The New Nursery School Handbook

The New Nursery School of the United Church of Christ, Norwell, was founded in 1977. It is owned by the Church and is operated through the Christian Education Mission and by a Board of Directors made up of parents of current and former students and Church members. This board, which meets on a regular basis, has the responsibility of setting policy in areas of educational philosophy, fiscal management, and other management matters. Anyone interested in exploring board membership should speak with the Director or a current board member, whose names appear at the end of this book. The school is licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts/Early Learning Services. Its role is not to instruct children in any particular religious belief but rather to help them experience what it means to be a unique person with individual talents and gifts.

Small class size and low teacher/child ratios allow for individualization of learning. This is a place where children can discover who they are, and what their world is like within limits appropriate to their developmental level. Creativity is encouraged through art, music, movement, and dramatic play. The emphasis is on problem-solving rather than answer-giving so that children can develop a positive self-image and sense of security.

The New Nursery School does not discriminate on the basis of religion, national origin, cultural heritage, race, gender, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status or disability in its admissions or hiring practices. It is our goal to recognize and respect each person’s unique background.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Each child is a person of worth deserving of our love and respect. Each child is unique with his/her own needs, interests, abilities and growth rate. Each child is a creative person who needs opportunities to experiment with a variety of materials and to develop social skills in an age-appropriate setting.

Self-awareness is a developmental process which occurs best in an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding. To facilitate maximal learning and development children need a stimulating environment which will lead them to construct their own knowledge of the world around them.

No behavior is meaningless; freedom to express feelings in positive ways is important. Children need to learn to recognize, accept and understand their own feelings and those of
others. This is done in an appropriate environment with the love, respect, and support necessary to maximize all areas of growth.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

Beginning in January applications are accepted on a first come-first serve basis from the following:

1. Children who are presently enrolled.
2. Siblings of present students.
3. Members of the United Church of Christ, Norwell
4. Siblings of former students.

If there are insufficient spaces available to accommodate all applicants, spaces are filled by a first come, first serve format. The remaining names are placed on a waiting list and notified, as space becomes available. The school retains the right to balance classes as is best for the children and teachers.

A non-refundable registration fee of $75.00 is due at the time of registration.

Tuition is payable in three installments.
1. $200.00 is due by May 1st.
2. Half of the remaining balance is due on August 1.
3. The second half of the balance is due on January 15.

Arrangements may be made for monthly payments, if necessary, with a small additional bookkeeping charge($5.00).

Late fee of $25.00 will be added when a tuition payment is 30 days in the rears.

Tuition fees are not refundable except in special circumstances. Please see WITHDRAWAL POLICY.

Financial aid is available for PreK children. Contact the Director as soon as possible. Recipients will be notified as soon as possible in the school year. All applications are confidential.
ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Children enrolled in the Toddler program must be 2 years old before September 1.

Children enrolled in the Nursery program must be 3 years old before December 1.

Children enrolled in the Three-Year-Old program must be 3 years old before September 1.

Children enrolled in the AM/PM PreKindergarten program must be 4 years old before September 1.
• Priority is given to those children who completed a three-day PreK program/and/or our Nursery Program for the four-day afternoon PreK program.

To insure the health of all children and to comply with state law, a standard medical form must be completed by your doctor and returned to the New Nursery by the first day of school. Failure to do so will delay your child’s entrance. Other necessary forms will be available during the summer and at Orientation. These must be returned promptly.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

If the Director of the New Nursery School and the parents agree that it is in the child’s best interest to no longer attend the school, the contract will be terminated with no penalty. Tuition will be refunded on a pro rata basis.

If the child is withdrawn for other reasons, the parents are liable for the semester’s tuition. No refund will be made.

A child may be asked to leave New Nursery School if the school determines that it can not meet the child’s developmental needs or if the child’s health and safety, or those of other children, can not be assured at the school. Every effort will be made, however, to keep the child at school. This will include meeting with parents to state concerns and suggest referrals and/or other help for parents and child. Please refer to Social Service and Referral Policy. If parents refuse or fail to follow through with the school’s suggestions and requests, the child may have to be withdrawn. This will be a last step only after all other communication with and assistance to parents have failed. A written record will be kept by the Director of all actions taken to help parents and child and will be kept in the child’s record. Children may also be asked to leave the school if tuition is more than three months in arrears and an agreed upon payment plan is not being followed. If a parent is chronically late (more than 15 minutes) picking up their child or if a parent engages in unsafe behaviors at the school or shows a lack of respect for staff members.

It is always our goal to keep the child at school, and we will work in good faith with parents to achieve this.
SUSPENSION POLICY

The New Nursery School may need to terminate a child from one of our programs in accordance with our Withdrawal Policy. We will only do this when it is in the best interest of the child or the other children in the class. We do not suspend children from our programs. We will try to meet everyone's needs.

Whenever a child leaves our program for any reason we will prepare that child for departure. We will discuss going to a new school and/or what it is like to have changes in routines. The teachers will make every effort to make departures as easy as possible for the child.

HEALTH CARE POLICY

We hope that our parents will be considerate of all children and teachers and will not send a child to school if he or she might be contagious. If your child has been ill with a fever, diarrhea or other contagious disease, such as head lice, he/she should not return to school until he or she is no longer contagious (at least 24 hours). Please keep in mind that your child should be ready for the full school program, which includes active outdoor play. All teachers are on the playground with the children, and it may be difficult to make arrangements to supervise one child indoors.

If your child becomes ill during the school session, the parent or emergency contact designated on the intake form will be notified. We will comfort the child and provide one on one supervision if possible, usually in the Office. The child needs to be picked up within one-half hour of the phone call.

In the case of a life threatening accident or emergency, the Norwell Town Ambulance, accompanied by his or her teacher will take the child to the South Shore Hospital. The parent will be notified immediately. The Department of Early Education and Care will be notified by the school of any serious injury to a child while attending school. If the accident is not life threatening, we will comfort the child as best we can until we can reach a parent.

First aid for minor injuries is given at school by the staff who are all certified in Red Cross first aid. In addition, there is at least one staff member on site at all times who is certified in Infant/Child CPR.

With school will come more exposure to many communicable diseases. Immunizations and boosters must be up to date and included on the required medical form. Isolation requirements from the State Department of Public Health are as follows:

- Chicken Pox: 1 week from appearance of rash
- Mumps: 1 week from onset
- Measles: 1 week from appearance of rash

In the unusual event that your child must receive medication during the school session, you must complete a “Medication Authorization” form to be kept on file in the Office.
A copy of the School’s complete Health Policy is posted in the Office and is available to parents upon orientation or request.

If your child will not be in school, FOR ANY REASON, please call the Office to notify the school. If we do not hear from you, we may call you to verify your child’s absence.

In order to protect children and staff, the School has a procedure for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Early Education and Care and to The Department of Social Services. All staff are mandated reporters and are educated about indicators of potential abuse and neglect and will evaluate these behaviors and injuries in the light of other information. These observations will be discussed with parents if the child’s safety can be assured. The staff member reporting concerns to the Director must maintain a log of observations, including dates and observed symptoms. A meeting will be held with all staff involved with the child to determine if cause exists to file a 51 A. If cause exists the Director will call DSS and file a written report within 24 hours. The DEEC must also be notified. If the situation is an emergency, the Director will also call the Child at Risk Hotline. If possible, parents will be notified that a report has been filed, stressing our legal responsibility to do so. New Nursery will cooperate fully with the DEEC and DSS in any investigation. This may include identifying parents of children or staff currently or previously enrolled or employed at the School. Allegations of abuse involving a staff member will result in immediate paid leave until the investigation is complete. A finding of abuse or neglect will result in immediate dismissal of the employee. Parents are urged to immediately discuss any concerns with the Director.

CHILD GUIDANCE

The New Nursery School recognizes that positive discipline teaches and encourages the healthy development of a child’s self-esteem. Our teachers praise and call attention to appropriate behavior thereby reinforcing it. Teachers are role models in order to influence, encourage and reinforce children’s positive behavior.

Limits, of course, are necessary. We set limits that are developmentally appropriate. When a child behaves outside the limits, teachers stop the action, describe the behavior they see and state their expectations. This helps the whole group understand the guidelines necessary for group living. Our goal is to help the child gain self-control and develop the ability to verbalize feelings and ideas so that problem solving can be done by talking with others rather than by physical means. At times when appropriate teachers may encourage children to negotiate rules for a play situation or for the entire class to follow. This negotiation procedure models problem solving abilities.

Corporal punishment, humiliation, verbal abuse or cruel or severe punishment is NEVER acceptable discipline techniques at New Nursery. No child shall ever be denied food or drink nor will they be force fed as a punishment. No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.

If a child needs a few minutes of quiet time to regain control, he or she will sit with a teacher in a quiet area of the room. On occasion the child may sit with the Director in the room or Office until calm and ready to return to the group. We stress that this is a time to
relax and feel better before returning to an activity. If a child is truly distraught and cannot
regain control or be calmed, the parent may be asked to pick up the child early. A meeting
with parents explaining the child’s difficulties and seeking parent input will follow.

Parents are informed of all behavior and discipline issues as soon as possible so
that parents and teachers can work together to help the child.

If you have specific concerns regarding behavior management techniques, we urge
you to discuss them with your teacher or the Director.

ASSESSMENT PLAN

The purpose of assessing our young children is to design goals for individual
children and the class in order to help them grow in all areas of development. It is essential
for an accurate picture of the child that all assessments involve parental contributions. It is
also necessary that the child be assessed in the context of his/her family values and culture.
Assessment of young children at New Nursery is based on observation and documentation
of a child’s behavior in our classrooms and all areas of the school.

The New Nursery School’s curriculum is based on The Massachusetts Department
of Education Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences, and therefore our
assessments are also based on these guidelines. Assessment allows our teachers to develop
curriculums that enhance all areas- social, emotional, physical, cognitive as well as speech
and language. The New Nursery School staff uses their knowledge and experience of child
development to report each child’s progress.

We believe that communication with parents is the key to success at school.
Teachers give their phone numbers to all parents in their classes in September in order to
facilitate good communication. Teachers and parents communicate informally at drop off
and pick up times. In the Fall teachers call each parent to report the child’s adjustment to
school, to share any concerns and establish goals. During the winter months the school
holds parent teacher conferences. Children do not attend school, but parents may come for
a conference with their child’s teacher/s and receive a written progress report. Toddler
parents have a choice of an in school conference or a telephone conference so that the
toddlers do not lose a day at school. Parents may request a conference at any time. All
observations, documentation, and discussions are always confidential.

At times the teachers and/or the Director may have a concern about a child’s behavior or
development in which case we will follow our Social Service and Referral policy.

SOCIAL SERVICE AND REFERRAL POLICY

The New Nursery School will use the following procedures for referring parents to
appropriate educational, medical, social and mental health services should the staff feel that
a child would benefit from additional services not provided by the school.

When a teacher is concerned about a child’s development she will discuss it with
her teaching partner and then both teachers will discuss their concerns with the Director.
The child’s record will be reviewed and the Director will ask both teachers to complete a
written observation documenting specific examples of their concern. The Director will also
observe the child and write her observations. Director and teachers will meet again to prepare a written statement for the parents, including a summary of the school’s observations, the reasons for suggesting a referral and the efforts that the school has made to accommodate the child’s needs within the school setting.

The Director will schedule a meeting with the parents to discuss the school’s concerns and to provide them with a current list of possible referral sources beginning with the child’s pediatrician.

We will offer all possible support to parents and encourage visits and phone calls at any time. If the parents give written permission, the Director will contact the referral agency for the parents. If the child is under the age of three parents will be informed of local Early Intervention programs. If the child is at least 2 and a half, the Director will inform parents of their rights under CH. 766.

The Lead Teacher will be responsible for keeping a record of all referrals, including parent conferences and results.

As follow-up to a referral, the Director will, with written permission, contact the service provider for consultation and assistance in meeting the child’s needs at school. If the child is not in need of services or is not eligible for services the school will continue to monitor the child’s progress and the Director and teachers will confer every three months to decide if another referral is necessary. Our goal at all times is to help parents and children receive the support that they need and to follow through with specific intervention techniques and Individual Education Plans formulated by parents and specialists together. Referrals and conversations with parents are strictly confidential. Children’s records are confidential and will not be released, in part or whole, to anyone without written parental consent.

CLASS SCHEDULES

The New Nursery School is in session five days a week with morning and afternoon class. Fees are outlined in the registration brochure.

Toddler Class
Monday, Friday- 9:00-11:30 a.m., or Monday 12:15-2:45 p.m.

Nursery Program (2.9)
Tuesday and Thursday - 9:00-11:30 a.m.

Three Year Olds
Two day programs—Tuesday/Thursday or 9:00-11:30 a.m. or p.m. 12:15-2:45 p.m.

PreK
Three day program Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:00-11:30 a.m.
Four-day program Mon., Tues., Wed., and Thursday 12:15-2:45 p.m.

Wednesday Optional Day- 9:00-11:30 a.m./12:15-2:45 p.m.
Each class session includes one hour or more of “free choice” time when children move freely among art experiences, block area, housekeeping area, manipulatives, book corner and sand or water table activities. Pick up time follows - everyone participates! Songs, fingerplays, movement and drama precede snack. After snack time books or flannel board stories are presented to the whole class. During the last half-hour of the session we go outside to play on the playground or to take class walks. During inclement weather we plan indoor activities to move large muscles.

VACATIONS AND HOLIDAYS

The New Nursery School follows the Norwell Public School calendar for holidays and vacations (December vacation often varies from the public school’s vacation). Please refer to the calendar on the last page for specific dates. Our last day of school falls on the Friday before Memorial Day. If the Norwell Schools are closed due to inclement weather, the New Nursery will also be closed. Please listen to radio station WHDH or WBZ. New Nursery does not make up “Snow Days”. You will be notified by telephone if school is canceled for any other reason.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

An extended day program is offered Monday through Friday. Lunch Bunch is available to children in our Nursery, threes, and PreK classes. Children bring their lunch including a drink, and we provide stories, free choice time, art projects and gross motor activities indoors and outside. We suggest healthy food for lunch such as simple sandwiches of meat or cheese, yogurt, fresh fruits, raisins, applesauce, canned fruit, pudding, celery or carrot sticks or other raw vegetables that your child enjoys. Granola bars, pretzels, crackers, or dry cereals are also a nutritious addition. A carton or thermos of milk or fruit juice is an appropriate drink as well as water (no soda, please). Please keep sweets to a minimum and do not send candy. We cannot offer refrigeration, but a small cold pack in the lunch box will keep these items cool and safe. Please Remember that New Nursery is a NUT & PEANUT FREE SCHOOL. The fee for Lunch Bunch, set each fall, is payable on a monthly basis with billing system. Sign up is done monthly on a first come - first served basis.

PARENT WORKSHOPS

The school may inform parents of workshops focusing on parenting skills or childcare issues. A staff member or other professional may lead a class if interest is shown. A small fee could cover the book and leader. Baby-sitting may be available. We welcome parents’ suggestions for discussion topics.
ORIENTATION

In September we hold orientation days for children and parents with a different format. Children come for a shortened class session and parents meet to hear plans for the year and to receive necessary forms and tend to administrative tasks. This is also a time to meet classmates parents and to arrange carpools.

OPEN HOUSE

Each Fall we hold an open house for families to come and meet the teachers. Teachers are available to talk with parents. Children are encouraged to show off their school to their family members. This open house could also involve an event planned by the Board of Directors.

Each Spring the school holds an Open House in the evening. This evening is a celebration of our young children. The entire family is invited to see pictures of the children in action during the year. They can see and use favorite materials, talk with the teachers, and enjoy refreshments.

CLOTHING

Play clothes are most suitable for Nursery School. We do get messy! Clothes which children can manage at bathroom time are a great help. Sneakers or other rubber-soled shoes prevent slipping.

Please be sure that your child is dressed warmly enough to go outside. We go out every day, except in the rain or excessive cold. Boots, snowpants, hats and mittens are necessary during the snow season. We ask that each child bring a change of clothes to school in their school bag. The School has many extra clean clothes available, but children often feel more comfortable in their own clothing.

Children learn by doing. They should not have to worry about getting “dirty” while experimenting with mud, paint, clay etc. Please dress your child in clothes that he/she will feel free to experiment in.

BIRTHDAYS

We are happy to share in celebrating a child’s birthday, just notify the teacher in advance. Birthday napkins and a special food make a nice treat. Ice cream cups or a cereal and raisin mix are always popular. We encourage healthy treats that your child enjoys. Please check with your child’s teachers to see if food allergies exist in the class so that you can plan a treat that all can enjoy.
SNACK

A daily snack is served to all children. Menus are posted at the classroom door. We usually serve juice and crackers. Most classes cook occasionally. Pasta, fruit cup, pretzels, cookies, pizza and breads are some favorites. These special dishes replace the usual snack.

Please check with the teacher if you and your child would like to provide an occasional snack time treat. Raisins, carrot and celery sticks, cheese cubes, fruit, homemade cookies or special family treats are all good snacks and a nice change from our usual crackers and juice. If we have children with food allergies in your child’s class we will notify you of appropriate snack items. It is imperative that all FOOD ALLERGIES are noted on the intake and medical form. Teachers will always provide alternative snacks in case of allergies.

The New Nursery School is a NUT AND PEANUT FREE school. Please do not bring these to school. Read the labels carefully. Bring snacks in their package if purchased so the labels can be shown to parents if necessary.

TOYS FROM HOME

Valuable toys, or those with tiny pieces, should not be brought to school. A favorite book or other possession, which can be shared, may be brought in occasionally if desired, BUT, there is no guarantee that it will not get lost or broken. Please do not let your child bring gum, candy, guns or other violent action-type toys to school.

FIELD TRIPS

There may be trips during the school year to nearby places of interest for Pre K classes. Parents will be asked to assist with the driving and chaperoning. A parental permission slip with specific trip information will be sent home before each trip and must be returned to the teacher prior to the child’s participation.

TRANSPORTATION

The parents provide transportation. A class list will be available on the first day of school to help parents with carpool arrangements and a current carpool list will be kept in the Office. Parents must also fill out a Release form indicating those people who may pick up their child. Children will be sent home in their carpool unless prior notice is given in writing designating another person authorized to pick up the child. If this person is unknown to the School staff we will ask to see a driver’s license to confirm identity.

The driver of each carpool should escort the children in her charge to their assigned classrooms. Parents should also be aware that the children are not to leave the
classroom until a teacher dismisses them. The driver will insist that the children walk with her to and from the car.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

We are pleased to have parents visit the school at any time. Parents often make special arrangements to visit the classroom to observe the day or to help with a special activity. Parents are welcome to watch their child's class through the one way mirrors anytime.

Parents, or other family members, are encouraged to volunteer to share a hobby, collection, musical or artistic talent or profession, or a special family or cultural tradition. We also welcome parents to help with special classroom projects, such as art or cooking.

Parent concerns and suggestions, written or verbal, about the school are welcome at any time. Each February or March parents have the opportunity to do a written evaluation of the program that is reviewed by the Director, the teachers and the Board of Directors.

PARENTS’ RIGHTS

You will be aware of your child's program and activities at all times. Newsletters and notices outside the classroom provide opportunities for parents to become informed.

A complete list of parental rights is available at Orientation or in the office anytime.

As a Parents you have the right to know:
• The philosophy, goals, and curriculum of the program.
• The daily schedule for your child
• Where your child is if not at the program's address
• How children are disciplined and give you an opportunity to offer input on discipline
• What children are fed and in what atmosphere
• Program policy on fees
• Health and safety policy and procedures
• That the information in your child's record which reasonably relates to the requirements for licensing shall be made available to the Office for Child Care Services. Authorized employees of OCCS/ELS shall not remove identifying case materials from the premises and shall maintain confidentiality of individual records.
• That information contained in a child's record shall be privileged and confidential. The school shall not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without the written consent of the child's parent(s). The school shall notify the parent(s) if a child's file is subpoenaed.
• You have the right to add relevant information to your child's file and you have the right to request deletion or amendments of information contained in
your child's file. If you are of the opinion that adding information will not clarify the file information, you may request a conference with the director to make your objections known. The director must inform you of his/her decision in writing within one week.

LEAVING A RELUCTANT CHILD

If your child finds it difficult to be separated from you in a new environment, be patient and understanding. Reassure him or her that you will return soon. If you and the teacher decide that you should stay in the room, sit in an inconspicuous spot and wait for your child to engage in an activity. When he/she seems ready, say that you are going and will return soon. When you leave please know that we will contact you if your child needs you.

Do not hesitate to ask the teachers for suggestions. They have had lots of experience with reluctant children and their parents. In almost every case, the child soon realizes that the New Nursery is a safe, interesting, fun place to be and after a short time feels very comfortable at school. Please remember that we are here for you and your child and will do all that we can to ease difficult transitions.

GREIVANCE POLICY

If there is a policy, procedure, or any problem that is upsetting, parents should discuss this with the director. Parents are encouraged to speak to the director on any topic and most especially if they have a problem or an idea to improve our service. If there is a problem and the director’s resolution is not satisfactory, the parents may bring the issue to The New Nursery Board of Directors. Their decision is final. There is a list of Board members at the back of this book as well as posted in the front hall.

Parents are encouraged to make suggestions on the running of the school, the policies, and the routines. We are always looking for ways to respond to our parents’ needs. There is a suggestion folder in the front hall and outside the office door by the school calendar.
New Nursery School Calendar
2008-2009
IMPORTANT DATES

September 8    Orientation AM & PM PreK classes
September 9    Orientation T/Th AM/PM 3's, Nursery(2.9) TTh,
September 15, or 19   Orientation Toddlers
October 10 & 13  No school - Columbus Day Break
November 11     No school – Veteran’s Day
November 26     AM classes only
November 27, 28  Thanksgiving Holiday

December 20-January 5   No school Winter vacation
Classes resume January 5, 2009

January 19     No school- Martin Luther King Day
February 16-20  No school- February Vacation
April 10       No School – Holiday
April 20-24    No school- Spring Vacation
May 22         Last day of school

In case of inclement weather, New Nursery will be closed if Norwell Public
Schools are closed. Please listen to WBZ, WATD or other local radio
channels. You will be notified by phone if the school must close for other
reasons.