

# NEEDHAM PRESCHOOL

## Family Handbook



2017-18

1155 Central Avenue  
Needham, MA 02492  
(781) 455-0416

## **Table of Contents**

Welcome!  
Preschool Staff  
Needham Public Schools Calendar 2017-18  
Needham Preschool Curriculum  
Daily Schedule  
Motor Group  
Playground and Eastman Conservation Area  
Special Education Services  
Parent Teacher Council (PTC)  
Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)  
Curriculum Enrichment and Special Events  
Communication with Staff  
Listening Conferences and Progress Reports  
Partnership Between Home and School  
Positive Behavior Support  
Arrival and Dismissal  
Absences, Midday Pick Ups, and Late Arrivals  
Important Forms  
What Does My Child Need To Bring?  
Classroom Visitors and Volunteers  
Kindergarten Transition  
Summer Program  
Lunch Bunch  
Enrollment and Registration  
Health Guidelines  
Toileting  
Birthday Celebrations  
Safety Drills  
Early Releases and Delayed Openings  
Weather Watch  
Snow Cancellations  
Special Circumstances

## Welcome!

The Needham Preschool is the first step in your child's journey into the Needham Public Schools! Our program is comprised of six classrooms located in the Newman Elementary School, and we serve the educational needs of students who are three, four, and five years old in the town of Needham. Classrooms are taught by masters-level teachers who are certified in both early childhood education and special education. This training and expertise enables teachers to differentiate their instruction and provide a rich and supportive learning environment for all children.

We are proud to offer an integrated preschool program in which children of different levels of ability are educated together, which is an inclusive educational model widely supported by research. Classes are limited to 15-16 students and are supported by the teacher along with at least two teacher assistants (TAs).

Needham Preschool follows a developmental whole child philosophy. We focus not just on kindergarten readiness skills, but also on building your child's social-emotional skills and a love for learning. We help your child to become intellectually curious, promote play skills and friendships, develop their independence and problem-solving skills, and, most of all, build their confidence and enthusiasm for school.

We have dedicated and highly specialized early childhood staff in our program, which is reflective of the commitment of the Needham Public Schools to early childhood education. Children benefit from the support and expertise of our Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, School Psychologist, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and Pediatric Nurse.

We have a supportive Preschool Parent Teacher Council (PTC) who work closely with us to create a positive and robust early childhood community, and bring in curriculum enrichment such as the New England Aquarium, Needham Firefighters, baby farm animals, puppet shows, and music and movement events.

We are very fortunate to be housed in the Newman Elementary School. You and your child have the opportunity to begin your relationship with the Needham Public Schools in one of the town's five elementary schools, which will help facilitate their transition to kindergarten. Also, our older Newman students love to visit now and then for fun activities with preschoolers, like book buddies and group painting projects. Many of them came to the Needham Preschool too!

## **Preschool Staff**

### Preschool Office

Rebecca Sparrell, Preschool Director  
Xenia Papoulias, Preschool Secretarial  
Program Specialist

[rebecca\\_sparrell@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:rebecca_sparrell@needham.k12.ma.us)  
[xenia\\_papoulias@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:xenia_papoulias@needham.k12.ma.us)

### Preschool Nurse

Nancy Solari, Preschool Nurse

[nancy\\_solari@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:nancy_solari@needham.k12.ma.us)

### Preschool Teachers

Daniel Cohen  
Ilana Halko  
Sara Harkins  
Megan Hoelzer  
Christine Joseph  
Jennifer Terakedis (BCBA)

[daniel\\_cohen@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:daniel_cohen@needham.k12.ma.us)  
[ilana\\_halko@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:ilana_halko@needham.k12.ma.us)  
[sara\\_harkins@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:sara_harkins@needham.k12.ma.us)  
[megan\\_hoelzer@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:megan_hoelzer@needham.k12.ma.us)  
[christine\\_joseph@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:christine_joseph@needham.k12.ma.us)  
[jennifer\\_terakedis@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:jennifer_terakedis@needham.k12.ma.us)

### Preschool TAs

Vanda Alexopoulos  
Schinita Bell  
Leah Buccheri  
Lonni Campbell  
Laura Cullen  
Kerri DeSimone  
Sylvia Hanna-Belisle  
Laura Hasenfus  
Sheila Hurley  
Susan Kalish  
Karen McTernan  
Susan Miller  
Patricia Murphy  
Denise Sullivan  
Pamela Vautour  
Joseph Vespa  
Marie Zeghibe

### Preschool Speech-Language Pathologists

Isabelle Andrei  
Michelle Ganson  
Maria Harlow

[isabelle\\_andrei@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:isabelle_andrei@needham.k12.ma.us)  
[michelle\\_ganson@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:michelle_ganson@needham.k12.ma.us)  
[maria\\_harlow@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:maria_harlow@needham.k12.ma.us)

District Physical Therapist

Suzanne Galvin

[suzanne\\_galvin@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:suzanne_galvin@needham.k12.ma.us)

Preschool Occupational Therapists

Elizabeth Dean

Rebecca Shusterman (COTA)

[elizabeth\\_dean@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:elizabeth_dean@needham.k12.ma.us)

[rebecca\\_shusterman@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:rebecca_shusterman@needham.k12.ma.us)

School Psychologist

Heather Murphy

[heather\\_murphy@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:heather_murphy@needham.k12.ma.us)

## **Needham Preschool Curriculum**

“Play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation as well as for promoting language, cognition, and social competence.”

*Copple, C., and Bredekamp, S. Eds., NAEYC, 2009*

The Needham Preschool is centered on activities that build your child’s kindergarten readiness—but that readiness goes far beyond letters and numbers. We want your child to develop the literacy skills that lead to reading, and we also want them to be compassionate enough to ask a new friend in the classroom to come play. We want your child to learn to write their name, and we also want them to learn to be resilient enough to complete a task that is challenging for them. We want your child to learn their numbers, and we also want them to learn that what really counts is being a well-rounded member of society—and that development starts as early as preschool.

We focus on your child’s social-emotional and academic success in the following areas:

- Small Group Learning Skills
- Social and Play Skills
- Literacy Skills
- Circle Time Skills
- Transition Skills
- Daily Living Skills
- Motor Skills

A growing body of research from diverse disciplines, including the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, concludes that early social and emotional learning lays an essential foundation for academic learning and success in life.

Research also shows a strong link between social and emotional learning and student gains:

- Greater school engagement and commitment
- Higher levels of empathy and pro-social behaviors
- A more positive school and classroom climate
- Increase self-efficacy and confidence
- Gains on standardized achievement tests

Additionally, research shows that social and emotional learning reduces the risks of:

- Substance abuse
- Mental health issues
- Emotional distress
- Behavior issues
- Risky behavior later in life

*(Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)*

The Needham Preschool follows:

- Massachusetts Standards for Preschool and Kindergarten: Social and Emotional Learning Standards and Approaches to Play and Learning Standards
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences

### **Social and Emotional Learning Standards**

- **Self-Awareness**
  - Children will be able to recognize, identify, and express his/her emotions.
  - Children will demonstrate accurate self-perception.
  - Children will demonstrate self-efficacy (confidence/competence).
- **Self-Management**
  - Children will demonstrate impulse control and stress management.
- **Social Awareness**
  - Children will demonstrate empathetic characteristics.
  - Children will recognize diversity and demonstrate respect for others.
- **Relationship Skills**
  - Children will demonstrate the ability to communicate with others in a variety of ways.
  - Children will engage socially and build relationships with other children and adults.
  - Children will demonstrate the ability to manage conflict.
  - Children will demonstrate the ability to seek help and offer help.
- **Responsible Decision Making**
  - Children will demonstrate beginning personal, social, and ethical responsibility.
  - Children will demonstrate the ability to reflect on and evaluate the results of his or her actions and decisions.

### **Approaches to Play and Learning Standards**

- Children will demonstrate initiative and independence.
- Children will demonstrate eagerness and curiosity as a learner.
- Children will be able to maintain focus and attention, and persist in efforts to complete a task.
- Children will demonstrate creativity in thinking and use of materials.
- Children will cooperate with others in play and learning.
- Children will seek multiple solutions to a question, task, or problem.
- Children will demonstrate organizational skills.
- Children will be able to retain and recall information.

## Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences

These guidelines reflect the Massachusetts Department of Education's commitment to quality, in order to ensure a solid foundation for learning and school success. Learning is structured through play and meaningful activities in a developmental sequence. Young children need many and varied opportunities to:

- **Plan:** Children consider what they are going to do with materials and how they are going to do it.
- **Play:** Children use materials and equipment in ways that best suit their personal curiosity and understanding.
- **Reflect:** Children recall things that happened to them, reinforcing or questioning their understanding.
- **Revisit:** Children practice skills and replay experiences in many different ways, with each activity refining or modifying previous learning.
- **Connect:** Children, with the help of staff, connect new knowledge with past experiences, creating links among subject areas and areas of skill development.

## English Language Arts

Foundations for learning in the English Language Arts are critical to all other curriculum areas, as well as to the child's social and emotional development.

Children develop the basis for verbal communication in early childhood.

Children begin to appreciate literature and the joy of reading by being read to at home and school.

A solid foundation in language development promotes success in reading and writing in the future.

Preschoolers are more likely to want to read and write when their imaginations have been engaged through being read to.

## Mathematics

Mathematics relates to ideas and concepts about quantity and addresses logical and spatial relationships.

The foundation of mathematics at the preschool level is formed out of children's concrete experiences and is not limited to "math time."

Mathematics is embedded into almost all daily classroom activities and play opportunities. Preschoolers learn to recite numbers in order, compare quantity, comprehend position, match objects in one-to-one correspondence, number concepts, and develop foundations for understanding two- and three-dimensional shapes.

### **Science and Technology/Engineering**

Young children are naturally curious about what things are called, how they work, and why things happen. The foundations of scientific learning lie in inquiry and exploration.

Earth and Space Sciences include describing properties of the earth, such as observing and discussing different environment elements, weather, and times of day.

Physical Sciences include investigating natural forces, such as exploratory play and art experiences.

Life Sciences include the study of living things, such as understanding life cycles.

Technology/Engineering involves finding out how things are constructed and work, and thinking about what we can do to make them work differently/better, such as designing, building, and testing solutions through play.

### **History and Social Science**

Learning in history and social science is built on children's experiences in their families, school, community, state, and country.

Preschoolers begin exploring these concepts with questions that are important to them such as "Who are the members of my family?", "Where do we live?", and "Who are my neighbors?"

This standard is intended to help children acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed in community life, as they learn to cooperate, share, and respect the rules of the classroom.

Additionally, children develop a civic identity through learning to participate in simple decision-making, listening to stories about the people and events we celebrate, and becoming familiar with national symbols.

### **Health Education**

In the preschool years, brain and body development are critically linked. Through physical activity and body movement, the brain internalizes directionality and position in space, which are critical to mathematical thinking and early reading and writing.

Activities that promote physical development help children develop skills and confidence in using their bodies and equipment.

Socially, children learn how to play in a group setting, take turns, wait for a turn, learn expectations, rules and routines, share, lead, follow, and be a friend.

Emotionally, children learn to start to develop independence and confidence.

### **Arts**

Arts education begins with a foundation that emphasizes exploration, experimentation, and engagement of the senses, through drama, music, and painting.

The arts often serve as a vehicle for children to demonstrate their understanding in other content areas.

Children experiment freely with arts materials to see what happens, notice how their work looks different from their peer's work, and learn that their effort leads to the production of a satisfying result.

### **Social Thinking**

The Needham Preschool also uses the Social Thinking program, which was developed by Speech-Language Pathologist Michelle Garcia Winner. The program works to help children develop social competencies to better connect with others by working on activities such as being a part of a team, sharing space with others, understanding one another, and developing meaningful relationships.

### **Daily Schedule**

A typical day might consist of the following:

- Transition into the classroom followed by teacher-facilitated play with peers. Your child's developing skills in transitioning from a parent or caregiver at arrival and into the classroom with their peers builds the foundation for resilience and independence. We know it isn't always easy in the beginning—but it always gets better!
- Morning Meeting is an opportunity to start the day with learning and following a classroom routine, listening to others, learning each other's names and greeting peers, turn taking, understanding of calendar and weather, and opportunities for music and movement.
- Tabletop activities and art projects build your child's language, fine motor, sharing, and self-advocacy skills.
- Choice Time is an opportunity for children to explore and learn through play. Options include block area, dramatic play, math manipulatives, writing center, reading area,

listening center, puzzles, puppets, sand wand water table, science exploration, painting/drawing, etc.

- Snack Time provides an opportunity for small group discussions, practicing social skills, and building self-help skills.
- Outdoor Play is an essential part of your child's motor development. Physical activities include running, climbing, building, and balancing. Indoor activities in inclement weather might include music and movement and activities such as obstacle courses.

### **Motor Groups**

Our Physical Therapist offers a weekly motor groups to all students. These fun and engaging sessions allow an opportunity for children to learn and practice concepts of body awareness, motor planning, ball play, balance, running, jumping, building upper and lower body strength, participating in a group, and following directions.

### **Playground and Eastman Conservation Area**

The preschool playground is a play space for the preschoolers during the school day, and is open to the community with the exception of during the school day, 8:45 AM – 3:10 PM.

The Eastman Conservation Area was recently renovated to include a boardwalk that winds through the conservation area down the hill from the preschool entrance. We love using this beautiful new addition to the school with students for nature walks.

### **Special Education Services**

Special education services provide specialized instruction to students who have been identified through testing as having a disability that prevents them from making effective progress in school. Parents/guardians are a large part of this process in sharing their insights and concerns for their children. If a child is found eligible for special education services, a team meeting is called, including parents and teachers, to develop the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). This program is designed to support the student's access to the general education curriculum. Special education evaluation and services can only be provided with parent permission. If you would like more information or believe your child may have a disability, please contact the Preschool Office.

### **Parent Teacher Council (PTC)**

The Needham Preschool PTC is a group of preschool parents working together with the preschool staff to create the best possible experience for their children. The PTC has three primary responsibilities:

- To create a sense of community among preschool families.

- To serve as a communication vehicle among parents and staff to discuss educational and school community matters.
- To raise money for creative enrichment programs (special events and activities that complement and extend the preschool curriculum) as well as classroom and teacher needs.

The PTC keeps in touch with parents via email to share information about upcoming events, meetings, parent nights out, fundraising, and volunteer opportunities. For more information, you can contact PTC Chair Hillary Rubin at [ecpcptc@gmail.com](mailto:ecpcptc@gmail.com).

### **Needham Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)**

The Needham SEPAC is comprised of parents of special education students who have joined together to provide information and support to each other. SEPAC meets regularly with school administrators to give input on the policies and programs that affect their children, and hosts speakers and informational sessions for parents. For more information, you can contact our SEPAC Preschool Liaison, Rebecca Carroll, at [preschool@needhamsepac.org](mailto:preschool@needhamsepac.org) or visit the SEPAC website at [www.needhamsepac.org](http://www.needhamsepac.org).

### **Curriculum Enrichment and Special Events**

Our PTC brings in terrific curriculum enrichment for the preschoolers. Past events have included a pumpkin patch, visit from the New England Aquarium, Needham Firefighters, Imagine and Move, Pumpnickel Puppets, and baby farm animals.

Additionally, the preschool hosts a Visiting Day prior to the start of the school year, Back To School Night in September, Boo Walk in October, and an End of the Year Walk in June.

### **Communication with Staff**

The preschool office can be reached at (781) 455-0416 ext. 140. Staff members welcome and value the opportunity to meet and talk with parents. Please note that it is difficult for teachers and therapists to meet with parents when school is beginning, ending, or in session, so parents are encouraged to contact staff via email to set up meetings:  
[firstname\\_lastname@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:firstname_lastname@needham.k12.ma.us)

### **Listening Conferences and Progress Reports**

Listening conferences are offered at the beginning of the school year as an opportunity for parents to speak with your child's teacher/s about your child. Teachers offer an additional parent conference in January. Progress reports are sent home twice per year in January and June. We make an effort to discuss children when they are not present, so thank you for arranging childcare during conferences with teachers.

## **Partnership Between Home and School**

Our strong relationship with preschool students and parents is the foundation of our program. We strive to support you and your child in every way possible, and ask you to communicate with us if your child or family has a need for which we can provide guidance and support. The preschool staff members are experienced educators and many are parents themselves, so we understand sensitive and complex family situations. Here are some suggestions that the staff offers for common situations:

### **Managing Anxiety and Transition**

Children are always watching and following the lead of the adults in their lives. In our experience, children are better able to demonstrate flexibility with change when that flexibility is modeled positively by their parents. Due to their age and development, we encourage you to use positive and simple language with your child whenever possible.

### **Visual Schedules**

Teachers use visual schedules all day long in their classrooms to support children. A visual schedule can also help support a child at home, especially during busy times such as a move or another change to the family. There are many templates that can be found online for creating visual schedules. We are also happy to help you develop one.

## **Positive Behavior Support**

Positive behavior support is a broad term that describes establishing settings, structures, and systems to facilitate positive behavior change. We strive to use positive statements that instruct a child what to do (“I keep my hands by my sides when I walk down the hall”) rather than statements that tell a child what *not* to do (“Please stop waving your arms in the hall”). We talk about behaviors as “expected” and “unexpected,” which comes from the Social Thinking program. We reinforce children who are behaving in an expected way rather than focusing on a child who is behaving in an unexpected way.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

The morning classroom runs from 8:45 AM – 11:20 AM, and the afternoon class runs from 12:30 – 3:10 PM. Some student schedules vary based on individual need. We appreciate your promptness in dropping off and picking up your child.

The preschool entrance is open at 8:45 AM in order to give our older elementary school students the opportunity to move through the halls to their classrooms, which allows for a more comfortable and efficient arrival for the preschoolers.

At dismissal time, staff members will bring students outside to their parents or caregivers.

Aside from arrival and dismissal times, the preschool door is locked for the safety of our students. If you come to the school outside of arrival and dismissal time, please ring the buzzer and proceed to the preschool office to sign in.

If your child will be picked up by someone who is not on your emergency form, please communicate this change with your child's teacher.

While we are fortunate to be a part of the Newman Elementary School, we appreciate that parking can sometimes be a challenge. If there is not a spot available in the preschool parking area, we encourage you to park in the large parking lot located on your right when you enter the Newman. Please do not park in any space that is not a designated parking spot. Handicapped parking spaces should only be accessed by vehicles with a handicapped placard. Your child's safety is our top priority, so thank you for walking them to the preschool entrance and holding their hand as you cross the parking lot.

### **Absences, Midday Pick Ups, and Late Arrivals**

If your child will be absent, please email our Preschool Secretarial Program Specialist, Xenia Papoulias ([xenia\\_papoulias@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:xenia_papoulias@needham.k12.ma.us)) as well as your child's teacher. Please include the School Nurse, Nancy Solari, if your child has a serious medical issue ([nancy\\_solari@needham.k12.ma.us](mailto:nancy_solari@needham.k12.ma.us)). Late arrivals (more than 20 minutes past the start of your child's school day), early dismissals, and any changes to transportation should always be documented in writing. Please email or send a written note to Xenia as well as your child's teacher. Late arrivals and early dismissals must always check in at the Preschool Office and sign your child in or out.

### **Important Forms**

We ask that all families complete the **Class List, Photo Release & Emergency Information** form every year. This form also enables the school to share class list information for planning birthday parties and other events. If you need a copy, please contact the preschool office.

Please be sure to share any updates in phone numbers, emergency contacts, babysitters/nannies, daycare schedules, etc. with the Preschool Office.

In addition, please be sure to return your child's **Nurse Emergency Card** to Nurse Nancy so that the school has updated health information for your child, as well as the best way to reach you during the school day in the event of an emergency.

### **What Does My Child Need To Bring?**

Please provide your child with a backpack, snack bag, a healthy nut-free snack/s and/or lunch if applicable, a seasonally appropriate change of clothes (including underwear and socks), and any toileting supplies that your child may need.

Parents should not provide snacks to children younger than four years old containing these foods: hot dogs either whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn; raw peas and hard pretzels; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

Children should come to school dressed comfortably in clothes they can play in, as well as use items such as paint and glue. Please dress your child for outdoor play (warmer/cooler clothing) as the weather changes. We encourage closed toe shoes with a rubber sole for safe playground access and participation in active play. Please remember to label all items of clothing and other belongings that you send into school with your child.

### **Classroom Visitors and Volunteers**

We welcome your active participation in your child's classroom. Your child's teacher and PTC will share volunteer opportunities. For the safety of the students, all visitors must sign in at the office and wear a visitor's badge. Any visitors that are not accompanied by a teacher or administrator will be required to participate in a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check.

### **Kindergarten Transition**

Kindergarten transition is an exciting process that begins in the winter. The Superintendent of Schools hosts an evening event, Know Your Needham Schools Night, in January. This is an opportunity to learn more about your child's transition to kindergarten and ask any questions that you might have. Kindergarten registration begins in February, and kindergarten orientations are held at each elementary school in Needham in February/March. The preschool will share information about all of these events with families during the school year.

### **Summer Program**

The Needham Preschool offers a six-week summer program that runs from the beginning of July through mid-August. This program is available to all preschool students, and many families take advantage of the opportunity for their child to attend. Detailed information about the summer program will be shared in February to allow for your family to plan ahead and reserve a space.

For students with special education services, eligibility for Extended School Year services is discussed annually at your child's annual IEP meeting.

### **Lunch Bunch**

Lunch Bunch is a 60 minute social and lunch time in between our morning and afternoon sessions. Enrollment is limited and must be for a minimum of 2 days per week in order to ensure routine and continuity for our students. Lunch Bunch is currently full, but please let the preschool office know if you would like to be on the wait list.

### **Enrollment and Registration**

For students who do not present with special education needs that require placement in a classroom, applications for tuition slots are accepted on September 1<sup>st</sup> for the following school year. Applications are posted on the school website and students are accepted on a first come, first serve basis, with priority given to current students who intend to return for the following school year. Families are notified by October 1<sup>st</sup> if there is a spot for their child in the following school year. Enrollment is secured when the deposit has been made and registration is complete, including complete health clearance verified by the nurse. Each student receives a developmental screening prior to starting the preschool program.

### **Health Guidelines**

The goal of our health program is to protect and promote the health of preschool children. School health records provide a confidential record of each child's health status and are maintained in the nurse's office. The nurse conducts annual vision and hearing screenings on our students.

The information that we gather about your child's health enables us to identify children with special health care needs and develop a health care plan that anticipates possible emergency situations. We do not celebrate birthdays with food due to allergies. If your child does have a medical issue, such as food allergies, seizures, reaction to bee stings, asthma, or anything else, please contact the nurse.

Please inform your child's teacher and nurse about any allergies or medical conditions that could impact your child at school. We do not celebrate birthdays at school with food due to allergies.

The following information is required prior to starting preschool:

- A physical exam within the past year, updated every year of preschool attendance
- Up to date immunizations
- Health assessment form
- Lead level

Please use the following guidelines for keeping your child home when they are ill:

- A fresh cold (nasal discharge, cough, watery eyes) developed within the past 24-48 hours is considered to be contagious.

- Fever: Students must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school, without use of Tylenol or ibuprofen.
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: Please keep your child home for at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved. Your child must be able to keep down food and fluids prior to returning to school.
- Strep Throat: Please keep your child home until 24 hours after antibiotics have begun.
- Conjunctivitis: Your child should not return to school for 24 hours.
- Head Lice: Your child should remain home until they have been treated and checked by the school nurse.
- Undiagnosed Rash: Please keep your child home for their safety and the safety of other students.

If your child is mildly ill but is unlikely to be able to participate fully in their school day, they should remain at home. If your child appears ill at school, the school nurse will call you to pick up your child as soon as possible. We cannot prevent all illness, but by working together we can minimize the spread of germs. It is very important to keep the school nurse updated on any medical conditions, medications, or medical changes. Nurse Nancy can be contacted at the preschool office at (781) 455-0416, ext. 138.

### **Toileting**

Preschool staff will assist you in carrying out your child's toileting routine. Please discuss any special accommodations with your child's teacher.

Children will wash their hands with liquid soap and running water after toileting. Staff members wear gloves when assisting children with toileting, and wash their hands with liquid soap and running water after assisting children with toileting. Paper towels are used to dry hands.

When handling clothing soiled with bodily fluids, staff members will wear gloves and bag clothing in sealed plastic bags, storing them apart from other items.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

We love birthdays in preschool! Due to food allergies and district wellness initiatives, we do not celebrate birthdays at school with food. Please contact your child's teacher to find out about other special ways to celebrate your child's birthday at school.

### **Safety Drills**

Being a part of a school means periodic safety drills. During a fire drill, preschool students line up with their classes and we walk outside to the island in our parking area. We practice being calm and quiet, and the entire process only takes a few minutes. The Needham Public Schools has adopted the ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) protocol for student

safety. We will discuss the ALICE protocol at Back to School Night. If you have any questions, please contact the Preschool Office. If your child talks with you about a safety drill that took place at school, we encourage you to use simple language with them, and remind them that their teachers always make sure they are safe.

### **Early Releases and Delayed Openings**

Needham Preschool follows the Needham Public Schools calendar, which is included in this handbook for your reference and planning. Families are reminded of these dates via classroom placement letter before the school year, as well as via teacher and director newsletters. On early release days, there is no Lunch Bunch or afternoon class, and students are dismissed at 11:20 AM. On delayed opening days, there is no morning class or Lunch Bunch, and students arrive at 12:30 PM.

### **Weather Watch**

The preschool follows the weather guidelines outlined here, and avoid outdoor play when the weather is considered to be dangerously hot or cold:  
<https://www.umass.edu/ofr/pdfs/weatherwatch.pdf>

### **Snow Cancellations**

If the Needham Public Schools are closed due to snow, the preschool is closed as well. If there is a delayed opening due to snow, there is no morning class or Lunch Bunch, and students arrive at 12:30 PM. Information about weather-related school closing can be found on TV, radio, and online, as well as via the superintendent's Twitter account: @NPS\_Supt. Please do not call the school directly for this information.

### **Special Circumstances**

If there are any special circumstances at home, such as changes to childcare, vacation, a move, illness, new member of the family, or death in the family, please notify your child's teacher so that we can support your child in adjusting to the situation.

### **We Want To Hear From You!**

We are here to support your child and family. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Preschool Office with any questions, suggestions, or ideas for how we can best support you and your child.

*The Needham Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, and ensure that all students and employees have equal rights of access and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, privileges, and courses of study.*

