



# Parent Handbook

80 Atlantic Avenue | Marblehead | MA | 01945  
781-639-1415

[seasidenurseryschool@gmail.com](mailto:seasidenurseryschool@gmail.com)  
[www.seasidenurseryschool.com](http://www.seasidenurseryschool.com)

# Parent Handbook

## SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

### Welcome

New beginnings are exciting for children, their parents and teachers. At Seaside, we are committed to helping you make an easy, comfortable transition into our program by clearly communicating our policies, procedures, and philosophy. We hope these guidelines help your initial orientation to the school and serve as a handy reference throughout your child's enrollment here.

### Seaside's Philosophy and Curriculum

The purpose of Seaside is to provide activities which help children to develop and learn at their own growth rates, in an informal and flexible program aimed at the needs of the individual child.

Seaside's philosophy is based on proven child growth and psychology concepts and embodies many current developments in these fields. The combination of personal and social support with learning in a non-competitive environment is central to our program.

Nursery school methods necessarily differ from those of other education levels. Curriculum and environment are carefully planned to include learning experiences that the children themselves implement through play. It is unfortunate that the term "play" is often taken to mean idle and unproductive activity... in truth, it embraces a wide range of spontaneous and productive experiences. Our classrooms are carefully planned environments which enable children, through actions, objects, and words, to explore, experiment and create their own understanding of the world they encounter. Childhood development follows a predictable path, but with a unique timetable for each child. The natural unfolding of this process is supported when the curriculum helps to strengthen a child's positive self-image. When children are provided with activities that are well matched to their developmental level, and have many opportunities each day to experience success, learning occurs naturally.

Seaside teachers serve as resources and facilitators, providing support and information to both children and parents.

## **Services Provided**

Seaside Nursery School offers a variety of programs to meet the needs of the families we serve. All of our programs offer a choice of the number of days that your child can attend.

### ***Programs***

The Infant/Toddler and Transitional Preschool Programs, which help encourage the development needed for the later nursery school experience, are for children from five months to 3 years old. Play is encouraged, to help develop social interaction among children. Development areas such as fine and gross motor skills are also enhanced by the daily activities.

The Nursery School Program is for 3, and 4 year old children. The daily program consists of alternating periods of individual, small, and large group activities, structured and non-structured time, indoor and outdoor play. All are important to the child's total development.

The Transitional Kindergarten Program is for 4 and 5 year old children. The daily program is similar to our Nursery Program; however it offers a more challenging curriculum to meet the needs of the older preschooler. This program incorporates a variety of school readiness activities along with a balance of small and large group activities to encourage social growth and foster independence.

### ***Early Drop-Off/Late Pick-Up***

Our Early Drop-Off Program begins at 7:30. Late Pick-Up runs until 4:00. You may add this program as a regular part of your child's schedule or you may use it on a drop-in, as needed basis.

### ***Lunch Bunch***

Our Lunch Bunch program is open to all Seaside children as an opportunity to gain afternoon school experience and take part in enrichment activities. Each session includes lunch (brought from home by each child), free play, outdoor play and rest. We also offer a daily extracurricular activity such as yoga, nature class, music and movement, gymnastics and art. Please speak to the Director for more information.

## ***Transportation***

Seaside Nursery School does not provide transportation. Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from school each day. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the program of any changes regarding the transport of their child.

## **Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination**

Seaside is firmly committed to the concepts and practice of equal opportunity and non-discrimination. We administer our programs for children and our employment practices without regard to race, gender, religion, age, cultural heritage, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, veteran status, disability, or any other characteristic protected by Federal, State or local law. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

Supporting equal opportunity goes beyond our obligation to the law. We work toward the cooperation of everyone to achieve a constructive learning and working environment for all. Discrimination or harassment in any form is not tolerated. We are responsible for upholding this policy, which, simply stated, requires that we treat each other with respect at all times.

## **Parent Involvement**

Seaside Nursery School has an open door policy. You are always welcome to visit your child's classroom when your child is present. Throughout the school year curriculum topics will change and new themes will be explored. If at any time you would like to join in with the classroom activities, read a related book, or share your expertise with the class, please see your child's teacher(s) to arrange a convenient day and time.

Individualized written progress reports are prepared for each child in the program every six months. Any significant developments or specific concerns will be shared with you as soon as they arise. Teachers, as well as the Director, are available to meet with parents at a mutually convenient time, at your request.

If you have any general issues or concerns, or special activities you would like to see instituted, please speak with the Director. Your input is valuable in helping us meet the goals and needs of your child. Seaside Nursery School reserves the right to decide whether or not your suggestions are right for the entire group and whether or not they will be implemented.

## **The Staff**

Children thrive when their teachers are deeply interested and committed to each of them. Our teachers enjoy working with children and parents to create a warm and consistent environment. They act as facilitators of learning and respect the idea that each child participates in the process of learning in a unique way.

All of our teachers are qualified early childhood professionals who have met strictly enforced state standards. They have been selected not only because of their knowledge and experience in the field of early childhood education, but also because their personal educational philosophy and teaching style are compatible with Seaside's approach. Each staff member must also pass a thorough check of personal references, a comprehensive health examination and a rigorous state screening.

We believe that learning is a life-long process, for children as well as adults. Our teachers are offered continual opportunities throughout their employment to further their education and improve their teaching skills. We offer in-service training, workshops and seminars for all of our staff. In addition, we encourage staff to participate in professional organizations, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and to become actively involved in the local early childhood community.

## **SECTION 2: GETTING STARTED**

### **Enrollment Procedures**

The choice you make about your child's early care and education is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Children have different personalities and needs. At Seaside, our enrollment process is designed to allow you time to visit, to ask questions, to observe your child at play in his or her prospective classroom, and to assess whether your expectations and Seaside's programs are a good "fit."

### **Transitions**

Seaside Nursery School is a school-year program. In September each child is placed in a classroom where s/he will stay until June. Any child who will be returning to Seaside in the fall will have several opportunities to visit the classroom s/he will be moving on to in order to ensure a smooth transition.

## **Initial Visit**

The first scheduled visit to the school will provide you with an opportunity to gather information about our program and staff, and to have conversation with the Director to discuss your family's needs and expectations. The Director will supply an enrollment registration form, tuition rate sheet, school calendar and any other appropriate enrollment materials. Your child is also welcome to visit at this time and may want to join in program activities while you meet with the Director.

## **Your Child's First Day**

Children react differently to new situations. Your child may cry when you leave, but in most cases, the tears will end as soon as you turn the corner. Try to relax. When you leave, please go with a smile and a cheerful good-bye. (You are welcome to call later in the day to speak with your child's teacher.) Many parents keep going back for one more kiss, reassuring their children over and over. Uncertainty on your part, however, can hinder your child's adjustment. In all probability, your child will love school and will look forward to coming each day. If it seems that extra time and help in making the transition are needed, we will talk with you to make a plan together. Please be assured that we will not allow your child to suffer prolonged unhappiness.

## **Separation Anxiety**

It is not unusual for a child to exhibit symptoms of separation anxiety. Your child may be blissfully happy for the first few days of school, before announcing, seemingly out of the blue, "I am not going!" Usually the child is simply coming to grips with the fact that going to school will be a regular event and not a novelty. Some children may also exhibit anxiety at the end of the school day. Tantrums, physical outbursts, and tears are demonstrations of the fear, frustration, and anxiety that the child is experiencing. Following are recommended suggestions for dealing with separation anxiety:

- Discuss your child's behavior with the teacher(s). He/she may have some insights about what happens during the day that could be helpful.
- Leave some extra time at drop-off time and/or at pick-up time. When children feel rushed, their feelings of anxiety and frustration are often intensified.
- Establish a set routine. At drop-off time a good-bye hug and kiss, wave at

the window, or the exchange of special words can help your child feel in control and more comfortable. At pick-up time, joining in a game, finishing an activity together, or reviewing your child's day, can help make the transition from school to home an easier one.

- Do not sneak away when your child is occupied. This might seem easier, but children often feel betrayed and become mistrustful. Saying goodbye helps children realize that the parent is not going to disappear when their backs are turned.
- Some children like to keep a photograph with them at school, either a snapshot of the child's family or perhaps a picture of the child's parents at their workplace.
- Children often enjoy bringing comfort objects to school, such as a special blanket or stuffed toy. Ask your child's teacher(s) about how such objects are handled in class. Some teachers have specific places in the room, such as a rug, couch, or the child's cubby, where the children may keep their objects from home. Some teachers have specific times during the day when children may take their comfort objects out of their cubbies.
- If parents are familiar with the routine of the child's classroom, they can review with the child what will happen during the day.

### **SECTION 3: DAILY ROUTINES**

#### **Arrival and Departure**

Seaside's approach to the scheduled arrival time is very casual. Parents are urged not to rush for the sake of meeting it, since this can be upsetting to the child.

Parents must accompany children directly to the classroom each day without exception. Under no circumstances may a parent leave a child at school prior to opening or without making sure that the child has been properly received by a teacher.

When picking your child up from school, please keep in mind that your child's teacher must continue to monitor the rest of the class even though you may feel

that you have something very important to discuss. For extended discussion, you will always be able to arrange an appointment with your child's teacher or the Director at a mutually convenient time. If you are going to be late for pick up, it is your responsibility to contact your emergency pick-up person to make arrangements for timely pick-up of your child.

Other than parents, only persons with prior written authorization will be allowed to pick up a child from school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present identification before a child is released to them. Children are allowed to leave school only when accompanied by an authorized adult. Such authorization must be renewed at least every 12 months.

To ensure the security of the children, Seaside's staff will adhere to the following procedures:

1. Check pick-up authorization form in child's file. A child may be released to a person who is not on the authorized list only if the parent has provided a verifiable dated and signed note authorizing a specified person to pick up the child at a specified time.
2. Before releasing a child to someone other than a parent, staff will check the driver's license or other identification.
3. Under no circumstances will a child be released to a person who is not on the list or for whom the parent has not written an authorization note, even if the child and a staff member are familiar with the person. This includes parents of other children enrolled in the school.
4. Occasionally, schools are put into a difficult position by parents who are involved in a custody dispute. In the absence of a court order, we cannot deny a parent access to his or her child. Even with a court order, our ability to deny access is limited to notifying promptly the custodial parent and the proper police authority, should unsanctioned contact be attempted or occur at school. Difficulties of this type must be discussed with the Director so that we can clarify our procedures and limitations. Staff members will be instructed not to place themselves in jeopardy to mediate a family dispute or to attempt to enforce a court order. If a parent chooses to leave a child at school, with a court

order in force, the custodial parent will be required to sign a waiver acknowledging the school's inability to physically obstruct a hostile effort to take the child from school.

It is important that a parent notify the school if their child is ill or will not be attending school for any reason.

### **Daily Communication**

Here at Seaside Nursery School, we strive to create a warm and cozy environment where each child will be provided an opportunity for growth, challenge and friendships. Although we are available for formal discussions between parents and staff, we hope you will speak to us daily to keep us informed about the small but important changes that can affect your child's ongoing development. Our goal is to establish an ongoing dialogue with your family.

### **Child Guidance**

*"Discipline is the slow, bit-by-bit process of helping children see the sense in acting a certain way."*

*James Hymes, author and early childhood educator*

Guidance and discipline should always be developmentally appropriate and based on an understanding of the individual needs of each child. The goal is to enhance and reinforce the healthy growth and development of the children and to protect the group and the individuals within it. A skilled teacher combines caring with fair and consistent limits within the classroom. Children who are treated in this way feel safe and are usually more cooperative. As they grow, children learn to express their feelings and needs in more socially acceptable ways. Clear expectations, individual attention and acknowledgment of positive behaviors work wonders. But of course, there are times when conflict will arise.

Whenever possible, children will be allowed to resolve conflicts and find solutions themselves. A teacher will intervene when necessary and will redirect the children involved to another activity. In doing so, the teacher will discuss the inappropriate behavior with the children and restate the desired behavior, age permitting. In order to help the children gain a better understanding of the desired behavior, the consequences of the inappropriate behavior will be directly related to the actions of the child (e.g. not being allowed to play with materials that have been misused, or repairing a book that was intentionally torn.) Forcing a child to apologize to

another child is usually not effective and does not validate the feelings of either child.

When redirection is ineffective, or when the difficult behavior is extreme or puts any child at risk, the teacher will seek assistance from a co-teacher or the school Director. Although it is important to allow children to express their anger in effective ways, keeping everyone safe is the teacher's first priority. Occasionally, a brief, supervised separation from the rest of the group can help a child regain control. There are some specific types of disciplinary intervention that are always prohibited by Seaside policy:

- Corporal punishment, including spanking, shall not be used.
- No child shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse.
- No child shall be denied food as a form of punishment.
- No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.
- Confining a child to a swing, high chair, crib or playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervision
- Excessive time-out (time-out may not exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place within an educator's view.)

### **Lunch and Snacks**

Parents are responsible for providing a snack for your child each day. If your child stays for lunch you are responsible for providing the lunch. Snacks and lunches must comply with all allergy regulations communicated by the school.

If you need suggestions for snack or lunch items, please see us in the office.

Seaside Nursery School has a microwave oven to warm foods. Please send foods to be warmed in microwavable, plastic or glass containers. Please introduce new foods at home before sending them to school to prevent unexpected allergic reactions. Please limit sugary foods, except for special celebrations. Because they are a choking hazard we do not allow hard candy or chewing gum at school. Please be sure to label your child's lunch box or bag, as well as all containers and water bottles.

## **Clothing and Diapers**

At least one seasonally appropriate change of clothes, including underwear and socks, should be kept at school at all times. All clothes sent or worn to school must be labeled with the child's full name.

Each child will have a specially designated space to hold personal belongings. The children are expected to wear shoes at all times. When a child wears heavy foul-weather boots to school in place of shoes, other shoes or hard soled slippers must be sent for use indoors.

Parents are responsible for providing diapers and diaper wipes if needed for their children. Please check with the staff regularly about your child's supply of diapers and diaper wipes. We will bag soiled clothing for daily removal.

## **Toilet Training**

Toilet training is done in accordance with requests of the child's parents and in a manner that is consistent with the child's physical and emotional abilities. Toilet training will never be coerced. All children will be allowed to use the bathroom when needed. Children will be supervised during toileting but allowed as much privacy as is appropriate. No child will be punished for soiling or wetting clothing. Children who are learning to be self-sufficient in the bathroom will have an easier time if they wear clothing that they can pull off and on by themselves.

## **Birthdays**

Seaside Nursery School will celebrate each child's birthday, recognizing this special day. We invite parents to help their child choose a favorite book to share at school on their special day. Families may donate the book to Seaside's school library in the child's name, or lend it for the day.

If you plan to invite classmates to a party outside school, please do not send birthday party invitations or thank you notes to be handed out at school. Mailing lists for each class are available from the office upon request.

## **Traditional Holidays**

Holiday themes will emphasize multi-cultural traditions. The children in our school represent many different religious and ethnic groups. The folklore and practices of each are an important part of our collective culture and are presented as such. The spirit of joy and happiness is the theme common to all. We do not emphasize

religious themes or one particular tradition. Parents are encouraged to share their traditions and customs with other children and their families. Please offer your suggestions to the Director.

### **Inclement Weather**

Seaside Nursery School will do its best to stay open on all scheduled school days. If, however, we feel the conditions are too hazardous to be open, we will make our own announcement via email and on our Facebook page. When the Marblehead Public Schools have a delayed opening, Seaside will open at its regularly scheduled time (7:30 AM for Early Drop-Off and 8:30 AM for regular arrival time).

## **SECTION 4: HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Good Health**

Only children who are in good health may be brought to school. When a child develops signs of illness during the day, parents will be called and will be expected to pick up their child as soon as possible. In the meantime, the child will be made comfortable in a quiet, supervised location away from other children.

Children in all classes will play outdoors daily, weather permitting. Parents are responsible for sending children to school in adequate clothing and footwear to maintain good health during outdoor play in all suitable weather conditions, including normal winter temperatures. Please do not ask us to keep a child inside because of a cold or other illness, except for recuperation from bronchitis or pneumonia, as ordered by a physician. A child who is too sick to go outside is usually too sick to be in a social situation with other children.

### **Illness**

Parents must understand that any new social setting offers exposure to illness and germs. Although teachers take precautions to prevent the spread of illness, children entering a new school setting may seem to catch everything that goes around for several months. Please be prepared to stay home with your child or make arrangements for someone who can. In general, children who are lethargic and unable to participate actively in the full, regular program will not be allowed to remain at school. Whenever your child has experienced any of the following symptoms within the previous 24-hour period, you will be expected to keep your

child home for the comfort of your child and the health of the other families at school.

- Fever of 101: Children sent home with a fever in the middle of the day may not return to school until they have been fever-free for a full 24-hour period.
- Diarrhea: Two or more instances close together may be assumed to be contagious unless determined by a doctor not to be so.
- Vomiting.
- Pronounced or persistent coughing.
- A contagious condition of any kind, including but not limited to strep, flu, respiratory infection, conjunctivitis, infectious rash, hepatitis, chicken pox, measles, mumps, scabies, lice, etc., unless accompanied by a physician's note indicating that the child is able to return to a group setting.

When sick children are kept at home, all of the children and their families benefit from better health. Seaside is not licensed for the care of ill children. Please remember that all symptoms must have disappeared at least 24 hours before returning to school. In some instances, a physician's certificate of good health may be required before a child will be allowed to return to school.

### **Medication Policy**

Seaside encourages parents and physicians to schedule medication outside of school hours whenever possible. But to meet the needs of those circumstances in which it is necessary to administer medication during school, Seaside strictly adheres to the following Medication Policy. Medication will be stored, handled and administered only according to this policy. The necessary authorization form for handling medications at school is available from the Director.

The administration of medication to children presents a number of special problems. Children vary widely in age, weight, cooperative disposition, and the ability to absorb, metabolize, and excrete medications. Ill children can react with unexpected severity to some drugs. It is the physician's responsibility to prescribe medication in the correct dosage without endangering the health of the child. It is critical for all parties - physician, parent, and the staff member administering the medication - to understand the expected action, possible side effects, and any warning signs of toxicity. The administration of medication must be reliably controlled and documented as follows:

1. Prescription medications will only be administered when delivered to Seaside's Director in the current prescription container, labeled by the pharmacist with the child's name, physician's name, name of the medication, dosage instructions, etc. Seaside must also receive a written order from the physician with specific instructions for administration, including length of course, any allergies, and possible side effects. The physician's name and telephone number must be provided.
2. Parents should always request prescription medication that is BID (twice/day) to preclude distribution at school whenever possible. Some TID (thrice/day) medications can also be scheduled completely outside of the school day.
3. The initial dose of the medication, whether prescription or over-the-counter, must be given at home or by the doctor in order to evaluate effectiveness and observe possible side effects.
4. Children on antibiotics may not return to school until they have completed 24 hours of antibiotic therapy.
5. Over-the-counter medications (e.g. Tylenol, Dimetapp, etc.) will only be administered or stored by Seaside with a written physician's order. This order, called a Medication Permission Form, must accompany each medication given. If an over-the-counter medication is ordered, we require specific instructions as to dosage, schedule, and term. We cannot dispense over-the-counter medication on an "as needed" basis.
6. Topical, non prescription medications may only be administered to a child with the written permission of a parent. Such permission shall be valid for no more than one year from the signature date. If Seaside notices an adverse reaction to such a medication, Seaside reserves the right to require a physician's written order to continue use of the medication at school. We will not administer any such medication contrary to the written directions on its original container unless directed to do so by a physician's written order.
7. Sunscreen. Parents who want their child to wear sunscreen are asked to put on the first application before coming to school each day. Parents must supply their own bottle of sunscreen with their child's name on it. Parents must also complete and sign a Sunscreen Permission Slip before

- the staff can reapply sunscreen to the child before going outdoors.
8. Children with special needs or chronic conditions will be assessed individually in consultation with parent and physician. Such special needs would include, but not be limited to, the use of inhalers, insulin, Phenobarbital, or Dilantin.
  9. All medications must be handed to a teacher or the Director. No medication will be accepted when left in a diaper bag, lunch box, cubby, etc. No medication should be mixed in a child's bottle or into other food, unless specified by the physician as the proper form of administration. In that case, the medication must be mixed at school. Seaside is not responsible for replacement of spilled medication or for those left beyond the expiration date. Unused medication will be returned to the parent.
  10. All medication should be clearly labeled with the child's name and/or current prescription label. All prescription and non-prescription medication will be stored in the student's classroom out of the reach of children. Topical medication may be stored in the classroom changing area on a shelf which is inaccessible to children. Appropriate authorization forms must be stored in the child's file and updated as medication is administered.
  11. The person administering the medication must know the child.
  12. The individual administering the prescribed medication must always be precise when measuring or distributing each dose. If there is any doubt about the accuracy of the indicated dose, it is imperative to recheck with the physician. The parent must supply any special device such as a dropper or a calibrated cup for the proper administration. Most pharmacists and physicians provide devices for giving medication to children. Some tablets which are not available in pediatric preparations may need to be crushed. This must be specified by the physician, along with any special requirements for measuring or administering the medication.
  13. Each dose administered is recorded by the staff member who administered it and kept in the child's file.
  14. When administering medication, no attempt will be made to restrain a child or to use unusual force if the child is upset or uncooperative. A parent will be called immediately if such a problem occurs.

Medication Permission forms are available from the Director, and they are suitable for use by the doctor as a physician's order to the school.

### **Accidents and Emergencies**

All staff receives first aid training, and designated staff, are trained in CPR for infants and children. All incidents and injuries will be reported to parents on an Incident/Accident Report Form, within 24 hours of any such occurrence. Minor accidents, such as cuts and scrapes, will be treated with soap and water; bruises and bumps treated with ice.

In the case of a more serious accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If we cannot reach a parent or the designated emergency contact, we will call an ambulance and your child's physician. A staff member will accompany your child in the ambulance to the nearest hospital and remain with your child until you arrive. You will be expected to assume responsibility for any resultant expense.

### **Biting**

Biting is an unfortunate but natural stage in the development of most young children. Although parents may not observe this behavior at home, most children who participate in a social environment with other children may, on some occasions, bite another child or be bitten by another child. While this is unpleasant for everyone involved, biting does not, under normal circumstances, represent a health threat.

The school's policy on biting is to help children outgrow this undesired behavior by learning more acceptable forms of social interaction. Our approach to managing biting is consistent with our policy for managing behavior problems in general. We examine the environment and the activity schedule to see how they may be contributing to the behavior, and we make any adjustments that we feel may help the child to modify the behavior. We also help parents to understand the behavior so they can be prepared to respond in a constructive way.

Unless biting by a child is unusually chronic and acute, it does not constitute cause for the school to suggest that a child should receive additional intervention outside the school or alternative child care services. We may, on rare occasions, decide to assign children to different groups as a remedial strategy. Under no circumstances, outside of a court order, do we have the right to discuss one child's

biting with another child's parents or to acknowledge the identity of a biter.

### **Child Protection Mandate**

In order to grow and learn, children's basic needs for good nutrition, shelter, medical care, bathing, clean clothes, intellectual stimulation, appropriate discipline, love and a feeling of importance must be met. Children need a safe, nurturing environment that makes them feel secure and loved. Our commitment is to provide the best possible environment to support children's self esteem and healthy development. To help our staff to understand your child's needs, we ask that you keep us informed about your child's health, well-being and any illness, injuries or situations outside school which might adversely affect your child. If for any reason you feel that our staff is not meeting your child's needs, we encourage you to speak with the Director.

Should you have any difficulty in providing for your child's emotional or physical needs, you are encouraged to ask for help. The Director can provide a referral to a community resource when you are experiencing a need for additional support.

In the rare instance when we recognize that your child's basic needs are being consistently neglected, the Director will inform you and will assist you in finding ways to meet those needs. If you are temporarily unable or unwilling to meet your child's minimal needs, as described above, our staff is mandated by State Law to file a report with the Department of Social Services. It then becomes the responsibility of the Department to work with you and your family.

In all cases of suspected child abuse, Seaside personnel are also mandated reporters under State Law. Our procedure is for staff to report their concerns to the Director, who will assess the facts and assist the staff member in making a decision to file a report. A decision is also made about whether to notify the parents or guardian. In making this decision, risk to the children involved will be of the utmost concern.

Seaside staff shall cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect. A copy of Seaside's complete child abuse and neglect policy is available to parents upon request. These procedures include, but are not limited to, insuring that any allegedly abusive or neglectful staff member does not work directly with children until an investigation has been completed by Seaside, the Office for Children and the Department of Social Services.

### **Community Agency Involvement**

Seaside Nursery School will permit no research, experimentation, or promotions using children without first obtaining written permission from the parents of the children involved. This includes photography, academic research, vision and hearing screening or any other activities, such as fund raising or publicity, which are unrelated to the direct care of children.

## **SECTION 5: FAMILIES' RIGHTS**

### **Children's Records**

Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. The school does not release the information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the child's program plan without the written consent of the child's parent or guardian. The school will notify a parent should his or her child's record be subpoenaed. Parents shall have access to their child's record at reasonable times with no delay of greater than two business days following such a request. If the parent requests a copy of any records, the school will provide the requested copies for the school's cost of making or obtaining the copies. Occasionally, a duly authorized licenser will review children's files to substantiate proper record-keeping by the school. However, no material is removed, and confidentiality is always maintained.

A child's parents may add information to the child's record at any time. The parents may request to have information in the record deleted or amended. If the Director feels that the information needs to remain in the record, the Director will meet with the parents to discuss the issue. If, after the conference, the Director still chooses to deny the request, the Director will provide the parents with a written explanation and will explain to the parents how to file an appeal with the child care licensing agency.

Upon written request of the parents, the school will send a copy of the child's record, at the parents' expense, to any other person or agency so designated.

### **Confidentiality**

Seaside Nursery School believes in protecting the confidentiality of all families who choose to use our services. We will not discuss the affairs of one family with another family without prior mutual consent, nor will we release family information

to parties outside the school or to the general public. It is also against school policy for staff members to discuss the affairs of families in casual conversation within the school or in any inappropriate way at any time. We expect all families to follow the same principles of confidentiality with respect to all other families and staff members.

Photographs of children or samples of children's work will not be displayed outside the school, nor will copies be used for promotional or training purposes without the prior approval of the parents.

### **Referral Procedure**

The Director and teachers evaluate and monitor children's behavior and progress through bi-weekly team meetings, evaluations, and through daily interactions. Records are confidential and access to them is limited. Parents have a right to review their child's file at any time.

If a behavioral incident occurs, or there is a reason to be concerned about a specific developmental issue, our procedures for observing, evaluation and referring the child or family to an appropriate agency or professional resource are as follows:

1. Teachers are responsible for recording information about a child's behavior and development in an accurate and factual manner which states specific behaviors and the date, time and duration of observations made.
2. The Director will review and sign all documentation regarding such behaviors.
3. The designated lead teacher or Director may be asked to observe the child in the classroom for three half-hour periods unless the situation requires the Director to act immediately.
4. Parents will be asked to review documentation and concerns about their child's behavior or development and sign a statement acknowledging the school's concerns.
5. The Director and parents then develop a plan to help identify both the child's needs and sources of help available to address those needs. This may include the Department of Social Services, the child's pediatrician, the Early Intervention team, or the local public school systems if the child is over three years old.

## **Termination and Suspension Policy**

Each family has an obligation to observe and follow the school's policies and procedures. If at any time the parents or child's behavior interferes with stated policies or classroom operation, it may be necessary for the school to take corrective measures.

The corrective measures may include a verbal notice, written notice, referral to a social agency, and termination. The corrective action taken will be determined by the school. The school does not guarantee that one form of action will necessarily precede another.

The following is a list of actions that will result in discussion with the Director and may be cause for termination: violation of the school's policies or safety rules, non-payment of tuition, theft or dishonesty, physical harassment, sexual harassment or disrespect toward employees. These examples are not all inclusive. We emphasize that termination decisions will be based on an assessment of all relevant factors. All meetings shall include documentation of the reasons for termination to the child's parent.

In addition, it should be noted that if the school is unable to meet the physical or social-emotional needs of a particular child, the director shall meet with the parent to suggest appropriate referrals.

When any child is terminated from the school, initiated by the school or the parent(s), we shall prepare the child for termination in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand.

Seaside Nursery School chooses not to use a suspension policy.

## **SECTION 6: TUITION AND ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

### **Payment**

Tuition at Seaside Nursery School is based on a yearly rate. It is broken down into ten (10) equal monthly payments for your convenience. Full tuition is due each month by the 1<sup>st</sup>. A \$15.00 late fee will be charged for tuition not paid as of the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. Any bank charges incurred by Seaside Nursery School on returned checks will be forwarded to the parents. The **only** adjustment on tuition

will be for extended illness (more than two weeks). A non-refundable annual Registration Fee, specified in Seaside's Tuition Policy, is required at registration and for each subsequent school year enrolled. All payments should be made payable to Seaside Nursery School.

### **Termination for Non-Payment**

Non-payment or consistently late payment of tuition and/or fees can be sufficient cause for termination of service. If service is terminated by the Seaside for non-payment, Seaside will pursue collection of the full amount due.

### **Absence**

When your child is going to be absent, please call Seaside as early as possible. If your child has a contagious illness, let us know so that we can alert other parents to look for symptoms in their children. There are no "make-up" days at Seaside Nursery School. A tuition adjustment will be made for extended illness of two weeks or more.

### **Schedule Changes**

All children must have a regular schedule on file with the school. Seaside requires two weeks' written notice in advance of a schedule change. Extra hours are usually available as needed, but must be cleared with the Director. Schedule changes will not be accepted for legal holidays or vacations for which Seaside is closed.

### **Holidays**

Seaside Nursery School is closed for certain holidays which are specified on the School Calendar. Tuition is charged on a monthly basis, without credit for those holidays for which we are closed. For example, if your child is regularly enrolled for Mondays, you will be charged the same tuition for a month in which the school is closed for a Monday holiday as you would be otherwise charged.

### **Withdrawal**

A two-week written notice is required for withdrawal. Following such notification, tuition will be charged for two weeks or until the date specified, if beyond two weeks.

## **Parent Information, Rights and Responsibilities**

Chapter 28a, Section 10 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Office for Children the legal responsibility of promulgating rules and regulations governing the operation of day care centers (including nursery schools).

The licensee (day care center owner) is required to inform all parents of specific information about their rights and responsibilities at the time of admission of their child to the school. Section 7.04 of 102 CMR 7.00, the regulations which govern day care centers, contains more information.

### **Parent's Rights**

#### ***Right to Visit***

You have a right to make unannounced visits to your child's room while your child is present.

#### ***Parent Input***

The program must have a procedure for allowing your input in the development of center policy and procedure. The program must allow you to make suggestions, but it is up to the program to decide whether or not they will be implemented.

#### ***Conferences***

You have a right to request an individual conference with the program's staff. The licensee has the responsibility to make the staff available.

#### ***Meeting Prior to Admittance***

The licensee shall assure that the administrator or his designee meets with you prior to admitting your child to the center.

At the meeting, the licensee in addition to the information contained in this fact sheet, must provide you with: the center's written statements of purpose; types of services provided; referral policy; behavior management policy; termination and suspension policy; a list of suggested nutritious foods you could send for snacks and meals, if it is your responsibility; the policy for identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect; the transportation plan; a copy of the health care policy (if you request it); procedure for administration of medication; procedures for providing

emergency health care and the illness exclusion policy; and a copy of the fee schedule. All of this information may be contained in the "Parent Handbook".

You should also be given the opportunity to visit the center's classrooms either at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of your child.

### ***Progress Reports***

At least every six (6) months, you should either meet with the center's staff to discuss your child's progress, or receive a written progress report of your child's activities and participation in the center. This report must become part of your child's center record. If your child is an infant or is a child with disabilities, you should receive a written progress report every three (3) months. Center staff must bring any special problems or significant developments, particularly if they regard infants, to your attention as soon as they arise.

### ***Your Child's Records***

Information contained in your child's record is privileged and confidential. The center's staff may not distribute or release information in your child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for your child without your written consent. You must be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

### ***Access to the Record***

You should be able to have access to your child's records. The center must provide access within two business days, unless they have your permission to take longer. You must be allowed to view your child's entire record, even if it is located in more than one location. The center must have procedures regarding access, duplication, and dissemination of children's records. They must maintain a written log which identifies anyone who has had access or has received any information out of the record. This log is available only to you and the people responsible for maintaining the center's records.

### ***Amending the Record***

You have the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant materials to your child's record; you also have the right to request deletion or amendments of any information contained in your child's record. Such request shall be made in accordance with the procedures described below:

1. If you are of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain clarify or correct objectionable material in your child's record, you have the right to have a conference with the licensee to make your objections known;
2. The licensee shall, within one (1) week after the conference, give you a decision in writing stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If the decision is in your favor, the licensee shall immediately take steps as may be necessary to put the decision into effect.

### ***Charge for Copies***

The licensee shall not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of any information contained in your child's record.

### ***Transfer of the Record***

Upon your written request, when your child is no longer in care, the licensee can give you your child's record or transfer them to any other person you identify. The center should ask you to sign a form verifying that you have received the record.

### **Responsibilities of the Program**

#### ***Full Disclosure***

Seaside Nursery School is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Parents have the right to contact EEC for information regarding Seaside Nursery School's regulatory compliance history.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
Department of Early Education and Care  
360 Merrimack Street  
Building 9, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Lawrence, MA 01843  
978-826-1316  
Licensor: Nicole Rodgers

### ***Availability of Regulations***

The center must have a copy of CMR 102 7.00, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs, on the premises, available to any person upon request. If you have questions about any of the regulations, ask your center to show them to you.

### ***Providing Information to the Department of Early Education & Care***

The licensee must make available to EEC any information required to be kept and maintained under these regulations and any other information reasonably related to the requirements of these regulations. This includes information in your child's records. Authorized employees of the office are not to remove identifying case materials from the center premises and are required to maintain the confidentiality of individual records.

### ***Reporting Abuse or Neglect***

All center staff are mandated reporters. They are required by law to report suspected abuse and neglect to either the Department of Social Services or to the licensee's program administrator. The licensee must have written policies and procedures for reporting and must provide the written policy to you upon enrollment.

### ***Notification of Injury***

The licensee must notify you immediately of any injury which requires emergency care. They must also notify you in writing, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to your child.

### ***Volunteers or Student Interns***

Volunteers, including student teachers or interns are chosen on their ability to meet the needs of the children in our care. Student interns will receive the appropriate orientation, training, and supervision. Volunteers or interns do not have unmonitored contact with children, nor are they used to maintain the ratios of a classroom. Supervision is done by the director, assistant director, lead teacher, and the college supervisor.