

## 5. SCHOOL POLICIES

### Safety and Health

#### BASIC POLICY

All adults are responsible for the safety of the children. Please be alert to any possible dangers or hazards and remedy them immediately or report them to the teacher. If you see any broken toys or equipment, remove it and tell the teacher. If you come across a book that is questionable or offensive, please share it with the teacher. If you see unsafe behavior, stop it immediately and then discuss it with the child. A first aid kit, including plastic gloves, is available in the white cabinets in the snack area. Emergency contact names and phone numbers for each child are posted inside the door of the white cabinet near the phone. Parents need to remember to update this information immediately if changes occur. Parents are responsible for assembling an emergency kit for their child. Directions will be provided in your enrollment packet.

The following sections cover safety-related issues in more detail.

#### ACCIDENT PROCEDURE

##### *Prevention*

The main thing we can do to prevent accidents at school is to keep a watchful eye on the children. Be sure to intervene to stop unsafe behavior (e.g., hitting, weapon play, trying to leave playground boundaries, unsafe use of tools or toys). If you are unsure whether an activity is unsafe, err on the side of caution. Intervene and then discuss it with the teacher and other parent helpers. As a diverse group of adults, we may all differ in our comfort level with children's risk taking and our definition of what is unsafe. However, we need to respect each other's viewpoints, and do our best to work together to keep the children safe.

##### *Report Any Accidents to Teacher*

Parents who witness an accident are to report all details immediately to the teacher. This holds true even if you and the teacher both witnessed the accident as vantage points and perceptions often differ. Parents are responsible for informing the teacher fully, and she is responsible for soliciting all necessary information so as to make the best possible decision regarding the child's care. It is the teacher's responsibility to determine the course of action, using her judgment on a case-by-case basis. The teacher will administer only the most basic first aid (e.g., band aids, cold packs).

##### *Call Parents*

Immediately upon learning of a child's serious injury or medical condition, the teacher will turn over the direction of the class to a parent helper. The teacher will then stay with the child until the arrival of parent, emergency contact or medical

personnel. The teacher will ask a parent helper to call the child's parents, using the list posted by the phone. The parent helper will also pull the child's emergency information sheet from the file so it is ready if needed. If the child's parents are not available, the designated emergency contact will be called. If the parents or emergency contacts cannot be located, we will call the child's physician and follow their instructions. This may include transporting the child to an emergency room or a doctor's office.

#### *When to Call 9-1-1*

The teacher will call 9-1-1 at her discretion, based on her training and experience.

#### *Accident Report*

In the case of serious accidents (requiring immediate and/or subsequent medical attention), an accident report is to be filled out as soon as possible by the teacher, with input from parent helper witnesses where appropriate. One copy will be given to the child's parents, one will be placed in the child's file in the classroom, and one will be sent to PCPO for insurance purposes.

For minor accidents (scrapes, slivers, bumps, etc.), the teacher will give the parent an informal verbal report at pick-up time, with further discussion later if needed. Parent helpers are encouraged to assist the teacher in this informal reporting, especially if they were the main witness or chief comforter after the incident. At the after-class debriefing, the teacher will review the day's events, including any accidents that occurred. Parent helpers may assist in calling parents to explain any minor incidents that were not reported at pick-up time.

In the event of any concerns over the teacher's handling of an incident, the parent(s) and teacher should communicate directly with each other (following the school's grievance procedure, see pages 47-48). If necessary, the Class Representative and/or President may mediate the discussion.

#### *Insurance Coverage for Members*

Our group insurance policy through PCPO covers "students and parent assistants for medical treatment for injuries sustained while taking part in or traveling straight to or from any activity sponsored and supervised by the school." The school pays a deductible. Take a PCPO insurance packet with you when seeking medical treatment for injuries resulting from the accident. This coverage neither implies nor depends on any liability on the part of the school and does not increase our insurance costs.

#### **BUILDING SECURITY (DOORS)**

As a compromise between convenience and security, the blue gym door will be left open for about 30 minutes at the start of school. This minimizes the time the church is unsecured while enabling parents to enter the school. Parent helpers need to remember to close the door after school starts.

At the end of the day, two parent helpers will join the teacher and children directly for the transition from circle to story time in the reading room. The third parent helper will remain in the classroom until the first parent arrives for pickup and will then join the teacher and children for the rest of group and story time.

#### **END OF SCHOOL DAY**

School is over at 12:00 p.m. As a safety precaution, the teacher will stand by the door and release children one at a time from the reading room, after matching him or her with a parent or authorized pick-up person.

If someone else is to pick up your child, the teacher should be notified, in writing when possible, in advance. If the teacher does not know this person, they should expect to show her their driver's license. In case of emergency (e.g., you have a flat tire), you should call another parent to pick up your child. Some children occasionally try to slip out and make a run for it, so everyone needs to be vigilant. Children are not to go out to the parking area by themselves nor are they to run around the halls and gym.

If you have one, please program the school's phone number (503) 234-1691 into your cell phone to alert us of potential delays or pick-up changes.

Children whose parents are working at school that day may stay for lunch. We ask that other children do not bring lunches to eat at school, so parent helpers can focus on end-of-day tasks.

#### **FIELD TRIPS**

We take occasional field trips to supplement our curriculum and enrich our experiences. Unless otherwise notified, each trip is contained to our regular school hours, and we depart from and return to our school site. You will be informed if there are changes, and we will contact you via cell phone if we are running late in our return.

##### *Information/Sign-ups*

A letter with information, a permission slip and a request for additional chaperones and drivers will be put in your child's cubby approximately two weeks prior to the field trip. The permission slip needs to be signed and returned if you would like your child to participate in the field trip. The scheduled parent helpers are presumed to be chaperoning, and the snack parent helper should check in with the teacher about what type of snack would work best. Please contact the teacher immediately if you have signed up to chaperone and can't make it. If there are not enough parent volunteers to ensure the safety of the children, the trip will be canceled.

##### *Car Policies*

In addition to the directions and the morning's itinerary, those driving will receive a folder containing a copy of each preschool passenger's emergency form, the

preschool's insurance information, and the cell phone numbers of the other drivers. Upon returning to the school, be sure to return the folder to the teacher.

When we travel in cars on a field trip:

- All drivers must provide automobile insurance information and have liability insurance coverage of at least \$300,000.
- Each child must be separately buckled into a safety seat.
- The child's parent should install the child's safety seat in the driver's car correctly and show the driver how to fasten in the child. Oregon Law requires that children under 40 pounds ride in a child safety seat, and that children under 4'9" and below the age of 8 ride in a child safety or booster seat.
- The teacher will bring the first aid kit and copies of the preschoolers' emergency forms.
- Parents may not smoke or talk on cell phones when transporting children on field trips.

### *Siblings*

Depending on the site, siblings may be allowed to attend field trips. Please talk with the teacher because first priority must be given to having an adequate ratio of chaperones to registered preschoolers. If you choose to bring along a sibling, you will not be asked to also chaperone a group of preschoolers. Scheduled parent helpers are expected to chaperone, so please check the schedule ahead of time and make the necessary arrangements.

**Please note that siblings are not covered by the school's insurance policy.**

### **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

Emergency procedures will be covered during the parent orientation. Every parent should review the emergency procedures posted in our classroom prior to parent helping the first time and note the escape routes. We will hold monthly emergency drills.

### **ILLNESS**

Before a child can be admitted to the preschool, his/her immunization form must be up to date. The day-to-day health of the children depends on the awareness of the parents and the teacher. If your child is not feeling well, please keep the child home so that other children will not be exposed to the illness. Siblings who are not feeling well should not come to school when you drop off your child as this too exposes the other children to the illness. Please make arrangements with another parent to be with your preschooler during workjob and opening circle time. See the Appendix for more specific guidelines on illness.

Parents should notify the teacher of absences by calling and leaving a message on the school phone before school starts that morning. This helps relieve the curiosity and concern of your child's classmates. It also helps the teacher to encourage

positive social skills (caring) by allowing her to mention a child's illness and facilitate discussions on how it feels to be ill, etc.

If signs of illness are present when your child arrives, the teacher will ask you to take the child home. If the child becomes ill during the day, someone from the preschool will call your home or emergency numbers to have your child picked up. If you will be at a friend's house or somewhere else, you may wish to leave an alternate emergency number with the teacher.

### **SIBLINGS**

For safety, liability and insurance reasons, as well as for the quality of the program, parents need to arrange childcare for siblings on parent helping days. Only enrolled preschoolers and parent helpers are covered by our insurance. **Non-mobile** infants may come along in a snugli or backpack. Please do not bring crawling babies or toddlers. The classroom is set up for preschoolers and is not appropriate for children younger than preschool age. Apart from safety concerns, if you have to keep a toddler out of trouble it is hard to relax and enjoy the morning with your preschooler. Finally, having siblings in class limits your parent helping ability for the rest of the preschoolers as well—again, both a safety and quality concern.

On the other hand, many siblings enjoy being part of the school drop-off and pick-up ritual. Before class, siblings enjoy being part of the workjob time and opening circle. After class it is also fine for them to come into the classroom and play for a few minutes under your supervision. Siblings also get a chance to play in the classroom (with an age-appropriate set of play options) during childcare on general meeting nights.

### **SMOKING/ALCOHOL/DRUG-FREE PREMISES**

No smoking, alcohol or drug use of any kind is allowed within preschool premises when you are directly responsible for the safety of the children.

### **FOOD ALLERGIES**

It is part of our anti-bias philosophy to strive to serve a snack that is safe and edible for all the children. Any food allergies that members of the class have are listed on the door of the snack cabinet. Please take these into account in planning your snack. Please bring only healthy foods for snack time.

If your child has food allergies, please be sure to check the serving table each day for the snack's safety. Always bring a back-up snack that your child can safely eat.

See pages 7-8 for information on our classroom procedures for school snacks.

### **WALKS**

We may go for walks in the neighborhood. For safety, when we take these mini-field trips:

- One adult parent helper will walk in the front, one in the middle and one at the end. The adult last in line needs to be continually on the alert to see that children stay with the group. Accept and allow for some wandering as long as the children are not in danger or trespassing on other's property.
- Children and adults must stay together.
- Children should stay in designated walkways.
- Children should hold hands in a group, with an adult when crossing streets. Have them STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN for cars.

## **Communication**

One of the most important components of a successful co-op preschool is open and effective communication. There is a tremendous amount of information to absorb when one first becomes involved in a cooperative school, this handbook for example, and then all the business and events that occur during the year. The system of communications described below is designed to give everyone the information they need as efficiently and helpfully as possible. As with every other aspect of the school, there is always room for improvement, and your suggestions are welcome.

### **BULLETIN BOARDS**

Parents need to check the bulletin boards in the hallway by the gym entrance every time they come to school.

Bulletin boards include information about: school events (field trips, color days, etc.), information and sign-up sheets for social events, parent meetings and cleaning days, updates on fundraising and parent-helping shifts, information about PCPO and parent education as well as want ads, news articles, parent's business cards, flyers, and so on.

Making a habit of checking the bulletin boards is a good way to stay informed from day-to-day.

The Publicity Coordinator is responsible for maintaining the bulletin boards. Parents posting items on the community board should date them so the Publicity Coordinator can pull excess material at regular intervals.

### **CUBBIES**

A cubby is provided in the gym of the school for each child. PLEASE clean out your child's cubby every time you come to school (or have your carpool driver do so). Notices, newsletters, updates/reminders and children's artwork will be distributed via the cubbies. You may want to have an extra change of clothes in the cubbies in case of a spill or accident.

You may use the cubbies to pass along information to Board members, other parents and for the newsletter. You may also use cubbies to inform parents of information that is child/parent related. They are not to be used for advertisement purposes. Birthday invitations must be sent through the mail and not left in the

cubbies. Children are hurt when one classmate gets an invitation and another does not.

#### **GENERAL MEETINGS**

Each meeting includes announcements and discussion of current school events and business. Board policy decisions are introduced. Issues that the membership needs to decide are discussed and voted on. At least one parent from each family must attend each general meeting. The business/informational aspects are supplemented with parent education by speakers and social time with refreshments. Because parent helper issues are discussed, we strongly encourage the parent helper in the family to attend the general meeting.

#### **NEWSLETTER**

The school newsletter comes out monthly from September through May. Parents are strongly encouraged to submit articles, book reviews, recipes, photos, artwork or whatever strikes their fancy. Making contributions to the newsletter is a great way to build and enrich our school community. Each month's submission deadline is noted in the school calendar. The newsletter is also a good way to get recaps of key information from the bulletin boards and general meetings.

#### **PHONE MESSAGES AND E-MAIL**

When the teacher or the Board needs to communicate a brief, urgent message to members, the Class Representatives will coordinate a phone-calling effort. The message will also be distributed by e-mail whenever possible. The Class Representative may enlist families to help with these calls. If you have any questions about the message you received, call your Class Representative.

There is a telephone in the classroom. The number is (503) 234-1691. During class time the teacher and helpers are busy with the children, so please make any messages you need to leave brief. If you desire a longer conversation with the teacher, leave a message and she will call you after class is over. When the class is outside or not in session, you will get the answering machine. Please leave a message and the teacher or a Board member will get back to you. If you need to leave an initial urgent message and you have exhausted all possibilities (school, cell numbers, etc.) the church's office number is (503) 232-9129.

#### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Although it is rarely used, the grievance procedure is an important part of our communications system. In general, any concerns should always be raised directly with the individual. If you have a problem with or a suggestion regarding school administration or policy, you should contact the President or your Class Representative. If you have a problem with or a suggestion regarding the curriculum or management of the classroom, you should contact the teacher.

If direct contact proves unsatisfactory, you should bring your concern, suggestions, or ideas, in writing, to the Board. Notice of Board meetings is included in the school calendar and monthly newsletters. Members are always

welcome to attend. You may also choose to contact the President or your Class Representative to check on dates and get further information about attending. Please let the President know in advance if you wish to be placed on the agenda.

If it appears that resolution of any issue may require it, an outside facilitator can be called on for assistance. PCPO is one resource available for such support.

## **Other School Policies**

### **CARPOOLS**

Many parents like to carpool. These are strictly private agreements between parents. If you are picking up several children you should arrive early enough to clean out their cubbies and be prepared to leave when they are dismissed.

If you are carpooling on your parent helping day, please remember that you are responsible for all the children in your carpool during the period before and after the school day.

### **CASH/CHECK**

Whenever possible, please use a check to complete any school-related financial transactions (e.g., tuition, scrip purchases, food drive donations). Be sure to note both your child's name and the purpose of the payment on the check. This helps make transactions more secure and ensures that your payment is properly directed. If you have to pay by cash, please be sure that you give your payment directly to the person responsible for the transaction (e.g., to the scrip seller for your scrip purchase) and that s/he counts the money with you there to confirm that s/he has received the proper amount.

### **CHURCH**

We pay rent to the Presbyterian Church of Laurelhurst for use of the school facilities, including limited use of the church's kitchen, gym and Narthex for meetings. Please treat the church and its property with care. It is especially important not to use the church's dishes, utensils, etc., or to undertake any renovation or repair without asking permission. When in doubt, ask the President, who is our chief liaison with the church.

### **DIAPERS**

Tillamook does not require that students be toilet-trained. If your child is still in diapers, make sure his/her cubby has diapers, wipes, plastic pants and anything else you want us to use for diapering. If you change a diaper at school, there is a changing table available. Be sure to wipe down the changing table with bleach solution to disinfect afterwards. If you have any concerns about your child's diapering or toilet use, please talk to the teacher.

**SCHOOL CLOSURE**

School will be closed on Portland Public School holidays, teacher planning days, and when inclement weather requires public school closure. All holidays and teacher planning days are noted on the school calendar. If Portland Public Schools' morning kindergarten is canceled due to the weather, then we are closed. Listen to local radio stations (1190 AM KEX) for snow-day information.

**SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT**

School supplies and equipment are not available for borrowing by co-op members.

**VISITORS**

Special arrangements may be made for prospective members, teachers from other preschools, or other interested persons (including grandparents) to observe the program during regular school hours. Please obtain the permission of the teacher in advance.