those with special needs - 223 Walnut St. - 508-875-5437
 - iv) Dr. Robin Eliasberg - dentistry for children - 326 Union Ave. - 508-875-1234
 - d) *Speech and Hearing*
 - i) Learning Center For The Deaf - 848 Central St. - 508-879-4581
 - ii) Speech and Language Resources - 475 Franklin St. - 508-620-9094
 - iii) Susan Strauss - Speech and Language Therapist - 508-877-2308 (has consulted with FCNS parents and serviced children at FCNS for many years)
 - e) *Therapists, Other Supports*
 - i) Advocates Psychiatric Emergency Services (crisis lines) - 508-872-3333/800-640-5432
 - ii) Framingham Resource Center - 300 Howard St. - 508-872-0765
 - (1) Provides housing, shelters, food pantries, women's protective services, SMOC Daycare
 - iii) MSPCC - Jamaica Plain, Boston - 617-983-5800
 - iv) Voices Against Violence (rape, crisis and domestic violence counseling) - 300 Howard St. - 508-626-8686, 24-hour toll free Hot Line 800-593-1125
 - v) Wayside Metrowest Counseling Center - 88 Lincoln St. - 508-620-0010 (sliding fee scale)
 - vi) Other therapists
 - (1) Ruth Johnston - 1 Franklin Commons - 508-872-6610
 - (2) Carol McCain, LicSW, - 40 Speen St., Suite 105 - 508-620-1655 - Family Therapy, works with parents on parenting issues or as a consult for a child's behavioral issues (known to Sandee Corbett as very effective therapist)
 - vii) P.A.L. (Parent/Professional Advocacy League) at Wayside Metrowest Counseling Center - 88 Lincoln St. - 508-620-0010 x308
 - (1) Lois DeRusha, Parent Coordinator - advocates for Chapter 766 process, IEPs, team meetings; wonderful resource for families in need of on-going services or referrals. Advocates for parents of children in crisis (waiting for hospital placements, abuse, domestic violence, emotional difficulties, behavioral problems).
 - (2) Lois runs a support group for parents of children with emotional, behavioral or mental health issues. 6:30 - 8:30, 2nd and 4th Mon. nights at 75 Fountain St. (downstairs). Free with childcare provided.
 - (3) Lois also does a support group for siblings of children with emotional problems during the school year.
 - viii) Parents Helping Parents (formerly Parents Anonymous)
 - (1) Toll free Parental Stress Hot Line - 800-632-8188
 - (2) Information for support groups - 800-882-1250
 - ix) Family Learning Center - 29 Upper Joclyn Ave. (Room #11) - 508-424-3434 - Program Coordinator, Debbie Cassano, Framingham Public Schools, Juniper Hill School. A great free resource center for families. 8 AM - 4 PM, Mon. - Fri. during school year.

- (1) Playgroup, gym time and sing-along has traditionally been on Wed. AM from 10:00 - 11:30 for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and parents.
- (2) Classes and workshops for parents, including “STEP” parenting classes for early childhood, elementary, preteen/teenager.
- (3) Free/discounted museum passes, lending library for children and parents.
- (4) Family Nights, Family Literacy Nights.

f) *Devices*

- i) Therapro - 225 Arlington St. - 508-872-9494 - toys, equipment for special needs

g) *Other Community Resources*

- i) Framingham Public Library - 49 Lexington St. - 508-879-3570 for general information, events and dates. Offers story/craft times, story hours, guest singers and performers. Book and other media holdings are extensive. Museum passes.
- ii) Framingham Parks and Recreation Department - 475 Union Avenue (Bowditch Field) - 508-532-5960. Many classes and activities, including series of preschool playgroups. First day registration for Framingham residents, later registration open to non-residents when space is available.

h) *Transportation*

- i) Shuttlebugs of MA - 508-624-6548 (serving Marlboro only for 2008-09)

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

1) Method of transportation and notification of parents in health emergencies

- a) A parent is notified by telephone and is required to come to school. If necessary, the child's physician is called and an assessment is made as to whether or not it is safe for the child to be transported by the parent. If it is not appropriate for the parent to transport the child, 911 is called.
- b) If a parent cannot be reached, the child's physician is called to help determine whether immediate medical attention is required. If it is, 911 is called and a familiar adult (Teacher or the Director) accompanies the child to the hospital. The child's emergency authorization and release form (“Green Sheet”) is also taken to the hospital.
- c) If immediate medical attention is not required, emergency designates are called. If no one can be immediately reached, the familiar adult remains with the child until the parent or designate is reached.
- d) Emergency procedures for field trips - There is a policy of no field trips at FCNS except for the spring school bus ride for pre-K children. A first aid kit, school cell phone and emergency authorizations for each child will be available in the vehicle.

2) Children who become mildly ill at school

- a) Children who don't feel well or who don't look well are evaluated for fever, headache, runny nose, sore throat, abdominal pain, etc. If any significant symptoms are present, the family is notified and must pick up the child.
- b) Ill children with temperature 100.6° F or higher, vomiting, diarrhea or irritability are not permitted to remain at school. Children with eye, skin, respiratory or direct contact infections may not remain at school.
- c) In addition, children who are too ill to participate in all program activities may not remain at school.
- d) A child waiting to leave will rest apart from the other children on a covered washable mat in the office in the Executive Director's care until he/she is picked up.

3) Inclusion/exclusion from school - sickness policy

- a) Respiratory viruses (cold viruses) spread easily, particularly at nursery school where children are in close contact with each other. If a child appears ill (cranky, lethargic or feverish) he/she should stay home until his/her health care provider has been consulted.
- b) A child with a contagious condition (strep throat, impetigo, etc.) for which antibiotics have been prescribed may not attend school until he/she has had several doses of medicine (at least 24 hours worth).
- c) A child on antibiotics with a non-contagious condition (ear infection, sinusitis, etc.) may return to school as soon as he/she feels better.
- d) Children with the following symptoms or illnesses must be kept at home until the illness has cleared up:
 - i) Fever - When a child has a fever of 100.6° F or more, he/she should stay home until the temperature has been normal for 24 hours.
 - ii) Runny nose – A freely running nose cannot be managed by either a child or teachers without exposure of all the other children to contagion. If the mucous from a child's nose is discolored, this may be a sign of infection. The child's health care provider should be consulted to determine if specific treatment is necessary.

- iii) Beginning signs of a runny nose or watery eyes often signal the onset of a respiratory illness.
 - iv) Cough that is new or constant.
 - v) Vomiting – a child must remain home until he/she has no episodes for 24 hours.
 - vi) Diarrhea – a child must remain home until he/she has no episodes for 24 hours.
 - vii) Impetigo and conjunctivitis - These are very contagious conditions and must be treated with antibiotics for 24 hours before the child may return to school.
 - viii) Chicken pox, mumps, etc. - A child who has been exposed to a contagious disease may attend school during the incubation period. The school must be informed if a child contracts the illness so that other families can be told. A child with the illness must stay home until all contagion has passed.
 - ix) Head lice and pinworms - A child with lice may not return to school until his/her hair has been treated and the eggs have been combed out. A child with pinworms must be treated by a doctor and he/she may not return to school until the pinworms are gone.
- e) All contagious conditions must be reported to the school so that the information can be shared with other families.
 - f) Teachers are trained to notice early signs of illness, particularly at arrival times so as to avoid exposure of others.
 - g) Children who present with the above symptoms/illnesses during the day are removed from the classroom. Parent(s) are called to pick up their child.
 - h) After any illness, a minimum of 24 hours with no fever is required before a child is permitted to return to school.
 - i) All children spend part of each day outdoors, weather permitting. It is not possible to make provisions for one child to remain inside when all the other children are being supervised outside. Parent(s) are advised to keep this in mind when deciding whether or not a child has recuperated sufficiently to return to school.
 - j) The Framingham Health Department (508-532-5470) and FCNS must be notified about reportable diseases such as bacterial meningitis, botulism, measles, poliomyelitis, rabies, rubella, tetanus, etc. Your health care provider will advise you if you need to report a disease to the Health Department.
- 4) Well-being of children at FCNS for longer days – please see separate Lunch Bunch/Stay Day information for lunch and rest requirements.
- 5) Plan for administering medication
- a) FCNS can only administer prescription or non-prescription medication to a child with a written order of a physician (which may include the label on the medication) indicating the medication is for that specific child. Authorization from the physician must include the name of the medication, dosage and criteria for administration. Written permission of a parent is also required. Authorization forms are available in the office.
 - i) Non-prescription medication – can be valid for one year.
 - (1) Parental permission for non-prescription medication may also be for an open time span. FCNS will, however, attempt to contact a parent before the medication is administered to the child unless the child needs medication urgently or when contacting a parent will delay appropriate care unreasonably. FCNS will notify parent(s) in writing each time the medication is administered to the child.
 - ii) Topical non-prescription medications do not require a physician’s order and may be administered to a child with only written parental permission that lists the specific medication and criteria for administering – can be valid for one year.
 - (1) Those topical medications applied to broken skin (wounds, rashes) must be labeled, in the original container and used only for that particular child.
 - (2) Those topical medications applied to unbroken skin (sunscreen, bug spray) may be generally applied to children.
 - b) FCNS will keep a written record of the administration of medication other than sunscreen or bug spray in each child's file.
 - c) All medicine must be in the original labeled container with the child's name, the name of the drug and the directions for its administration and storage. FCNS will dispose of, or return to the parent(s), any unused medication.
- 6) Emergency preparedness
- a) In an emergency that would require evacuation of children from their classrooms and the building:
 - i) Teachers will carry at all times a list of children presently in their care and when they evacuate will also have a backpack or bag containing emergency contact information for those children (Green Sheets), latex gloves, tissues, wipes, paper cups, graham crackers and a book or game to keep children occupied and calm. Evacuation procedures will start and end with counting children and matching names to attendance lists (teacher’s and master).

- ii) The Executive Director and Office Assistant will keep two backpack disaster kits ready at all times for evacuation. One is for emergency contact information (Green Sheet file), any needed medication, master attendance lists, a first aid kit, the FCNS key ring and an emergency cell phone belonging to the school. The other is for books and games to keep children occupied and calm, graham crackers and paper cups for snack, and other emergency materials (flashlight, tissues, diapers, etc.).
 - iii) Monthly drills are held with the Executive Director (or the person acting for her) sounding an alarm (typically a triangle is used rather than the alarm system). The entire Parish House building that houses FCNS is equipped with a smoke/fire alarm system wired directly to the Framingham Fire Department so that a fire/smoke situation is reported automatically.
 - iv) Each classroom is assigned a primary and secondary route to evacuate. Maps of routes are at each classroom and building exit. Children practice evacuating at all times of day and from all areas of the school.
- b) Contingency plans and procedures for the following emergency situations:
- i) Sheltering in place in the Nursery School – in the event of a hazardous chemical spill, gas leak, hurricane, storm or other reason that would make it unsafe to leave the school building, children will be kept inside in their classrooms with windows closed or in an interior hallway with closed doors, if necessary because of expected high winds.
 - ii) Immediate area evacuation of the Nursery School and/or situations that that would prevent children from re-entering/remaining in the school building until such time as their parents usually pick them up – parents/caregivers will be notified by the school cell phone in the following cases that their child needs to be picked up (emergency phone numbers will be used if parents/caregivers are unavailable):
 - (a) In the event of fire, natural disaster or situation necessitating evacuation from the school building, classes would be taken by the Teachers to the church. Access to the church is always possible with a key on the Director’s Nursery School key ring.
 - (b) In the event of a loss of power/heat during school hours and if the temperature falls below 65°, dependent on the time of year and time of day
 - (c) In the event of a loss of water during school hours
 - (d) In the event of a loss of power, heat or water before school opens, school will be closed until the problem has been corrected
 - iii) Neighborhood evacuation of the Nursery School and/or situations that would prevent children from remaining in the immediate area until such time as their parents usually pick them up – parents/caregivers will be notified by the school cell phone that their child needs to be picked up (emergency phone numbers will be used if parents/caregivers are unavailable):
 - (a) In the event that sheltering in the First Parish Meeting House puts children at risk, we would alert neighboring Plymouth Church at 87 Edgell Road that we need to shelter there (508-875-1364, church office; 508-875-1001, Plymouth House Nursery School).
 - iv) General evacuation of Framingham
 - (a) If not already transporting school children, Framingham Public Schools busses would evacuate the children and staff from FCNS to safety. The Framingham Police Department would set this plan into action and would notify us via Framingham’s reverse 911 phone system. If FPS busses are not available, we would follow Framingham Police Department instructions including destination location and remove the children to safety using any means possible, including transporting them in staff cars. In a like manner, we would contact parents/caregivers by any means possible.

6. CHILD GUIDANCE (complete plan as filed with EEC)

- 1) The purpose of child guidance is to insure a nurturing, safe and consistent setting in which children may grow as individuals while learning to become members of a group by forming strong relationships with others. Rules and behavioral limits exist at FCNS to promote development and are not a means of punishment. Child guidance, formerly called discipline or behavior management, must be consistent, reasonable, appropriate and based on an understanding of the individual and diverse developmental needs of each child. We make sure that staff is kept up to date with training on new understandings of child guidance techniques and good early childhood practices based on children’s individual needs.
- 2) Our goal is for child guidance to help children master the following:
 - a) To be safe with themselves and with others
 - b) To feel good about themselves
 - c) To develop self-control and good coping skills

- d) To appropriately express their feelings
 - e) To become more independent
 - f) To balance their needs and wants with those of others
 - g) To learn new problem-solving skills, including non-violent conflict resolution
 - h) To learn about conservation – to use equipment, materials, and other resources in caring, appropriate ways.
- 3) Routine child guidance practices at FCNS include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a) Staff having the foundation of a sound understanding of the principles of child growth and development
 - b) Planning for appropriate behavior with respect to the environment by arranging furniture and other materials to encourage active learning and independence
 - c) Planning daily scheduling that prevents boredom, waiting, hurriedness, with time to relax and enjoy activities
 - d) Having a daily routine with ample opportunity for children to select activities and move between them at their own pace, and that also gives ample notice of transitions ahead of time
 - e) Providing children with expectations that are clear, age-appropriate and applied in a consistent way. Allowing children to participate in the establishment of rules, policies and procedures where appropriate and feasible
 - f) Reinforcing positive behavior by recognizing children’s positive actions
 - g) Helping children learn about natural consequences because appropriate natural consequences appeal to their sense of logic, “*When I do this, this is what happens.*”
 - h) Adults modeling appropriate behavior by being consistent with what are the program’s expectations for children
 - i) Redirecting children toward positive activities by interrupting a child’s negative behavior and steering the child toward an acceptable substitute activity
 - j) Reminding children of the rules when necessary
 - k) Teaching children new skills and encouraging them to discuss and resolve their conflicts on their own or with staff’s assistance when necessary rather than imposing an adult’s solution on them. Encouraging children to express their feelings in words and to resolve problems peacefully
 - l) Ignoring simple inappropriate negative behavior that is unpleasant and knowing when to respond to more substantial inappropriate behavior
 - m) Teaching children coping mechanisms such as taking a break and picking another activity
 - n) Recognizing and validating children’s feelings when discussing their unacceptable behavior with them, (separation of one’s disapproval of the behavior from the care and respect for the child)
 - o) Understanding how individual children respond to different cues, and also that no single technique will work for all situations
 - p) Observing and documenting children’s behavior
 - q) Meeting with parents, keeping them informed of their children’s behaviors and seeking input from them about what is happening in the child’s life as well as about strategies that are helpful to the child at home. Working with parents to foster children’s growth
 - r) Creating an individual action plan for a child that identifies his/her challenging behaviors and includes ideas for how the teachers and the child’s parents can work together to resolve them
 - s) Accessing specialized support services if a child’s behavior continues to be harmful to themselves or others. With written parental permission, referring the family for specialized services that can help address the child’s behavior problems. Following our policy for referrals (see referral policy and list of community referral resources).
- 4) We will attempt to foresee and prevent challenging situations. However, there may be times when we have to physically intervene to stop children from hurting each other, themselves, or destroying the environment. Effective strategies for us to cope with more challenging behaviors include the following:
- a) Facilitating language so that a child can verbalize his/her feelings. Giving him/her an acceptable physical outlet
 - b) Speaking calmly with the child individually and away from the group
 - c) Giving choices and setting time limits
 - d) Giving a child breathing space and a chance to regain self-control
 - e) Having the teacher place herself in close proximity to the child until the child is able to regain self-control
 - f) Separating the child from the environment, but having the child remain within staff’s immediate and direct supervision until the child is able to regain self-control and re-join the group
 - g) If necessary, per EEC prohibitions, supportively hold a child only when all other possible interventions have been attempted first, only in order to protect him/her and/or the others, and only until the danger is past.
- 5) The following prohibitions are always in effect at FCNS:
- a) Corporal punishment will not be used, including spanking.

- b) Physical restraint will not be used for discipline or to force a child to become more compliant.
 - c) No child will be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal or physical abuse, neglect or abusive treatment.
 - d) No child will be denied food as a form of punishment. No child will have food forced upon him/her at any time.
 - e) No child will be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet. No child will be forced to remain in soiled clothing or forced to remain on the toilet. No other unusual or excessive practices for toileting will be permitted.
- 6) The written plan for child guidance will be posted conspicuously in an area frequented by the staff and visitors. The plan will be provided to parents and to each staff member at the time of employment.

7. POLICY FOR TERMINATION AND SUSPENSION

- 1) FCNS reserves the right to dismiss any child in the event it is necessary for the welfare of the child concerned or for the welfare of the group as a whole.
- a) A child's enrollment would be terminated after it has been determined by the Teacher(s), Executive Director, parents and/or a referral source(s) that our early childhood setting is no longer able to best serve the needs of the child and only after the following steps have been taken:
 - i) Every effort has been made to continue to include the child in the program.
 - ii) FCNS has been in close communication with the child's parents regarding the area(s) of concern from as early a time as possible.
 - b) If all efforts fail, the parent and teacher will determine an agreeable date for the termination of the child from the program.
 - c) Whether initiated by the parents or the school, the Teacher(s) will prepare the child and the other class members for this separation in a developmentally appropriate and supportive way.
 - d) The school will assist and inform the parents of the availability of information and referral to other services should it be desired by the parents.
- 2) FCNS reserves the right to suspend any child in the event such an action is necessary to comply with the public health laws (physical examination, immunization and lead screening of the child) of the Commonwealth and/or regulations for the licensure of group day care centers of the Department of Early Education and Care. Parents lacking financial resources or not choosing to comply through private means will be referred to the Health Department Clinic of the town in which they reside.
- a) The following are the only allowable exceptions:
 - i) Parents' written objection on the grounds of religious belief.
 - ii) Documentation from the child's physician that these procedures are contraindicated. Low risk is not considered grounds for contraindication.
 - b) Parents will be given notice and reasonable time to comply regarding physical exams, immunization and lead screening before a child's first day of school. Every effort will be made to continue to include every child in the program and good faith attempts toward compliance will be acknowledged. The school will be in close communication with the child's parents as soon as it is determined the child's records are incomplete. If all efforts fail, the child may not continue to attend the program. The child will be welcomed back in class as soon as his/her records are complete. Staff will implement a plan to exclude an under-immunized child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which the child is susceptible occurs in the program. The child may return to school only when the risk abates.

8. PLAN FOR PREVENTION OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- 1) Mandated Reporting
- a) In order to insure the well-being of the children in our care, the staff of the Nursery School has a continuing duty under law to report incidents of possible neglect or abuse, including physical, sexual and psychological abuse, to the Department of Social Services, and to cooperate in any investigation of possible neglect or abuse (Massachusetts General Law chapter 119, section 51A).
 - b) We do not have discretion in this matter, but must make such referrals whenever we have reasonable cause to believe that a child might have been harmed by anyone, including non-family members. We may be subject to criminal penalties if we fail to report such possible harm.
 - c) Moreover, in grievous cases, we may refer the matter directly to the police or consult with the District Attorney as well.
- 2) The Nursery School acts to protect the children in its care and custody from abuse and neglect in the following ways:
- a) By training staff to be sensitive and perceptive.
 - b) By building a trusting, sharing relationship with parents.

- c) By making families aware of community agencies that provide needed support services:
 - i) Department of Social Services - 63 Fountain St. - 1-800-445-6020 or 508-424-0100/Children at Risk Hot Line 800-792-5200
 - ii) Toll free Parental Stress Hot Line - 800-632-8188
 - iii) Parents Helping Parents, formerly Parents Anonymous (info. on support groups) - 800-882-1250
- d) By sharing information about child development and child rearing techniques with families.
- e) By letting parents know if signs of stress are recognizable in their children.
- f) By encouraging mutual sharing of concerns about children between staff and parents.
- g) By teaching children about their right to say "No".
- h) By teaching children that a trusted adult can and should be told about an abusive experience.

9. DISMISSAL OF CHILDREN TO OTHERS

- 1) The Nursery School will not release a child to an individual without the express written permission of his/her parent(s)/guardian. We must have specific instructions from you in order to send your child home with anyone other than the regular person responsible for picking him/her up at dismissal. An individual to whom a parent/guardian has given permission must identify him/herself by means of a photo ID before the child will be released.
- 2) If parents wish the Nursery School to assist in enforcing restraining, custody or visitation orders, a copy of the court order must be on file in the child's records.

10. TRANSPORTATION

- 1) Parents are responsible for transportation to and from school.
- 2) In a health emergency, a child will be transported to Metrowest Medical Center by an ambulance dispatched to FCNS by the Town of Framingham.
- 3) Our sole field trip is in the spring with Pre-K children who are taken on a ride in a Framingham Public Schools bus. This is an activity of long standing so that the first bus ride to Kindergarten in the fall for ex-FCNS children will not be a new experience. Parents must give written permission before a child can participate. Children wear seatbelts and the staff/child ratio is equal to or better than that occurring in classrooms daily. Emergency authorizations and releases, a cell phone, a first aid kit and any medications on site for specific children accompany the group. Alternate transportation if there is a problem with the bus during the trip would be provided by Framingham Public Schools.

Please Note:

When MA Office of Child Care Services [OCCS] and MA Department of Education Early Learning Services joined to become the Department of Early Education and Care [EEC], OCCS regulations were retained. We are required by EEC and NAEYC [the National Association for the Education of Young Children, under whose auspices we are accredited] to distribute the information in this Parent Handbook annually. Included for your reference are summaries, with complete documents available in the FCNS office upon request.