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Mission and Philosophy

Nicholson School's Mission Statement

The mission of The Nicholson School is to provide a safe, nurturing, developmentally appropriate program for pre-school aged children, and their families, administered by highly qualified early childhood educators. Our school is a place where children have fun, grow, learn, and encounter the world with joy, curiosity, and confidence. We strive to create an environment that encourages wondering, problem-solving, questioning, and development in all areas of cognitive growth through play-based activities, both self-selected and teacher-directed. We welcome, value and appreciate human differences, and aim to create a program that reflects the lives of our community, including children, families, and teachers.

The Nicholson School Story

The Nicholson School was founded by a mom to honor her grandmother, Novella Nicholson, a strong woman who worked both inside and outside of the home, raised three children and always wanted to be an educator of young children. While Novella's dream was never realized, she passionately believed that a well-educated child is capable of wonderful things.

This conviction is at the core of everything we do at The Nicholson School. We see our primary role as that of caring facilitators. Our mission is to help children embark on their personal life paths by encouraging them to get excited about learning...excited about asking why.

Our Philosophy

At The Nicholson School we believe that children learn best in environments in which they feel safe, nurtured and confident. Our teachers focus on meeting each child where he or she is developmentally so that they feel comfortable exploring and learning. Children create their own unique classroom community as teachers help them learn how to respect and care for themselves, each other and the environment.

Children learn through the power of play; they absorb and understand knowledge through their own unique combination of experiences and representations - their Multiple Intelligences. At the Nicholson School we respect children's Multiple Intelligences by creating an intentional environment for teacher-led, small group and self-directed exploration across a wide range of concepts - literacy, science, art, numbers, and music. All in a way that is engaging and age-appropriate. The classroom environment is dynamic and evolves over the year with the children and their interests.

Our children share this earth with people from many cultures; at the Nicholson School we enjoy learning about them together.

We believe in the competence of children - our teachers support each child's individual learning style and path of inquiry. Children are encouraged to reason, ask why, experiment and make decisions.

Licensing

The Nicholson School is licensed by the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) and all registered students are covered by Liability Insurance

Entrance Requirements

Before a child can be admitted to school, the following forms must be completed electronically in their entirety and submitted to the Director. These are:

Certified Copy of child's birth certificate (to be copied at school) and delivered within thirty days of enrollment or we will have to contact state police.

Child Emergency Information and Release Record form

Child and Family Information form

Signed Guidance and Discipline policy (within the parent handbook, detach signature sheet bottom of page 9)

Signed Transition Permission Slip (within the parent handbook, detach signature sheet bottom of page 10)

Medical form completed by your child's physician and signed by parent/caregiver

Verification of Receipt DCFS Summary of Licensing Standards

Verification of Receipt of Parent Handbook (last page of Parent Handbook)

Forms are emailed to families prior to the beginning of school. Extra forms are available from the Director.

Tuition

A deposit of 25% for preschool is required at the time of acceptance to the Nicholson School and is non-refundable and non-transferable. The balance of tuition is due June 1st for the 2 Day Program. Families of children enrolled in the 3 or 5 Day programs may pay the balance in two equal installments, June 1st and October 1st. Tuition is considered late if postmarked after the communicated deadlines. A late fee may be imposed on payments made after these dates. There are no refunds if your child is sick or misses school for any reason.

Checks should be made payable to The Nicholson School and mailed to the attention of the Director.

Financial Aid

Partial scholarships are awarded on the basis of need. Separate scholarship applications are available upon request.

Program

School Hours

The morning 3 day program begins at 8:30am and children are dismissed at 11:30am. The morning 2 day program begins at 8:30 and children are dismissed at 11am. The morning 5 day program begins at 8:15am and the children are dismissed at 12:15am. There is a toddler/caregiver class on Friday's from 11:15am to 12pm.

Beginning School & Separation

No matter how much children love to explore new things, many are uneasy about separating from familiar people, places and routines. Parents can help by giving children *a simple explanation of what to expect the week before school begins, not much earlier*. Give them time for discussion and ask them about their questions or concerns. Children will work through their separation anxiety in their own way, but parents can help smooth the transition by paying attention and accepting the child's feelings and needs.

We encourage parents to stay in the classroom as long as needs be. Your presence gives your child a home base from which he can explore -- and to which he can retreat. Remove yourself from the classroom gradually. Try spending a little time in another room part of the room, out of your child's range of vision before leaving completely. You may also try leaving the building for periods of time (feeding the meter, taking a walk). Don't be surprised by a delayed - and unhappy - response when your child realizes these disappearances are getting longer. Please don't try to talk your child out of feeling sad, though diverting their attention is worth a try.

Your child may experience difficulty separating not only at the beginning of the year, but also after vacations or illnesses, or after changes at home. Setbacks may include a return to "old" behaviors like thumb sucking, crying, or angry outbursts.

We suggest that parents create a goodbye routine and develop a hello routine with the teachers. Routine transitions and rituals help young children feel a sense of control over their environment. Knowing what will happen next and what is expected of them, better equips children to participate and act independently.

We have structured the first week of school to diminish potential angst as much as possible; special scheduling helps to alleviate some distress and make the child's transition to school as comfortable as possible. Children and parents will be invited to spend time with the staff in the classroom in the days leading up to the first day of school, giving children and parent(s) a chance to become familiar with the environment. We require one parent of both new and returning children to accompany the child on the first day of school.

Child Release Policy

To ensure the safety of all children during drop off and pick up time parents must fill out the "Child Emergency Information and Release Form" in the enrollment documents prior to their child starting school. This form lists parents and caregivers that are approved to drop off and pick up their child. All caregivers must be over 18 years of age. This form also states whom to call in case of an emergency. Children will only be released to those stated on the list unless the primary caregiver provides alternate written instructions on the day of the release. We understand that at times, other caregivers may need to help with drop off and pick up. In cases where an adult not on the approved list is going to drop off or pick up, a signed, hand written note must be sent to school with the child and the approved person must show a state ID or drivers license upon drop off and/or pick up. Should changes in child care and schedules occur, parents can notify the Director of any changes and revise the child release form as needed.

Arrival

It is very important that children be dropped off no earlier than 8:15 for the 5 Day program and 8:30am for the 2 Day and 3 Day program. Children in the morning class should arrive no later than 8:45 am (5 Day) or 9:00 am (2 Day, 3 Day). **A parent or caregiver must sign in their child on the sign in sheet (located on the top of the cubby's) upon arrival.**

Arrival and entrance into the classroom in the morning is an important transition time for your child. It is important to establish a consistent routine for separation and saying goodbye, especially with children who may have difficulty entering a room full of active children. The teachers are willing to help work on this routine if necessary and will be available for special attention. **In order to do this, we need to remind all parents that morning drop off is not a good time to socialize with other parents or with the teachers.** Our focus must be on the children and their needs. Should you need to communicate something quickly that concerns your child upon arrival, please be sure your child is either unable to hear you or included in the conversation. If you anticipate this conversation, please arrive on the early side. If you need to communicate with the teachers about things other than your child, please call the school after class time.

Late Arrival and Early Departure

The first thirty minutes of class is an important transition for children from home to life as it exists in the classroom. Children need the first half-hour of free playtime for integration into their new environment. We ask that your child not enter the classroom until class time, but it is equally important that children NOT be more than 5 minutes late.

We know that occasionally the only available doctor's appointment for your child will be early in the morning. We understand the dilemma of trying to get your child to a specific doctor while participating in school, however if you are not able to arrive by 8:45 (5 Day) 9:00am (2 Day, 3 Day) at the *absolute* latest, then the child should not come to school that day. Please inform the teacher in advance if you will be arriving late.

In order to provide continuity and a secure classroom environment, parents should not take children out of school more than one half-hour before the end of class.

Late Policy

It is our hope that we can be of assistance to families having difficulty arriving and departing school on time. However, repeated tardiness at pickup or drop-off is distracting and harmful to the other students and/or teachers, and ultimately, if such tardiness is unresolved, the school will have no other option but to remove the student from class. Repeated tardiness is defined as late arrival (after 8:45 am for the 5 Day, after 9:00am for the 2 Day, 3 Day) or late departure (after 12:30 (5 Day) 11:45 (3 Day) or 11:15 (2 Day) on five separate occasions.

While we understand that on a rare occasion, a parent may have an emergency that renders them unable to drop off or pick up their child at the designated time; repeated tardiness unacceptably hinders the teachers' ability to teach and the children's ability to learn. In addition, it causes the child involved serious anxiety and worry.

If a child is not picked up by 12:30 (5 Day)), 11:45 am (3 Day) or 11:15 am (2 Day) a teacher will then begin calling the numbers given on the Child Release form in the order in which they appear on the form. It is important that you keep this form up to date with current contact information to ensure that you and your care givers can always be reached in case of an emergency. If the primary care givers cannot be reached after two tries, made approximately 5 minutes apart, the emergency numbers will be called. If for any reason The Nicholson School cannot get in touch with any of the emergency contacts or the primary care givers after 40 minutes, outside authorities will be called.

First and foremost, our desire is to ensure the emotional and physical safety of all of our children and we understand how stressful it can be for a child if their parent is late. As a result, we will make sure to keep the child out of late discussions. We will not hold the child responsible in any way for the tardiness of his/her parent and we will make sure to only discuss the issue of tardiness with the parents and never with the child. The child is always our first priority and we will keep him/her safe while he/she is in our care, and until he/she is picked up safely by a caregiver or ultimately, authorities.

Once a child has been late at either arrival or pick-up, the family will be notified and the following policy will go into effect:

- 1st time Teacher will accept the sincere apology from the parents for the teachers' understanding and kind care of the child
- 2nd time Parent(s) and Teacher meet to discuss the situation, highlighting the importance of timeliness and a \$50 charge will be added to the child's tuition.
- 3rd time Parent(s) and Administrator meet to discuss the situation, highlighting the importance of timeliness and a \$75 charge will be added to the child's tuition.
- 4th time Parents must make alternative, permanent transportation arrangements and notify the school of them within five days in order for the child to remain enrolled. The child will be withdrawn from the school until alternative arrangements have been provided to the school.
- 5th time The child is withdrawn from school and tuition is not refunded.

Dismissal

Dismissal is an equally important and potentially more stressful transition for children. Children in transition from teacher to parents often feel insecure and add to confusion by running around. Consequently, it is very important for the group to have appropriate closure to their day. Children will be ready to accept parent's arrival after the class has ended. Unless otherwise notified by the parent, teachers will ONLY release children to those persons authorized

in the Daily Release form. It would be a great help if you would wait for your child in the foyer of the 1700 West Cortland building. Once we have opened the door, you'll be asked to sign our pick-up /release form and then you will be connected with your child. Please have patience while we make sure that all children connect safely with those picking them up.

A parent is required to send a note to the teacher authorizing any change regarding pick-up. We will not release a child to anyone (even the parent of another child in class) unless we have written consent from a parent. Verbal or written permission from nannies/caregivers is **not** acceptable.

The person picking-up your child is required to complete a sign-out form on a daily basis. The teacher will hand you a clipboard with the form for you to sign before she releases your child.

Daily Schedule

2 Day Daily Schedule

Welcome Transition and Free Play

- Housekeeping area
- Multi- media Table
- Manipulatives/puzzles
- Blocks/building
- Science/Sensory Experiences
- Art Area
- Writing Area
- Easel painting

Clean Up

Meeting Time

- Independent Reading
- Songs/ Finger Plays
- Story

Wash Hands/ Snack

Outdoor/ Gross Motor Play

Return from Gross Motor play

Goodbye Meeting

3 Day Daily Schedule

Welcome Transition and Free Play

- Housekeeping area
- Multi- media Table
- Manipulatives/puzzles
- Blocks/building
- Science/Sensory Experiences
- Art Area
- Writing Area
- Easel painting

Clean Up

Meeting Time

- Independent Reading
- Songs/ Finger Plays
- Story

Transition/Wash Hands/ Snack

Outdoor/ Gross Motor Play

Return from Gross Motor play

Goodbye Meeting

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5 Day Daily Schedule

Welcome Transition

Free Play/Sign In

- Blocks/building
- Puppet Stage
- Felt Board stories
- Easel
- Drawing/Writing

Hello Meeting Time

- Independent Reading
- Songs/ Finger Plays
- Story

Wash Hands

Snack

Second Free Play

- Housekeeping area
- Multi- media Table
- Manipulatives/puzzles
- Science Experiments/Sensory Experiences
- Blocks/building
- Art Area
- Writing Area
- Easel painting

Clean Up

Outdoor/ Gross Motor Play

Return from Gross Motor Play

Goodbye Meeting

Discipline Policy

Discipline is essential to healthy emotional and social development. It is also critical in achieving harmony in the classroom and enabling each child to achieve his/her highest potential.

Our goal is to assist children toward becoming self-disciplined adults. Achieving self-discipline is different for each individual. Children need assistance in gaining impulse control and in conveying and recognizing verbal and non-verbal communications. Through many teacher-assisted interactions we hope to assist the children in developing skills in problem solving, negotiation, and compromise, which will enable them to be successful in various groups and the school setting. During this learning process, every child at the Nicholson School will be treated with respect and compassion.

We will assist children in achieving self-discipline by providing an environment that reduces stress and supports harmonious interactions. We have highly trained and experienced teachers in a spacious classroom that contains sufficient and engaging materials and a daily schedule that is predictable and appropriate to the interests and attention span of children.

Teachers, trained in child development, understand that young children are not experienced or mature enough to arbitrate in confrontational situations. When a dispute or disruption arises, teachers will use it as a teaching opportunity, if appropriate. They will role model appropriate behavior and conflict resolution, first by engaging children in expressing their needs and feelings, empathizing with their feelings and subsequently helping the children in reaching an agreement and continuing their play.

Our philosophy of guidance is not an imposition of authority or punishment; there is no “time out” or total exclusion; obedience is not the goal. Greater understanding of how we affect each other in a social fabric and greater self-control in maintaining this fabric is what we want to accomplish. Over a period of time and through many conversations, interventions and group discussions, we try to make it clear that physical harm and meanness are not acceptable. Nevertheless, we expect verbal and physical conflicts to occur and rather than having steadfast rules for particular negative behaviors, we try to address the deeper fears and emotions leading up to an incident.

Occasionally, if a behavior problem cannot be controlled in the classroom, the child may be removed from the group for a time. During this time child, the child will have an opportunity to regain control and along with a teacher, think of ways to better resolve the situation before returning to the group.

We are philosophically opposed to corporal punishment because we believe it teaches children that it is acceptable to use force to solve problems. This is never acceptable at school. We reassure children that our classroom is a safe place, both physically and mentally for everyone. We do not allow children to hurt others. Our goal is to keep each individual safe, so we will never allow anyone to harm another. We encourage parents to use positive discipline techniques at home.

Beginning at the start of school, parents and teachers begin building trust in and sharing expectations with each other. If a child experiences difficulty adjusting to any aspect of the School environment, a teacher will inform the child’s parent(s) of the concern and enlist their cooperation to help the child overcome his/her particular difficulty. If a child’s behavior continues to be a problem, we will ask the parent(s) to meet with the teachers and/or the Director. We will develop a joint plan to address the behavior problem. If necessary, we may recommend an evaluation or a resource person from outside the School.

We hope that every child enrolled in the Nicholson School will be successful at the School. We are therefore committed to working with a child who is exhibiting a behavioral problem provided that his or her parent(s) give us their full cooperation. Despite the best efforts of the School and the parent(s) however, we may not be able to meet the needs of every child. If we believe a child cannot benefit from our program or if his/her presence is detrimental to other children, we may ask a child to leave the School. This decision will be made by the teachers in conjunction

with the Director. All communications between the teachers, parents and the Director are kept in strict confidence. No information about a child will ever be publicly disseminated.

I have received, read and fully understand the discipline policy. If I have any questions regarding this policy I will address these questions with the Director of the Nicholson School.

Name

Date

Parental Permission for Transition between Garden and Cloud Classrooms:

I hereby grant full permission and authority to The Nicholson School, a preschool located at 1700 W. Cortland Street, to transition my child daily between the Garden Classroom (suite 101) and the Cloud Classroom (suite 202) with the understanding that my child will be accompanied by Nicholson School staff from one classroom to the other through the main staircase and hallway of the building.

I understand that my child's transition between classrooms will occur with his / her class group and Nicholson School teachers as indicated by the needs of the curriculum. The Garden Classroom provides extended experiences in science, math and environmental observation while the Cloud Classroom focuses on early literacy and the arts.

The movement of my child's location between both classrooms by supervising Nicholson School teachers is a vital part of the School's preschool curriculum, enhancing the children's' educational development and overall preschool experience.

Parent/ Guardian Signature

Date

Child's Name

Discharge Policy

At The Nicholson School we strive to create the best possible first school experience for each child. Our staff will do everything in their power to meet each child where they are developmentally to ensure a positive experience for the children, families and teachers. If at any point teachers or parents believe that the program is unable to provide all that a child needs, meetings between parents, teacher and director will ensue. If any members of the team believe that the child could be better served in another setting, the child will be discharged and the remainder of the child's tuition refunded to the family.

Transportation

Parents are to provide their own transportation to and from the Nicholson School. The staff does not transport children in vehicles of any kind for any reason.

Absences from School

If your child will be absent due to illness or vacation, please notify the school prior to the absence. If your child is going to be late, a call or email is appreciated.

Health & Safety

The Nicholson School uses the following guidelines to protect your child and others from contagious illnesses. We realize that this can sometimes be inconvenient for parents, but we trust that you understand the necessity for such a policy. If any of the following conditions occur while your child is in attendance, you will be notified and your child must be picked up from school as soon as possible: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, head lice, symptoms of an infectious disorder such as pink eye, ringworm, etc., and any other condition deemed necessary by the director/teacher for the well being of your child and the other children enrolled. Please remember that a runny nose that is goopy, colored (light yellow or light green), and/or constant, is a contagious illness in which we ask you to keep your child out of the classroom so as not to spread illness to others.

If a student incurs a minor injury (cut or abrasion), the injury will be treated appropriately and parents will be notified at the end of the school day. In more serious cases, the parents will be notified immediately. In the event of an emergency or accident, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital. We will immediately attempt to notify the parents or those listed on the emergency form.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of disease is to have strictly enforced standards regarding the exclusion of ill children. We need your help with this. Do not bring ill children to school and if your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified so that you can pick the child up immediately. If your child contracts any contagious disease or infection (**chicken pox, conjunctivitis, mumps, measles, scarlet fever, strep throat, impetigo, head lice, pin worms, etc.**) during the school year, please contact the Director immediately. We are required to notify parents, public health authorities and staff when children have been exposed to a contagious disease so that precautions can be taken to prevent the disease from spreading. Matters will be treated with confidentiality.

Our policy requires that your child be free of symptoms of illness (fever, diarrhea or vomiting) for at least 24 hours. Fever-free means without medication for fever reduction. Please keep in mind that if we send your child home because of illness, the child will not be admitted to school the next day because the 24-hour period will not have elapsed. Children are to remain home for 24 hours after beginning antibiotics.

If symptoms persist after a 5 day absence, however the child is not contagious and is cleared by their doctor to return to school, a sick child may be readmitted with the child's physician's signed consent.

Hand Washing:

Adult Hand Washing Policy

Adults always use this procedure when you:

- Enter the classroom
- Use the restroom on the second floor and re-enter the classroom using a paper towel to open the door
- Assist a child on the potty
- Change a child's diaper or pull-up
- Use a tissue, blow your nose
- Distribute packaged foods to the children
- Touch areas of your body
- Touch unclean equipment, work surfaces or rags
- Consume food or beverages

Proper washing of your hands greatly reduces the risk of spreading disease and sickness to the children.

- Use water as hot as the hands can comfortably use
- Moisten hands, soap thoroughly, and lather to the elbow
- Scrub thoroughly
- Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds
- Rinse thoroughly under running water.
- Dry hands on a paper towel. Do not reuse paper towels or use common towels
- Turn off water using clean towel to avoid recontamination of clean hands

The following precautions will also be taken:

- Use paper towels to open doors upon re-entering the classroom.
- Repeat this procedure as often as necessary to keep hands clean at all times.
- Hand sanitizers are not a replacement for washing hands and should never be offered to the children

Child Hand Washing Policy

Proper washing of the children's hands greatly reduces the risk of spreading disease and sickness among the students.

Children will wash their hands at the following times:

- When they enter the classroom in the morning after storing their belongings in their lockers
- Before and after they eat their snack
- After they return from the playground
- After they blow their noses
- After they go to the potty
- After they touch unclean objects
- Before and after using the water table

The following procedure will be used to help the children wash their hands:

- Use warm water
- Help child moisten hands, soap thoroughly, and lather to the elbow
- Scrub thoroughly
- Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds
- Rinse thoroughly under running water.
- Help child dry hands on a paper towel if they need assistance. Do not reuse paper towels or use common towels
- Turn off water using clean towel to avoid recontamination of clean hands

These policies will be reviewed twice a year and amended as needed.

Diapering and Potty Training

Children should come to school in a fresh diaper or pull up. Children who are in the process of potty training should use the bathroom with their parent or caregiver upon entry in the classroom. Parents will provide sufficient supplies for their child's diapering needs including a minimum of 5 diapers and a pack of wipes. Parents should check this supply regularly and replenish as needed. Children's diapers and pull-ups will be checked and changed by the teachers on as needed basis. Parents must inform the teachers and Director when a child begins potty training and provide additional clothes and underwear. We do not specifically potty train at school but we will work with your child and assist them in the process that has been started at home.

Clothing

Your child should be dressed in play clothes that are durable, comfortable and appropriate for both play and the weather. We will go outside daily, weather permitting. Because a wide variety of activities take place at school, we recommend clothes that allow for freedom of movement. Many of your child's favorite activities may be a little messy (like painting and digging in the dirt) so please ***make sure the child's clothes are suitable for mess.***

Children should have a complete change of indoor clothing at school at all times (includes underwear, socks, pants, dress, shirt etc.). ***All clothing including boots, sweaters, and sneakers must be clearly labeled with the child's name or initials.*** Please provide clothing that young children can manage by themselves. It is advisable that all children also keep a sweater or sweatshirt at school for unexpected temperature changes.

Medication Policy

Instructions for Administering Medication

Medication can be administered by the school as required by a physician, subject to the receipt of appropriate releases from parents/guardians which will be kept on file.

Prescription medication must be labeled with the name of the child (first and last), the full pharmacy label, the date it was filled, the name of the licensed health care provider, the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, instructions on how to administer and store it, and the expiration date.

Non-prescription medication must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name, be in its original container in such condition that the name of the medication, its expiration date, and the directions for use are clearly legible.

Instructions from the licensed health provider who prescribed or recommended medication for a child must also be provided.

Any topical products, such as sunscreen, insect repellent, or diaper ointment, whether supplied by the parent or by the school, must be approved by the parent in writing prior to use on the child.

All medication, whether refrigerated or unrefrigerated, will be kept in locked cabinets or other containers inaccessible to children and designated for this purpose only. **All medications must be kept out of reach of children at all times.**

Because of food allergies, absolutely no food should come to school in your child's backpack unless the parent/caregiver has made the teacher aware. **Personal snacks, candy, and gum must be left at home.**

Pest Management Integration Policy

The Nicholson School is inspected on a quarterly basis by Conquest Pest Solutions, a pest management company. Chemicals are not used on the premises; rather the school is monitored by both the teaching staff as well as Conquest Pest Solutions. If the teaching staff or students report any incidence of pests, Conquest Pest Solutions will be called immediately. If there is an instance when chemicals need to be applied to address a pest problem, parents will be notified at least two days prior to the application of any chemicals. Further, children will not be allowed back into treated areas for at least two hours after application or as specified by Conquest Pest Solutions, whichever time is greater. If you have any questions regarding The Nicholson School pesticide policy, please contact the Director.

Outdoor Health Policy

The Nicholson School will protect children against cold, heat, sun injury, and insect-borne disease. The school ensures this by taking the following precautions: children wear clothing that is dry and layered for warmth in cold weather. Children always have the opportunity to play in the shade. Children should arrive to school with sunscreen already applied and are encouraged to wear sun-protective clothing. However, with written permission from parents, the teachers will apply skin protection. Applied skin protection will either be sunscreen or sun block with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher is applied to exposed skin. When public health authorities recommend use of insect repellants due to a high risk of insect-borne disease, only repellants containing DEET will be used. Staff apply insect repellant no more than once a day and only with written parental permission.

Universal Precautions

Personnel are advised to observe certain precautions in order to prevent direct and indirect transmission of infectious diseases. Although HIV has not been shown to be transmitted through indirect or casual contact, this and other infectious agents can be present in the blood. Other infectious agents can also be present in other body fluids including vomit, feces, and urine. The following precautions are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control for handling blood and body fluids in schools and other settings.

Rubber gloves should be available to and worn by personnel in cleaning up blood and body fluid spills, i.e. skin and mucus membrane cuts, open skin lesions, and items soiled with blood. Laceration wounds should be washed with soap and water and managed in a way that minimizes direct contact of caretaker with blood.

Good hand washing, using soap and running water, after exposure to body fluids (including routine use of the toilet) should be taught and observed.

Open lesions on students and staff should be covered if possible.

Soiled surfaces should be promptly cleaned with disinfectants. Disposable towels should be utilized. Mop heads in contact with blood should be discarded.

All disposable materials, including gloves, should be disposed of in a sealed plastic bag. Body fluids may be disposed of through the normal sewage system.

Medical and Dental Emergencies

If a child is injured or becomes seriously ill while at school:

The Director determines that there is a medical emergency.

The Director, or Teacher:

- calls 911 for an ambulance
- calls the parent (or authorized person if parent cannot be reached) to direct him/her to go to the hospital. If not immediately available, staff continues to try to contact them.
- Parents numbers are in the child's file in the locked cabinet as well as on the emergency contact form posted on the cabinet and in the first aid bag
- Authorized Persons' ("persons to contact in case of emergency") names and numbers are in the child's file and the emergency contact form posted on the cabinet and in the first aid bag
- The Director obtains the Emergency Medical Release Form

- The Director stays with the child and accompanies the child to the hospital.
- The Director takes the Emergency Medical Release Form to the Hospital
- The Director remains with the child until the parent arrives.

Mandated Reporting

The Director and teachers at the Nicholson School are all mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. All Mandated Reporters are required to report suspected child maltreatment immediately when they have “reasonable cause to believe” that a child known to them in their professional or official capacity may be abused or neglected. The teachers and Director at the Nicholson School follow the DCFS guidelines for reporting abuse.

Emergency Evacuation Drills

Fire Drills are held monthly under supervision of the Fire Prevention Bureau. The Drills are held under conditions of quiet and order. Parents at school during a fire drill are required to follow the regulations of silence and order. Tornado Drills are held twice yearly, once in the fall and once in the spring. Parents at school during a tornado drill are required to follow the regulations of silence and order.

Emergency Evacuation Plan

Of course, none of us want to think about what would happen in the event of a disaster or citywide emergency, but we must. We have considered and discussed many possible scenarios should one occur while the children are at The Nicholson School. The following are plans and provisions that we have made in the event of an emergency.

In response to a crisis situation requiring children and teachers to evacuate the building, we will depart as practiced in our monthly fire drills. The building will only be evacuated if it is more dangerous to remain inside. As a group, the class will walk across the street to North Shore Pediatric Therapy. The address is 1657 W. Cortland Street 60622. The telephone number is 877-486-4840. Whenever we leave the building, teachers will carry the emergency contact list, first aid kit, water, and wipes. Once at North Shore Pediatric Therapy, the Director/Lead Teacher will call each family, notifying parents to pick up their child at the restaurant. Additionally, the Director will email the class.

Parents/Teacher Communication

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Formal conferences between parents and teachers regarding the child's progress in school are routinely scheduled twice a year. These occur in late October/early November and again in the spring. Parents are asked to bring specific questions and/or comments to discuss with the teacher regarding their child or the school program. This is also a good time for parents to share information about experiences or changes at home which might influence the child's behavior at school. Parents may also schedule additional meetings with the staff to discuss their child's progress.

Parent Notification

Parents are notified of important general classroom and school information via email. Important reminders are also posted on the bulletin board in the front of the room.

Email

The Nicholson School recognizes that electronic mail (email) is a valuable communication tool that is widely used across our society. Staff members provide school email addresses to parents to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication within the school community.

Parents will be notified of important school information and happenings via email. If a parent wishes to receive these messages in hard copy form they must notify the Director at the beginning of the school year.

While email may be a fast and convenient way for parents to send messages, it may not be the best means for the teachers. Some teachers read their email messages before school and some read email in the evening. Many teachers prefer to use the phone to speak directly with parents. For these reasons, please remember if you choose to send an email message to a teacher, you may not get an immediate reply. Teachers will determine how best to respond, by email, phone or personal conference.

General email guidelines:

Please send only non-vital messages by this medium. For example, do not use email to inform the school of a change in pick-up.

Your child's progress, learning expectations or behavioral issues are best addressed through a telephone conversation or by scheduling a conference with your child's teacher. An email discussion regarding these matters is not appropriate.

Email must never be used to discuss contentious, emotional or highly confidential issues. These issues should be dealt with face-to-face or by phone.

Use of parents' email addresses for purposes other than legitimate school business is not allowed. Please respect the privacy of others and refrain from sending emails for personal business, philanthropic, political or religious purposes.

Email correspondence between the school and a parent is considered personal. We expect that parents will acquire permission from the sender before forwarding or copying, either in whole or in part, any message or attachment.

Problem Resolution

The Nicholson School aims to provide a stimulating, safe environment for all children. We aim to deliver the highest standard of care and to foster good relationships with all parents and caregivers. We believe parent's views and concerns should be respected and acknowledged.

We understand there may be times during your child's enrollment at The Nicholson School when questions or issues may arise. We believe in resolving these as quickly as possible or giving you the answers as soon as we are in a position to do so. Therefore, if any issues of this nature arise, please speak with the Director of the School.

If the teaching staff is unable to resolve the concern, parents/guardians can address their concerns with the School Director. If the matter is still unresolved, The Nicholson School requires the complaint in writing. The complaint will be investigated by the Director and Executive Director and complainants will be notified of the outcome within 30 days.

Problem Resolution Procedure

We believe children and parents are entitled to expect courtesy and prompt, careful attention to their needs and wishes. Our intention is to work in partnership with parents and the community in general and we welcome suggestions on how to improve at any time.

Procedure

It is hoped that differences can be settled by informal discussion among parents and staff members. A parent who is uneasy about any aspect of their child's classroom experience should talk over any worries with the Director. Most complaints can be resolved informally. If there is no satisfactory outcome within a couple of weeks, or if the problem reoccurs, the parent should put the concerns or complaint in writing and request a meeting with the Director. If this does not resolve the issue, a meeting with the Director and Executive Director to discuss the grievance is scheduled. An agreed written record of the meeting's discussion will be made.

We believe that most grievances are made constructively and can be sorted out at an early stage. We also believe it is in the best interest of the School and parents that complaints be taken seriously and dealt with fairly and in a way which respects confidentiality.

******Notification of Decision**

The Grievant may sign to the effect that he/she agrees or disagrees with the decision, but he/she must sign to acknowledge receipt of the decision. The Grievant may submit addendum comments to the final decision.

Confidentiality Policy

Through our work, Nicholson School staff will sometimes be privy to confidential information. It is our intention to respect the privacy of children, their parents and guardians, while ensuring that children are provided high quality care and education. Any confidential information shared with the School will only be used to enhance the welfare of the child.

To ensure that all those participating and working in the School can do so with confidence, we will respect confidentiality in the following ways:

Staff will not discuss individual children, other than for purposes of curriculum planning/group management, with people other than the parents/caregivers of that child.

Staff will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality.

It is the policy of this program not to disclose the names of the children who may have caused injury to another child or children while attending school. This ensures each family's privacy.

Information given by parents/guardians to the teacher or Director will be accessible to the parent/guardian, Director, staff and licensing agent and will not be passed on to other adults without the expressed written consent of the parent/guardian.

Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, will remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.

Adult students, when they are observing in the School, will be advised of our confidentiality policy and required to respect it.

Parents will have ready access to the personal files and records of their own children but will not have access to information about any other child.

We keep three types of records on children attending The Nicholson School.

Personal records

These include registration and admission forms, signed consents, correspondence concerning the child or family, any ongoing record of relevant contact with parents, and observations by staff on any confidential matter involving the child, such as developmental concerns or child protection matters.

Individual Assessment Forms are kept in the child's personal file and, while in progress, in the possession of the child's teacher(s).

Personal information about children, families and staff is stored in a locked file

Anecdotal records

These include observations of children in the setting, samples of their work, and/or photographs of children in the environment.

They are usually kept in the classroom where they can be accessed and contributed to by staff.

Teacher Recommendation records

Chicago Area Independent Schools ask nursery school teachers to complete a common recommendation form as part of the application process. The child's teachers will complete the common form once, by late January, and will mail a copy of it to the school(s) to which the child is applying. The parents must provide the teachers with the forms and an address, stamped envelope. Some private schools send the form directly to the school.

It is the parents' responsibility to let The Nicholson School know where their child is applying so that recommendation forms can be sent to the correct institutions. In order for the School to release information to the Independent School(s), a signed consent form needs to be on file at The Nicholson School.

The only information forwarded to an independent school is that which is requested on the Common Recommendation Form. Completed Child Recommendation forms are not part of the child's personal file, are confidential and are not shared with parents.

Access to children's personal records

Parents may request access to personal records regarding their child and family according to the following procedure.

- The School Director prepares the file for viewing.
- All third parties are written to, stating that a request for disclosure has been received and asking for their permission to disclose to the person requesting it. A copy of these letters is retained on the file.
- 'Third parties' include all family members who may be referred to in the records.
- It also includes workers from any other agency, including social services, the health authority, etc. It is usual for agencies to refuse consent to disclose, preferring the individual to go directly to them.
- When all the consents/refusals to disclose have been received, they are attached to the copy of the request letter.
- A photocopy of the complete file is made.
- The School Director will redact the records to prevent the disclosure of information for which consent to disclose has been refused.
- What remains is the information recorded by the pre-school, detailing the work initiated and followed by it in relation to confidential matters. This is called the 'clean copy'.
- The 'clean copy' is photocopied for the parents, who are then invited in to discuss the contents. The file must be transferred to the parents in the context of a conference that allows the School Director to explain the contents.
- Legal advice may be sought before sharing a file, especially where the parent has possible grounds for litigation against the pre-school or another (third party) agency.

Any and all of the above-described actions serve The Nicholson School's commitment and responsibility – which is the safety and well-being of the children it educates. If in a specific case, the procedures undermine that commitment and responsibility, the School is not obligated to adhere to these procedures.

Additional Program Information

Visiting the classroom

Parents are always welcome and encouraged to visit and participate in The Nicholson School experiences. You will get to choose 2 parent assisting days during the school year via the online sign up tool. If you wish to come on a date that differs from your chosen day, please check with us first, so that we can avoid having too many visitors in the class at one time.

While in the classroom, parents are to refrain from entering into any school situation, i.e. arbitrating, giving directions, or making decisions. Any action or situation that causes concern should be brought to the attention of the teacher to manage.

Please refrain from talking during rug time. Even whispering is very disruptive to both the teachers and the children, and doing so contradicts one of our school community's rules, to listen when others are speaking.

Children say very clever, personal, sweet and simply charming things. Often these narratives, thoughts, or misperceptions are perceived as humorous to adults. *We try not to react to what the children say.* **This is not to mean we do not laugh at meeting time.** It simply means that this is a place for two, three and four year olds, so we respect what they think and what they say.

Parent-teacher communication is encouraged. However, the teachers must devote class time to the children and to the various group responsibilities and therefore class time cannot be used for informal parent meetings or general conversation.

Sensitivity and Discretion

The relationship that develops between staff, parents, and children in school is often personal, requiring that staff and volunteers maintain professional, ethical conduct at all times.

All classroom volunteers (including parent substitutes) should use good judgment if sharing classroom anecdotes and must keep information about other people's children and families confidential. *Discretion regarding children's abilities, behaviors, or discipline matters is a necessity.*

To ensure that all those participating and working in the School can do so with confidence, volunteers will respect confidentiality in the following ways:

- He/She will not discuss individual children, other than for purposes of curriculum planning/group management, with people other than the parents/caregivers of that child.
- He/She will not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs.
- It is the policy of this program not to disclose the names of the children who may have caused injury to another child or children while attending school. This ensures each family's privacy.
- Information given by parents/guardians to the teacher or director will be accessible to the parent/guardian, school director, staff and licensing agent and will not be passed on to other adults without the expressed written consent of the parent/guardian.
- Issues to do with the employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, will remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.
- Adult students, when they are observing in the School, will be advised of our confidentiality policy and required to respect it.
- Parents will have ready access to the personal files and records of their own children but will not have access to information about any other child.
- It is important to the School's business that information that is confidential not be disclosed to anyone except in the furtherance of the School's business or as required by law. Generally, anything that is not

known or available to the public should be considered confidential. If at any time you have any question as to whether something is confidential, ask the Director **before** disclosing the information to anyone else.

To avoid potential harm to the School, its employees, or the children in its care, no volunteer shall at any time, during or after placement, without written approval of the Director, disclose or use any information, documents, knowledge or data that the volunteer receives or develops during his or her placement by the School which is confidential.

We welcome the involvement of our families in the educational program of their children. To insure the safety of the children and their families, and to maintain a quality learning environment for our students, volunteers are required to adhere to the above guidelines when volunteering in the classroom.

Any concerns, suggestions, complaints or questions regarding classroom happenings should be brought to the attention of the Director.

Cellular Phones

The Nicholson School is a cell phone free space. We understand, and feel it is important to honor the transition process for each of our children. In order to do this most effectively, we ask that parents and caregivers leave their phones tucked away in a pocket/bag when picking up and dropping off children. This enables a much more child centered transition.

Parent volunteers/visitors in the classroom should refrain from using cellular phones. Please turn your ringer off when you arrive. If you must make/receive a call, please go outside to do so.

Birthdays/Snack

Birthdays are seen and recognized as important days at The Nicholson School. However, the school birthday celebration is purposefully kept simple and child-centered. The child's observance at The Nicholson School is not intended to take the place of each family's special observance at home. Instead, we try to make it a fun celebration and special day for each individual child at school. Each child will have the opportunity to celebrate their "Nicholson Birthday" which could fall on their actual birthday or a date close to their birthday. On your child's birthday you are welcome to come for the last 15 minutes of the class to sing, celebrate and read a special book. The exact date will be determined with your lead teacher.

To foster a culture of giving, we encourage the birthday child to give the class a small present on his / her birthday, e.g. a book the parent reads in class that day at rug time. If your child's birthday is in the summer, their Nicholson School Birthday celebration will most likely be around their half-birthday.

Favors, hats or any treats at going-home time (goodie bags) are not acceptable during your child's Nicholson School birthday or any other holiday.

While birthday parties OUTSIDE of the school are not our domain and therefore policy is difficult to impose, let us simply say this: **PLEASE USE GOOD JUDGEMENT.** Because our school is small, our suggestion is to invite all of your child's classmates to his / her party.

Snack

Please provide snack for the class on your parent assistant day. Teachers will discuss possible snack options for the parent to bring for the child's day. **Snacks must be INDIVIDUALLY PACKAGED and NUT FREE with the ingredient label (healthy snacks are encouraged).**

Snack Examples:

Individual packages of-

- | | | | |
|---------------|---|------------------|----------------------------|
| -Goldfish | -Apple sauce | -Teddy Grahams | -pre-packaged apple slices |
| -Bananas | -Mini oranges (to be peeled at by children at school) | -Cheese sticks | |
| -Pirate Booty | -Pretzels | -Nutrigrain Bars | -dried fruit |

Transitional Objects

Any object that a child derives comfort from is called a Transitional Object (blankets, dolls, stuffed animals). They are welcome at school.

Objects from Home

Philosophically, we believe that items from home can provide many important social opportunities and can enrich the play of children who are developmentally ready. Equally so, we believe certain toys/items from home can be limiting in children's play and actually hinder the creativity that children could be using while at school. Personal objects (toys, figures, etc.) from home often cause anguish at the end of the day when the item has been misplaced or left at school. We have a plethora of materials, activities and games here, all of which have educational purposes and though "teaching" the concept of sharing/taking turns is an objective of our preschool curriculum, we find that objects from home are even more desirable and therefore more difficult to share.

Items from home should stay at home; items other than transitional objects may not accompany the child in his/her backpack to school.

Nicholson School
Verification of Receipt of 2017-2018 Parent Handbook

The Parent Handbook is your guide to the policies and practices at The Nicholson School. The Handbook provides general information regarding your relationship with the School. The policies and practices contained in the Handbook apply to all parents at the School.

I have read this statement and understand that I am responsible for becoming familiar with and adhering to the policies contained in the Parent Handbook.

Name of parent/guardian

Name of parent/guardian

Signature

Date

Signature

Date