

# Hingham Nursery School

## Family Policies & Procedures

### 2025-2026



*Artwork by Mary Ann Gaul*

**1101 Main Street**  
**Hingham, MA 02043**  
**(781)749-0029**  
**[www.hinghamnurseryschool.com](http://www.hinghamnurseryschool.com)**  
**[Admin@hinghamnurseryschool.com](mailto:Admin@hinghamnurseryschool.com)**





## ***A Letter from the Director***

Welcome to Hingham Nursery School! Our program has been providing high quality early learning experiences for the Hingham Community and surrounding towns since 1966. Formerly known as St. John's Community Nursery School, in 2004 we became Hingham Nursery School and in 2006, we opened the doors to our little red schoolhouse on Main Street. To date, over 2,500 children have spent their preschool years with us, and we are proud to have children whose parents once attended Hingham Nursery School.

Whether you are a new family just starting your journey with us or a returning family continuing your journey with your next child, we are excited to have you as part of our community! It is important to us to partner with you in order to provide the best care for your child while they are in our program, as no one knows your child better than you do. We look forward to building a relationship with you and supporting you in the early years of your child's growth and learning.

This handbook is meant to familiarize you with our philosophy, program operations, and policies and procedures. Our policies and procedures are based on the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) regulations, which we are required to follow. There is a lot of information in this handbook, and it is meant to provide answers to many of the questions you may have along the way. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to speak with the program Administration or your child's teachers. We are all here to support you.

Here's to a wonderful and exciting experience learning and growing!

*-Kristin Gruber-Grunert*

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|                                                         |         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| OUR PHILOSOPHY, CURRICULUM, AND CLASSROOMS. ....        | 5 - 6   |
| HINGHAM NURSERY SCHOOL CHECKLIST .....                  | 7       |
| DROP-OFF & PICK-UP PROCEDURES .....                     | 8       |
| HINGHAM NURSERY SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES .....      | 9 - 12  |
| HEALTH CARE POLICY .....                                | 13 - 17 |
| STATE-MANDATED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION POLICIES ..... | 18 - 22 |
| PARENT INFORMATION, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES .....   | 23 - 24 |
| PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES .....                          | 25      |

Thank you for taking the time to read the following information. This information complies with the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), 1 Washington Street, Suite 20, Taunton, MA 02780. Phone 508-828-5025, ext. 568.

Parents may contact EEC regarding our program's regulatory compliance history.

You can find this handbook information as well as other program information on our website, [www.hinghamnurseryschool.com](http://www.hinghamnurseryschool.com).



## **Our Philosophy**

The philosophy of Hingham Nursery School is based on the well-proven educational theory that a child interacting in a developmentally appropriate environment will develop socially and emotionally while learning cognitive readiness skills, which are the foundation of later school experience.

Hingham Nursery School is committed to providing a nurturing environment that fosters the growth and development of each child. Young children learn best through hands-on, open-ended activities that encourage exploration. In all that we do, we respect the individuality of your child, giving them the tools they need to grow into enthusiastic lifelong learners.

### **Our Curriculum Supports Our Philosophy**

Our curriculum is based on the Massachusetts Dept. of Education Guidelines, which were developed to ensure a strong foundation for learning. The philosophy behind our curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Learning requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work, to learn firsthand about the world we live in.

**Our Early Childhood teachers design the curriculum with intent**, based on their knowledge of children and how they learn. They observe, assess, and reflect on each child in the classroom to encourage participation and provide the best learning for each child.

Children move through developmental stages in the areas of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical learning as well as in language development. Every child's development is unique and is viewed as an active and interactive process, where children learn most effectively from their own discoveries.

### **Our Classrooms Support Our Curriculum**

Our Pre-K and Preschool classrooms include the following areas:

- Dramatic play
- Block building
- Writing center
- Small manipulatives
- Science
- Book corner
- Free art areas
- Large muscle areas (indoors and outdoors)
- Playdough table
- Snack table

Interacting within these environments encourages growth in each of the following areas:

- Social and emotional
- Pre-reading and literacy
- Math and science
- Creativity
- Fine and gross motor

### **Our Language Supports Our Curriculum and Our Philosophy**

As the curriculum is developed with intent, our language at school is also intentional. Here at HNS, we want to be sure that the teachers and children have positive interactions with each other in order to develop socially and emotionally. Learning and imagination are extended through language as well.

Our language with the children is positive and respectful. It:

- Teaches and guides
- Describes and does not judge
- Helps children to communicate and problem solve
- Encourages cooperation, ideas, independence, and imagination
- Develops positive feelings of self: I can do it, I am valued, and I am respected

We believe the children of HNS are known for the skills they carry with them when they leave our care.

## **Hingham Nursery School Checklist**

Below is a checklist of the items your child will need at the start of the school year and as the seasons change throughout the year. We hope this list is helpful for you as you are beginning to prepare for the start of school! Please feel free to reach out to us at [admin@hinghamnurseryschool.com](mailto:admin@hinghamnurseryschool.com) if you have any questions.

**PLEASE NOTE: Each child's belongings must be clearly labeled with their name.**

### **Backpack:**

- The backpack should be something they can carry on their own and will fit their lunchbox (*if they are eating lunch at school*) and their water bottle.

### **Food & Drink:**

- Water Bottle
  - This should come to school filled with water for the day.
- For those children who will be eating lunch at school, please send in the following:
  - Labeled containers inside of an insulated labeled lunch box/bag with an ice pack.
  - Warm food can be sent to school in an insulated thermos.
- Since we strive to support the children in being independent, we ask that you send in lunch boxes, containers, and water bottles that your children can open and close with minimal support.
- We will provide support as needed, but we also want to encourage them to be as independent as possible during mealtimes.

### **Indoor Clothing:**

Changes of clothing to keep at school:

- A few changes of seasonally appropriate clothing should be sent into school in a labeled Ziplock bag on your child's first day at school.
- You can also plan to bring this with you on your Visit Day, so you have one less thing to think about on the first day of school!

### **Outdoor Clothing:**

Weather Related Outdoor Clothing:

- In the fall and spring, your child will need a lightweight coat for when the weather begins to get cooler.
  - If you would like them to wear a Sunhat in the warmer weather, you can send one in as well.
- In the winter, your child will need the following for outdoor play on cold or snowy days:
  - Snow Pants
  - Winter Jacket
  - Winter Hat
  - **Waterproof Mittens or Gloves**
    - Knit mittens or gloves absorb a lot of moisture on snowy days, which makes for unpleasant play and cold hands when outside.
  - **Waterproof Snow Boots**
    - Waterproof boots that are easy to put on and have good traction on the soles are best for the wet and sometimes slippery days on the playground

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURE**

***Please share this information with anyone who is picking up your child.***

### **Arrival:**

Our goal is to ensure a smooth and safe start to your child's school day. Our parking lot and loop are **one-way**, so please follow the arrows painted on the pavement when driving in our lot. If all the parking spaces in our lot are full when you arrive, please slowly drive through the lot to exit and loop around to re-enter from Rosemary Lane. You can then wait for a parking spot to become available. Upon arrival at school, park your car and walk your child to the front door via the crosswalk. Please hold your child by the hand while walking in our parking lot, as it can become very busy at drop-off and pick-up times.

The Director or your child's teacher will greet you at the front door or inside the lobby space, where you will say goodbye to your child and they will wait with the rest of their class to start their day. If your child is needing some additional support at drop-off due to feeling sad at separation, the Director or your child's teacher will provide support to you and your child during this transitional moment.

If you are dropping your child off later in the morning and there is no one waiting to greet you at the front door, please ring the doorbell and the school Administrator or Director will let you and your child in for drop-off. It is helpful to email your child's classroom teacher and [admin@hinghamnurseryschool.com](mailto:admin@hinghamnurseryschool.com) if you know you will be dropping your child off later in the morning so we can plan accordingly for their arrival at school.

### **Dismissal:**

The children will be waiting on the benches in the lobby five minutes prior to their pick-up. It is important to be prompt when picking up your child, as they can become anxious if they are the only child left after the other children have gone home. If you are unexpectedly running late for pick-up, please call the school office at 781-749-0029 to let us know your anticipated arrival time, so we can plan accordingly. If your child will be picked up by someone other than you, please email the school office at [admin@hinghamnurseryschool.com](mailto:admin@hinghamnurseryschool.com). If this is the first time this individual will be picking your child up from school, they will need to show a photo ID before we can dismiss your child.

### **A few last notes about drop-off and pick-up:**

- Please respect the marked handicapped parking spaces and leave them open for those who need them.
- Please try to limit the time you are parked in the lot, especially at busy arrival and dismissal times, to ensure there are parking spaces available for others.

# **HINGHAM NURSERY SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

**All of the following information is important. Please read it thoroughly and save this handbook for future reference.** If you have questions, please contact the Hingham Nursery School Director.

1. **Transportation** All families must sign and return the Small and Large Group Transportation Plan and Authorization Form which is included in the paperwork you receive before the start of school. If a child is to be picked up by anyone other than the person(s) listed on the authorization form, written permission for this must be provided to the school, and this person must show photo identification at the time of pick-up. We will not allow a child to leave HNS with an unauthorized person. Please see Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures.
2. **Absences** If your child will be absent, please call or email the school by 10:00am to let us know that your child will be out. If we haven't heard from you by 10:00am, we will call you to check-in.
3. **Snacks and Allergies - WE ARE A NUT- FREE ENVIRONMENT.** HNS provides snack each day for the children. If you and your child would like to provide an occasional special snack, please check with the teacher in advance. In the fall, we will send home a letter with specific information about appropriate snacks and allergens in your child's classroom. There may be children with allergies that necessitate particular food limitations. Please always check-in with your child's teachers before you bring in a special snack. **If we feel a snack or lunch item that has been sent in is inappropriate, we will send it home and connect with you either at pick-up or via email.**
4. **Bathrooms/Toileting** We expect some children may not be fully toilet trained when they begin attending school and toileting accidents may occur. We support families and children during the toilet learning process. Toileting training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment at HNS.

Bathrooms are located in each classroom, and when children are in the classrooms, they may use them at any time. There is no scheduled toileting time in the classroom. Children are asked to tell a teacher when they need to go to the bathroom and teachers will support children with their clothing, as needed. When children are outside on the playground, a teacher will bring a child or children into the bathroom when they indicate a need. It is helpful that children wear clothing to school that is easy for them to manage independently when in the bathroom.

5. **School Clothing**
  - **Please mark ALL clothing with your child's name**
  - Play is the work of young children and children learn through play. Play and art activities, both indoors and outdoors, can be very messy for some children. Please send your child to school in clothes that can get messy and dirty!
  - **Snow pants** that go on easily (zippers at ankles), boots your child can manage themselves, and mittens (gloves are difficult to put on, especially for 3 year olds), all make it easier for your child to dress him/herself to enjoy outdoor play in the cold weather. Children feel good being able to dress themselves.
  - **Good fitting rubber-soled shoes** are recommended for the playground and in our large indoor play space. The children will slip less easily and have more control when moving in these spaces. **Flip flops or sandals cannot be worn at school.**
  - For the safety of the child, please remove drawstrings from clothing with hoods.

- Please keep a spare set of seasonally appropriate clothing for your child in a plastic bag, labeled with their name at school.

6. **Outside Play** Your child will play outside each day. The decision whether to play outside is made at the **beginning of each day, based on the predicted weather conditions**. Please dress your child accordingly to play outdoors, since the playground can be cold. If it is pouring rain or too cold due to the wind chill, we will play indoors in our playspace. The weather can often change, so whenever possible we will play outside. If necessary, please apply sunscreen before your child comes to school.
7. **Bags and Backpacks** Often, your child will have things to bring to and from school, including newsletters, notices, and artwork. Please send your child to school with a backpack they can carry on their own. Please check your child's bag every day for information and materials that may have been sent home. Every child will receive a red HNS bag for their snow clothes as the cold weather approaches.
8. **Conferences** Conferences are scheduled in the fall and in the spring during class time. Parents may also request a conference at any time during the school year. The fall conference is a time to discuss the child's adjustment to school, from the parents' and teacher's perspective, and parents receive information about the various areas of their child's school experience thus far. The spring conference includes a written report, with one copy sent home to the family the day before the conference for review, and one signed copy to go in the child's file at school. For more information, please see **Parent and Staff Communication**.

Teachers prefer not to speak with parents about children when the children are present, be it in the school building or at conference time. If you want to speak with a teacher at any other time during the year, please check-in with the Director or your child's teacher to schedule a time to meet that will work well for your schedules.

- **Diverse Learners** If your child is receiving outside services, such as Speech or Occupational Therapy, we will arrange for conferences three times a year, or as needed, as per EEC Licensing Regulations.

9. **Birthdays** We are happy to celebrate your child's special day at school. A simple treat that is special to your child is most appropriate to share with the classroom. Please check-in with your child's teacher for safe and acceptable snacks for their class. We ask that you do not distribute birthday party invitations or thank you notes at school. It may result in hurt feelings for those who were not included in the celebration.
10. **Visiting** We welcome and encourage parents to visit school, as we want you to feel included in your child's experience here. Parents are free to visit school any time their child is in attendance. It is helpful for teachers to know in advance if you plan to visit their classroom so they can plan their schedule for the day accordingly and so they can prepare your child for this visit.

Occasionally, we may have other visitors at HNS, including prospective families touring the school or an Educational Consultant who is observing a specific child. All visitors must ring the doorbell, check in with the Administrative Office, sign-in, and wear a name tag for identification when on site.

11. **Special Things from Home** We know that children like to bring things from home, and occasionally it is nice to share something with their class. Valuable toys and ones with small pieces, however, should be left at home since there is no guarantee they will not be lost or broken. **We ask that toy weapons of any kind not be brought into school.**
12. **A Difficult Day** If your child has had a difficult morning or if something has happened to upset him/her, please let their teacher know at drop-off or call the office to speak with the Director in order to provide more information about your child's morning. With this information, we will then be able to best support your child during their time at school.
13. **Communicable Diseases** Please notify the school office (781-749-0029) if your child has a communicable illness so this information can be shared with the other classroom families. Please see the **Health Care Policy** section of this handbook for more detailed information about Communicable Illnesses.
14. **Snow Day Policy and Procedure** It is our policy not to make up snow closure days. When the Hingham Public Schools close due to inclement weather, we also close. When the Hingham Public Schools have a delayed opening, our 4–5-year-old classes come to school on the delayed opening schedule of the Hingham Public Schools. The 3–4-year-old classes do not attend on a delayed opening day. Public School closing information can be found on the local news channels and websites. In early October, we share more detailed snow-day closure procedures and the room parent contact list.
15. **Change of Address or Phone Number** Please notify the school office at [admin@hinghamnurseryschool.com](mailto:admin@hinghamnurseryschool.com) with any changes in your phone number, home address, or email address. Also, if any school list information needs to be corrected, please let us know so we can update it for you. It is important that we have all the correct contact information for you on file at school.
16. **Field Trip and Emergency Procedures** On all field trips we will bring the **FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE CONSENT FORM**, a list of those children with allergies, any necessary medications, and a First Aid Kit. The teachers will also bring cell phones for unexpected emergency communications. Parents will be notified in advance if their child will be going on a field trip.
17. **Holidays** At school, we try to keep in mind what is developmentally appropriate for the children and respectful of all families and traditions within our school community. We also strive to maintain a regular routine during these exciting times of the year. If there is a tradition that you would like to share with your child's classroom, please speak with their teachers so we can learn more and coordinate a time for you to visit the classroom to share.
18. **School Newsletter** A quarterly newsletter with information about classroom happenings, notes from teachers, and photos will be emailed to all families and posted on our website.
19. **Parent Involvement and Building a School Community** We encourage close cooperation and open communication with parents. Parents are invited to visit their child's classroom to observe, read a book, help with a special project, or share a special talent or interest with their child's class. Each class has two room parents. Parent conferences are scheduled twice a year or any time upon request. Teachers also communicate ongoing and upcoming class activities via email or communications that are sent home with your child.

The Board of Directors plans family and fundraising events throughout the school year as a way to build a sense of community for our school. All members of the school community are invited to participate in these events in a variety of ways.

During the summer before the school year begins, we suggest a Summer Reading Book for parents to read to their child. This book is woven into the curriculum at the beginning of the school year. Children's familiarity with the story forges a connection between home and school as they settle into their classroom and the new school year.

20. **Board of Directors** The management and fiscal policies of the school are set by the Board of Directors, which consists primarily of parents of the school's children. Board members serve to ensure the continued successful operation of Hingham Nursery School. The Board meets once a month with the Director to set policy, discuss school operations, and plan events. Current Board members will be included with your class lists that you will receive at the start of the school year.
21. **Required School Forms** EEC Regulations require your child to have current paperwork on file at school. This includes a copy of their most recent physical exam (no more than one year old), immunization history, and Lead Test results. The other required forms include:
  - Intake form
  - First Aid and Emergency Medical Care and Consent Form
  - Transportation Plan and Authorization Form
  - Field Trip & Walking Permission Form
  - Photo Permission Form
  - Teacher Communication Permission – *returning students only*
22. **Tuition Policy**

HNS invoices you for your child's tuition quarterly, in mid-July, late-October, mid-January, and mid-March. We ask for your prompt payment of these invoices. If you are having trouble making payments on time, please schedule a time to speak with the Director about developing a payment plan. As a reminder, you have signed an enrollment contract for the entire school year. If you wish to withdraw from Hingham Nursery School, pro rata refunds of remaining tuition will only be made if a vacancy caused by withdrawal is filled. HNS charges a \$25 fee for all returned checks.

## **HEALTH CARE POLICY**

Massachusetts State law requires that all EEC Licensed programs develop a written Health Care Policy. Hingham Nursery School is committed to the health and well-being of all children, teachers, and staff in our community.

This policy is subject to change as state or local requirements change.

## **EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

|                                                |                       |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| HEALTH CARE CONSULTANT- ANNE FERRARI-GREENBERG | (508) 641-1984        |
| HINGHAM BOARD OF HEALTH                        | (781) 741-1466        |
| HINGHAM POLICE                                 | 911 or (781) 749-1212 |
| HINGHAM FIRE/AMBULANCE                         | 911 or (781) 749-1480 |
| POISON CENTER                                  | (800) 222-1222        |
| SOUTH SHORE HOSPITAL                           | 911 or (781) 624-8000 |
| MASS DEPT OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES               | (781) 794-4400        |
| DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH                         | (617) 624-6000        |

Our licensing agent is the Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) and they can be reached at (617) 988-6600. Regulations 606 CMR 7.00 are available in the Administrative Office.

## **SICK POLICY**

In accordance with state regulations, we have provided a list of illnesses which will warrant exclusion from our program. The Director and teachers will use these guidelines as well as their best judgment in making the decision to contact a family if it is determined that a child needs to be sent home due to illness.

Please remember that there may be circumstances when your child does not present with these specific symptoms, but they may not be feeling well and are unable to participate fully in the day. In these cases, it is best for your child to remain at home until they are well enough to keep-up with the daily routines in their classroom.

Often children want to come to school when they are not feeling well. We ask that you make a determination of what is best both for your child as well as the other children and staff members in our community.

### **EXCLUSION SYMPTOMS**

|                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>FEVER</b>                                                | A fever of 100 or higher                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>DIARRHEA</b>                                             | An episode of watery stools                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>VOMITING</b>                                             | An episode of vomiting                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>COLD/RESPIRATORY<br/>(COVID-19, FLU, RSV)</b>            | Breathing difficulties, severe cough, fever, and other obvious respiratory symptoms. Remain at home/isolate until symptoms improve and they are fever free. Early Education and Care follows CDC and DPH guidelines regarding respiratory viruses, such as COVID, flu, and RSV. |
| <b>EAR INFECTION</b>                                        | Extreme pain in ear, redness in and/or discharge from the ear                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>CONJUNCTIVITIS</b>                                       | Symptoms include swollen, irritated, red, oozing eyes, which may become encrusted during sleep                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>SKIN CONDITIONS</b>                                      | Impetigo, ringworm, and scabies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>HEAD LICE</b>                                            | This applies to lice and/or nits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>CONTAGIOUS AND<br/>VACCINE-PREVENTABLE<br/>ILLNESSES</b> | Strep Throat, Staph Infections, Measles, Chicken Pox, German Measles, Mumps, Rubella.                                                                                                                                                                                           |

## **RETURN CRITERIA FOLLOWING AN ILLNESS**

|                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>FEVER</b>                                 | Must be fever free without the assistance of medication for at least 24 hours                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>DIARRHEA</b>                              | Must be diarrhea free for at least 24 hours, hydrated, and able to eat a regular diet                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>VOMITING</b>                              | Must be vomit free for at least 24 hours, hydrated, and able to eat a regular diet                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>COLD/RESPIRATORY</b>                      | Improving symptoms and fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. The CDC and DPH suggest masking for children over the age of two to avoid the spread of viruses, but this is not mandated. |
| <b>EAR INFECTION</b>                         | Free of symptoms                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>CONJUNCTIVITIS</b>                        | Must be medically treated for at least 24 hours                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>SKIN CONDITIONS</b>                       | Any weeping rash must have a written statement of non-contagion from a physician. Others may require a written statement from a physician. Please contact the school Director for condition specific guidance.                    |
| <b>HEAD LICE</b>                             | Must be medically treated and nit/lice free                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>VACCINE<br/>PREVENTABLE<br/>ILLNESSES</b> | Must have a written statement of non-contagion from a physician                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>STREP THROAT</b>                          | Must have a written statement from your physician indicating when your child may return. Child must be on medication for 24 hours and fever free.                                                                                 |
| <b>CHICKEN POX</b>                           | All lesions must be scabbed over, which takes approximately 5-7 days                                                                                                                                                              |

## IMMUNIZATIONS AND LEAD TEST

All children must have updated immunizations, unless contraindicated by their physician or for religious reasons. Lead tests are required for each child until the age of four. If you have any questions, please speak with your child's pediatrician.

## CARE OF MILDLY ILL CHILDREN

A child who is not feeling well is brought to the office and made comfortable while their family is notified. Every effort is made to contact the child's family, but in case that is not possible, we call the person(s) designated on the *First Aid and Emergency Medical Care Consent Form*. We keep the child safe and comfortable until the family or designated person is able to pick-up the child.

## ALLERGIES

It is important for parents to notify the school of severe allergies that your child may have as well as any medications they may need administered if exposed to an allergen. All children's allergies are posted in each classroom and in the office. Teachers and staff are required to know about all children's allergies and the emergency procedures and medications for the child. The staff are informed and educated on all precautions and procedures that must be followed.

## MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION

Hingham Nursery School administer prescription medication and Epi-Pens when an Authorization for Medication Administration Form is completed and signed by the parent and pediatrician. Please **contact the school to begin the required medication documentation process**. Parents must complete and sign the following forms:

- **Individual Health Care Plan Form**, which includes the name of the child, a photo of the child, the child's health condition, the name of the medication, amount of the medication to administer, the date, and the parent's and doctor's signatures. Each parent of a child with an IHCP reviews the medication and procedure for administering the medication with the Director.
- **Medication Consent Form**, which specifies the name of the medication, the dosage of the medication, and authorizes the school to administer the medication.

The person administering the medication logs the date, time, route, and amount administered on the Medication Administration Log and signs their full name. All forms, when completed, are kept in the child's file. The medication is required to be in its original prescription container with the child's name, date, name of medication, physician's name, amount to be administered, and storing instructions. Non-prescription over-the-counter medication, such as Tylenol or cough medicine, will only be administered to a child if a physician prescribes it and the medication consent form is complete.

## NOTIFICATION OF COMMUNICABLE ILLNESS

Parents are notified if there is a case of a communicable illness, including head lice, in their child's classroom. The name of the individual remains confidential to the classroom population. In cases of some communicable illnesses, such as Chicken Pox or Measles, the Director must report the name of the child and illness to the Hingham Board of Health and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

## **INJURY PREVENTION**

School staff routinely inspect all spaces and equipment, both inside the school building and outside on the playground. We make every effort to ensure that the school environment is safe for all children and staff.

## **INJURY REPORTS**

The school maintains an Injury Log in the Administrative Office. Staff are required to complete an Injury Report Form for all injuries that require First Aid treatment. These reports include the child's name, the date, the time of incident, the type of injury, the location of the injury, witnesses and how the injury occurred, and recommendations for future precautions. Parents review and sign the Injury Report Form. One copy of the form is given to the family, one copy is kept in the child file, and one copy is added to the Injury Report Log Book in the Administrative Office. If hospitalization is required for an injury, EEC is notified, as per their requirements, with the proper medical documentation.

## **INFECTION CONTROL**

In an effort to control infectious disease, staff and children wash their hands frequently during the day with running water, liquid soap, and disposable towels. Hand sanitizer and wipes are used if water is unavailable. Staff and children are required to wash their hands before and after eating, cooking, after toileting, after coming into contact with bodily fluids and/or discharge, and after cleaning. All other hand washing is done as needed for both staff and children. The school environment, including bathrooms and eating areas, is cleaned on a daily basis. Cleaning supplies are kept out of the reach of the children.

## **FIRST AID EQUIPMENT**

A First Aid Kit is located in each classroom as well as the Administrative Office. It is clearly labeled for easy location and access. All teachers are certified in First Aid and CPR and can therefore administer either in an emergency situation. The First Aid Kit will be updated and maintained by the school Administrator. The First Aid Kit contains the following:

|                  |                             |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Adhesive Tape    | Disposable Non-Latex Gloves |
| Band-Aids        | Instant Cold Pack           |
| Compress Bandage | Gauze Roll Bandage          |
| Gauze Pads       | Scissors                    |

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: CHILD**

When a situation arises where a child requires immediate medical attention, the Fire Department is called to request an Ambulance. We inform them of the nature of the emergency and the address of Hingham Nursery School. We never hang-up the phone until told to do so by the Fire Department. While the Fire Department is being called, a qualified staff member administers First Aid to the injured child. The Director contacts the child's parents to explain the situation and ask them to meet us and their child at South Shore Hospital. The Director takes the child's school file and accompanies the child in the Ambulance to South Shore Hospital. The Director stays with the child at the hospital until their family arrives. When on field trips, teachers carry Medical Releases and Emergency First Aid Information for each child as well as a First Aid Kit. If an emergency arises while on a field trip, the teacher calls 911 for assistance and remains with the injured child until the parents have been notified. The school Director is also notified of the emergency situation in order to provide assistance from school.

## **STATE-MANDATED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION POLICIES**

A copy of the *Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care's* **Parent Information, Rights, and Responsibilities** is included in this booklet.

**Non-Discrimination Policy** Hingham Nursery School attempts to provide appropriate space for all applicants. Its admissions procedure is non-discriminatory with regard to sex, sexual orientation, race, color, creed, religion, socio-economic factors, cultural heritage, marital status, political beliefs, and disabilities. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

**Admission of a Child with Disabilities** The Hingham Nursery School is non-discriminatory in nature and philosophy and will accept through its regular Admissions procedure any child regardless of disabilities. The parent(s) and the Director will gather all pertinent information from the child's agency of record to determine in writing any specific accommodation for the child. See also the policy on Special Circumstances.

If it is determined that the program cannot meet the needs of a specific child, the school will put the reasons in writing as well as meet with the parents of that child within 30 days of acceptance. The priority and focus of any decision would be what is in the best interest of the child and his/her family.

**Behavior Management** Behavior Management consists of helping children grow toward self-discipline. Limits and expectations are made clear to the children. Hitting is not allowed, and we assure children that we will not allow them to hurt others or themselves. When conflicts arise, we encourage children to resolve the issue and are there to support them, as needed. We may help them with the words, but it is our goal to have them use their own words when resolving conflicts. We also encourage children to participate in setting "rules", when appropriate.

On the part of the staff there is no hitting, spanking, humiliation, severe punishment or verbal abuse, denial of food as punishment, or punishment for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet. Children are respected as individuals and helped to grow toward self-discipline.

**Parent and Staff Communication** To ensure Parents and Staff can effectively communicate, the following guidelines are in place. Parents or Staff may request a conference at any time. The Director should be notified of any issue as soon as possible. After the conference, if either party still has questions, the Director should be made aware in order to help answer questions or resolve remaining issues. The Director would contact both parties and arrange subsequent meetings, as needed.

If the Director is made aware of an issue from a parent, she will ask permission of the parent to discuss the issue with the staff member. At that time a meeting would be arranged with all three parties. The Director and Staff of the school would make every effort to give the parent the time needed to reach a resolution to the matter, keeping in mind the needs of the child.

### **Plan for Referral of a Child**

- 1) The Teachers and/or the Director would be the one who would pick up potential problems or special needs that a child might have. Also included would be referrals for dental, vision or hearing concerns.
- 2) Staff will document the child's behavior and be in contact with the Director. The Teacher and/or Director would confer and if it seemed appropriate, would ask for a conference with the parent(s).

- 3) If there was agreement that a referral would be helpful, the following options would be suggested:
  - a) Contact with the local school system to see if the child would come under Chapter 766.
  - b) Contact with the child's pediatrician to get an opinion.
  - c) Direct referral to a doctor, hospital, testing service, or psychologist.
- 4) In any of the above options, the parent would be responsible for contacting referred professionals.
- 5) All referrals will be made in writing on the **Referral Form** and placed in the child's file. The form has a follow-up plan section.
- 6) After a suitable amount of time, the Teacher and/or Director will review the referral and put in writing on the form what the follow-up has been.
- 7) The Director may act as the liaison to assist with the referrals, but only with the written permission of the parent(s).

**Special Circumstances** While Hingham Nursery School is non-discriminatory, there may be special circumstance associated with a child's presence which may necessitate the parents assuming any additional costs that would be incurred over the cost of tuition.

There may also be special circumstances that warrant a child to be in an alternative program more suited to the child's specific needs. **See also Termination and Suspension Policy.**

#### **Termination and Suspension Policy**

Hingham Nursery School's Suspension and Termination Policy can only be implemented if all other options have been explored in order to support a child and family. The Director first engages the family in an on-going dialogue discussing the observations of the child. During meetings with the family, documentation of classroom observations is shared. The Director and the Teachers refer the child and family to resources, as per the school's Referral Policy. The school makes every effort to support the child and family that are within their ability to do so. If it is determined that the school is not able to appropriately meet the needs of the child, then the child will be terminated. The school will work with the family to provide them with support and resources in order to find a program that will more appropriately meet the needs of their child.

The school reserves the right to suspend or terminate a child whose parents are not willing to support the toilet learning efforts of the school by being available to change the child, if the situation deems this necessary.

Financially, if a parent were unable to pay tuition beyond the first semester, it will be at the discretion of the Director and the Controller whether to have the child continue at the school.

#### **Toileting**

We expect some children may not be fully toilet trained when they begin attending school, and toileting accidents may occur. We support families and children during the toilet learning process. Toileting training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment at HNS.

Bathrooms are located in each classroom, and when children are in the classrooms, they may use them at any time. There is no scheduled toileting time in the classroom. Children are asked to tell a teacher when they need to go to the bathroom and teachers will support children with their clothing, as needed. When children are outside on the playground, a teacher will bring a child or children into the bathroom when they indicate a need. It is helpful that children wear clothing to school that is easy for them to manage independently when in the bathroom.

### **Transitions**

Children remain with their class for the entire school year. Before the end of the school year, the teachers talk about the “good-bye day.” Each class has a paper chain with links representing each day until the “good-bye day.” During circle time, each class talks about the chain and what happens after the chain is done. Teachers write letters to parents explaining the procedure and giving closure to the last days of school. Teachers do not announce to the class what each child is doing the following year – that is up to the parents. We say children are doing different things after the summer.

Parents of returning children sign a form giving their child’s past teachers permission to share information about their child with the child’s current teachers in our school. Teachers have access to each child’s file containing information from the previous year. If the child attended another school, we do not speak with the child’s former teacher until written permission is given by the parents.

**Background Record Check and Fingerprinting Policy** Each new staff person (Teachers, Administration, and Substitutes) are required by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to have an extensive Background Record Check (BRC) with fingerprints before an offer of employment is confirmed. Current staff people are required to have their EEC BRC updated every three years.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES: SCHOOLWIDE**

#### **Evacuation Procedure/Evacuation Drills**

In case of an emergency, when the school needs to be evacuated, each group will follow evacuation instructions posted in each classroom. The teachers and children will either walk out of the back of the school and meet at the gate at the end of the outside play area or they will walk out the front door of the school and line-up on the sidewalk. If the rear emergency EXIT is blocked, teachers and children will exit in accordance with the posted alternate plan. In both situations teachers will check the attendance list with the face of each child when assembled in a safe area. All groups will have one teacher at the head of the line and one teacher at the rear, checking to see all children exit safely. Groups will proceed to prearranged meeting areas. Teachers will wait for further instructions from the Fire Department as to when they may return to the building. Evacuation drills are unannounced and executed monthly at Hingham Nursery School. Evacuation routes are alternated. All evacuation drills are recorded in a central log including date and time.

#### **Shelter-In-Place Procedure**

In consultation with the Hingham Police Department, the following procedures are in place. In the event of an emergency necessitating a Shelter in Place order, the police will either a) come to the school to advise us of the order and its magnitude, or b) use the Reverse 911 system to call all affected parties. Any children on the playground or indoor play space will be brought inside to their classroom. The teachers will immediately, but calmly, lock the door and close all shades in the classrooms. The director will double check that all exterior doors are secure. We will send a school-wide email to notify parents. The order will stay in effect until it has been lifted by the police. While the order is in effect, children will not be dismissed to their parent or guardian.

#### **Intruder**

Precautions and procedures are in place to respond to the presence of an unauthorized person at our school. The front door is locked except during arrival and dismissal times. The back door is unlocked during playground time and is locked when a class or classes returns inside. Teachers have procedures in place in the classrooms. Your child’s safety is our primary concern and greatest responsibility.

### **Building and Site Evacuation**

In the event of a building evacuation, children will be removed from the school and brought to the Hingham Middle School or Notre Dame Academy. Parents will be notified of any evacuation as soon as possible.

In the event of a natural disaster and/or an area evacuation, all children will be evacuated to Hingham High School by public school bus. The Hingham Fire Department offers shelter only in the event of a natural disaster or state of emergency. All attempts will be made to contact parents and keep them informed. Teachers and the director will stay with the children in the event of an evacuation until such time that their parents can come pick them up.

**Abuse and Neglect** Hingham Nursery School will protect children from abuse and neglect while they are in the care of the program. The school has in its Personnel Policy the procedures to address allegations of abuse by a staff member.

#### **7.11(4), 7.11(18(a):**

- Any form of abuse or neglect of children while in care is strictly prohibited
- The Licensee and all educators must operate the program in ways that protect children from abuse or neglect
- Educators are responsible for abuse and neglect if:
  - The educator admits to causing the abuse or neglect, or
  - The educator is convicted of the abuse or neglect in a criminal proceeding, or
  - The Department of Early Education and Care determines, based upon its own investigation or report filed under M.G.L. c. 119, 51A and 51B, that there is reasonable cause to believe that the educator or any other person caused the abuse or neglect while children were in care.
- Every educator is a Mandated Reporter under M.G.L. c. 119, 51A and must make a report to the Department of Children and Families whenever he/she has reasonable cause to believe a child in the program is suffering from serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse inflicted upon the child, including but not limited to sexual abuse, or from neglect, including but not limited to malnutrition, no matter where the abuse or neglect may have occurred and by whom it was inflicted
- The licensee must notify the Department of Early Education and Care immediately after filing or learning that a 51A report has been filed alleging abuse or neglect of a child while in the care of the program or during a program-related activity
- The licensee must notify the Department of Early Education and Care immediately upon learning that a report has been filed naming an educator or person regularly on the childcare premises (including household members in family child care) an alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect of any child.
- The licensee must ensure that any educator accused of the abuse or neglect of a child in a report to the Department of Children and Families, filed pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119 51A, does not work directly with children until the Department of Children and Families investigation is completed and for such further time as the Department of Early Education and Care requires.

**Policy on Research and Experimentation** There will be no research, experimentation or unusual treatment involving children without written authorization for each occurrence. There will be no observation by outside professionals or student teachers without notification of parents. When visitors come to visit the program, we ask them to observe only and not to interrupt or interact with the children.

**Policy on Unauthorized Activities** We do not allow the children to participate in any activities unrelated to their program and care. Children are not used for fundraising purposes, i.e., “bike-a-thons, jump-a-thons.” We use pictures of children in school for classroom and in-school purposes only. Parental consent is required to use photographs on our website or on social media platforms. We do not use children for publicity on our website or social media platforms without specific written consent from parents.

**Integrated Pest Management** Massachusetts regulations require that schools and childcare programs must ensure that their facility has an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan on file with the Department of Agricultural Resources. They are also required to ensure standard written notification of parents and staff whenever a pesticide application is being made outdoors on school property. Emergency situations may require an exemption from the conditions of the law. Exemptions are granted by the local Board of Health or Department of Agricultural resources. The Hingham Nursery School IPM plan can be obtained from the school Administrative Office or at [massnrc.org/ipm/](http://massnrc.org/ipm/).

## **PARENT INFORMATION, RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

*From the Department of Early Education and Care*

The General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Department of Early Education and Care the legal responsibility of promulgating and enforcing rules and regulations governing the operation of childcare centers (including nursery schools), and school-age childcare programs.

These regulations, 606 CMR 7.00, establish minimum standards for operation of group childcare and school age childcare programs in the Commonwealth. The regulations require certain things of licensees (childcare program owners) in regard to their work with parents. A summary of the required parent information, rights, and responsibilities follows.

**Parental Input** The licensee must appropriately involve parents of children in care in visiting the program, meeting with the staff and receiving reports of their children's progress. The program must have a procedure for allowing you to give input and make suggestions, but it is up to the program to decide whether or not they will be implemented.

**Meeting with Parents** In group childcare programs, the licensee shall assure that the administrator or his designee meets with the parent(s) prior to admitting a child to the program. The parents shall have an opportunity to visit the program's classrooms at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of the child. In school-age programs, the licensee shall provide an opportunity for the parent(s) and child to visit the program and meet the staff before the child's enrollment.

**Parent Information** The licensee must provide to the parents upon admission of their child the program's written statement of purpose, including the program philosophy, goals and objectives, and the characteristics of children served; information on the administrative organization of the program, including lines of authority and supervision; the program's behavior management policy; the program's plan for referring parents to appropriate social, mental health, education, and medical services for children; the termination and suspension policy; a list of nutritious foods to be sent for snacks or meals; the program's policy and procedures for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse or neglect; the procedures for administration of medication, and upon request, a copy of the complete health care policy; a copy of the fee schedule, and in school-age child care, the procedures for on-going parent communication. All of this information may be contained in a "Parent Handbook".

**Parent Conferences** The licensee must make staff available for individual conferences with parents at your request.

**Progress Reports** At least every six (6) months the licensee should meet with you to discuss your child's activities and participation in the program. The licensee will prepare a written progress report for your child, will provide a copy to you, and will maintain a copy of the report in your child's file. If your child is an infant or a child with disabilities, you should receive a written progress report at least every three (3) months. Program staff must bring special problems or significant developments, particularly if they regard infants, to your attention as soon as they arise.

**Parent Visits** You have the right to visit the school and your child's room at any time while your child is present.

**Children's Records** Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. Program staff may not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to

implementing the program plan for the child without your written consent. You must be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

**Access to your child's record** You are entitled to have access to your child's record at reasonable times on request. You must have access to the record within two (2) business days of your request unless you consent to a longer time period. You must be allowed to view your child's entire record, even if it is maintained in more than one location. The school must have procedures governing access to, duplication of, and dissemination of children's records, and must maintain a permanent, written log in each child's record which identifies anyone who has had access to the record or who has received any information from the record. This log is available only to you and the people responsible for maintaining the school's records.

**Amending your child's record** You have the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant materials to the child's record. You also have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in your child's record. If you believe that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in your child's record, you have the right to a conference with the licensee to make your objections known. If you have a conference with the licensee, the licensee must inform you in writing within one week of his decision regarding your objections. If the licensee decides in your favor, he must immediately take the steps necessary to put the decision into effect.

**Transfer of Records** When your child is no longer in care, the licensee can give your child's record to you, or any other person you identify, upon your written request.

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

## **PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Providing Information to the Department**

The program must make available any information requested by the Department to determine compliance with any Department regulations governing the program, by providing access to its facilities, records, staff, and references.

### **Reporting Abuse or Neglect**

All school 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. The licensee must also notify you, in writing, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to your child.

### **Availability of EEC Regulations**

The program must maintain a copy of the regulations, *606 CMR 7.00: Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs*, on the premises of the school and must make them available to any person upon request. If you have a question about any of the regulations, ask the school to show them to you.

