

Magothy Cooperative Preschool



2026-2027 Handbook

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Our Mission

Our Mission is to provide a stimulating, child-directed environment that encourages creativity, environmental consciousness, self-expression, and socialization. To nurture a well-rounded and independent child who has enthusiasm for learning and a positive attitude towards themselves and the world around them. We provide affordable, quality preschool education through the cooperative participation of the school community.

Educational Philosophy

Magothy believes through connecting with the natural world around us and each other- empathy, love and respect for oneself, each other and the natural world becomes the core on which our learning builds and grows. We believe that the preschool years and childhood are a time of wonderment, exploration and joy. A time to be treasured and protected, not rushed. A child's early years should be a time of engaging with all of their senses, making discoveries, interacting and communicating. We believe that play and learning are not separate entities, rather simultaneous and essential to the growth of children. Play/learning can happen anywhere. We believe that a nurturing environment, where opportunities to grow socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively through connection to the natural world and each other, provides children with a strong foundation to continue their growth as life-long learners.

Our Approaches to Learning

Play-Based

According to the journal of the [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\)](#), "Play is so important to optimal child development that it has been recognized by the [United Nations High Commission for Human Rights](#) as a right of every child." NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) describes play in this way, "The impulse to play comes from a natural desire to understand the world." So what is Play-Based Learning? Typically, play-based learning is child-led and open-ended. Through voluntary and enjoyable activities, play-based learning develops the whole-child through social-emotional learning, developing confidence and motivation, and practicing cognitive skills. Elements of play-based learning are:

- Self-chosen- an adult may model or invite play but the child determines the rest
- Enjoyable- enjoyable for the child, emotional aspect is important, based on child's interests
- Unstructured-ample time to explore and discover, directed by own interests
- Process-oriented- the process of the play is important
- Make believe- involves imagination, pretend play
- Academic and life skills are built into play experiences
- Teachers act as facilitators

Nature-Based

According to [NAAEE \(North American Association for Environmental Education\)](#), a Nature-Based Preschool "reflects established best practices in early childhood and environmental education, with an emphasis on play-based learning. In a nature preschool, teachers create a caring, stimulating, and safe environment in which every child is regarded as a valuable, unique, and capable contributor to the learning community."

Elements of a Nature-based Preschool are:

- Curriculum is guided by best practices in early childhood education
- Teachers have different areas of expertise and work together as a team
- Nature is at the heart of the curriculum.
- Learning opportunities are place-based, seasonal and authentic.
- The entire learning community engages in environmentally friendly practices.
- Focused on Outdoor Learning.
- Children's interests and abilities direct learning opportunities and assessment.

- Teachers emphasize opportunities for individualized learning across learning environment
- Teachers provide a daily routine that allows for flexibility
- Teachers are co-learners with children
- Teachers modify the curriculum and environment to individualize learning opportunities
- Children's progress in both standard early childhood developmental domains and domains that relate to the development of environmental literacy are included in assessment measures.

The Magothy Way

At Magothy Cooperative Preschool, we combine the best developmentally appropriate practices in Early Childhood Education, Play-Based Learning, and Nature-Based Education into a unique program to meet the needs of our children and families so that grownups and children learn alongside one another. We are rooted in play and inspired by nature. We bring the indoors outside and the outdoors inside and use authentic materials and experiences whenever possible. We learn through a combination of whole-group, small-group and individual opportunities with a balance of self-guided (informal) and guided (formal) approaches. We incorporate some elements from Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Waldorf pedagogies. We use scientific vocabulary. We investigate, notice, explore and wonder. We spend most of our days outdoors in all types of weather, embracing the seasons and the opportunities they bring. We encourage reasonable risk-taking, self-care, advocacy for self and others, perseverance, and resilience. We embrace a flexible rhythm to our day that allows for sustained play and unexpected inquiries and discoveries. We are protectors of play and respect children as valuable, unique, and capable contributors to our community.

Our Curriculum is influenced by:

- Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Early Childhood
- [Guidelines for Excellence in Early Childhood Environmental](#) Education Programs created by the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE)
- [MSDE Standards for Early Learners](#) and Healthy Beginnings
- Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence Strategies
- Project Learning Tree- Growing Up Wild
- Seasonal changes
- Our students and their families

Magothy Cooperative Preschool complies with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) guidelines for early learners as outlined in the State Standards.

Curriculum Monthly Guide

September/ October: Woodland adventures with me and my friends, 5 senses, faces, Trees/Forest, Tracks, Autumn Changes, Harvest Time, pumpkins & apples

November: Communities, Homes & Habitats (human and animal), Preparing for Winter

December: Lights and Reflection- Evergreens, Sun, Moon, Stars and Constellations, Winter

January: Changes Everywhere/States of Matter- Fairytales and Nursery Rhymes

February: Fairytales Continued-Kindness Rocks- Dragons and Dinosaurs

March: My Big Backyard: Oviparous Animals (hatches from eggs) Habits and Adaptations

April: Jumping into Spring: Plants, and Insects

May: The Chesapeake Bay and Beyond

Preschool and Beyond

How we prepare our children for beyond the world of preschool

Our children develop knowledge in many content areas, including art, music, math, science, language arts, phonemic awareness, natural history and social studies. Our children also develop socially, physically, emotionally and cognitively as they move through the stages of play: Solitary, Parallel, Associative, Cooperative.

We develop life skills (sharing, empathy, following directions, social skills) by:

- Modeling respectful behavior
- Providing opportunities to practice patience
- Having ample time for free play and cooperative play
- Identifying, acknowledging and expressing feelings
- Practicing breathing and calming strategies
- Working through big emotions
- Modeling and encouraging conversational skills and manners
- Opportunities for choices and natural consequences

We develop language and literacy by:

- Providing dramatic play experiences
- Providing a print rich environment (books, field guides, poems, non-fiction and fiction)
- Singing and playing with rhyming sounds/ letter sounds
 - Finger plays, Nursery Rhymes, poems
- Shared Reading and Storytelling, listening to and retelling stories
- Developing Oral Language
- Introducing new vocabulary and words from other languages
- Identifying characters, setting, sequence of story
- Modeling and offering mark making/ writing experiences
- Dictation of stories, map making, generating lists, procedural writing, labeling
- Name Recognition and Writing
- Letter Recognition, Letter Sounds & exposure to Sight Words (PreK)

We develop math skills by:

- Identifying colors, shapes, textures, positions
- Singing songs and reciting poems with counting
- Number recognition
- Rote counting, encouraging 1:1 correspondence when ready
- Exploring quantity and size
- Subitizing- ability to recognize a small set without counting
- Graphing and charting
- Tracking seasonal changes, time progressions
- Find, follow, repeat and extend patterns
- Sorting and classifying
- Comparing and contrasting, Grouping, Matching
- Comparative measurement and use of scales
- Estimating and identifying more or less

We develop gross motor and fine motor skills by:

- Balancing
- Running
- Climbing
- Working hand muscles in playdough, clay, shaving cream, dirt
- Pouring, filling, threading
- Cutting- scissor work, chopping garden items
- Use of riding toys- balance bikes, scooters, tricycles, bicycles and foot push cars

We develop reasonable risk taking by:

- Assisting children to determine their own physical capabilities
 - Balancing on a log, climbing a tree, crossing the jungle gym
- Supporting, guiding children as needed
- Adults are always responsible for removing/identifying any hazard or unsafe condition
 - “Notice how the log is wet.”, “Do you see your friends close by?”, “What is the plan for ____?”
- Establishing boundaries/guidelines (tree climbing, stick play, rough play).
 - Physical boundaries
 - Child must be able to get themselves onto the branch/log
 - Personal boundaries, “Is everyone still having fun?”
- Resisting the urge to say “Be careful!”

Embracing the Present

Preparing for what’s to come is a part of our program, however we are mindful that if we are constantly preparing and looking ahead, we are not embracing the gift of the present. Preschoolers grow and change so much during these few years. Our overall goal is to make the most of these preschool years, primarily embracing the twos, threes, and fours. We believe in protecting the preschool years, rather than racing through them.

**Technology Policy**

Electronics or screen time are NOT a regular part of our day. Occasionally teachers may facilitate use of a digital magnifier, microscope along with a laptop, or sometimes use their phone and naturalist ID applications to assist in plant or animal identification.

Licensing

Magothy Cooperative Preschool is licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Office of Child Care. This means we must comply with the regulations outlined by MSDE, including the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR).

Maryland's Guide to Regulated Child Care and the regulations may be reviewed at:

https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/guide_to_regulated_child_care.pdf A copy can also be provided upon request.

Staff

Our teachers come from diverse backgrounds, but they all share one thing in common: a love of preschoolers and nature! All of our teaching team began their journey here at Magothy as parents. We fell in love with the philosophy and community and have come to call our little preschool- our happy place! Our teachers are knowledgeable about developmentally appropriate practices for early childhood learners and have a wealth of teaching experience.

One lead teacher is accompanied by one teacher's assistant per class.

All staff comply with guidelines set forth by MSDE. This includes fingerprinting, background checks, First Aid/CPR training, Medication Administration training, Emergency Preparedness training, and continuing educational training. Staff bios can be found on our website at www.magothycooperative.org.

Cooperative Preschool

What is Magothy Cooperative Preschool?

Magothy Cooperative Preschool is a cooperative effort of parents, children, and teachers. We are a non-profit organization owned and administered by the parents of the preschool children. The parents and teachers work together in guiding the children as they gain social, emotional, and developmental skills. The building and grounds are maintained through the efforts of our families. The business of the school is conducted through an executive board, board meetings, and general membership meetings.

Why Choose a Co-op?

For many, this will probably be your child's first school experience. Magothy Cooperative Preschool is an excellent bridge between home and the formal atmosphere of elementary school or beyond the preschool years. With at least one member of each child's family participating, the atmosphere of home extends into the preschool.

An excerpt from [Parent Cooperative Preschools International](http://www.parentcooperativepreschools.org) - "Taking part in a cooperative preschool allows you to be directly involved with your child's early education. Being able to supervise your child, and the teacher, guarantees your child is safe and with the best teachers anywhere. Interacting with a community of other parents who share your commitment to childhood and receiving modeling by the teacher as you help, gives you opportunities to learn alongside your child. Most importantly, choosing a cooperative preschool gives you extra time to bond with your child and create memories together. Your child will always know that education is important in your family because you live it everyday."



What are Your Responsibilities?

The responsibility of a cooperative organization (finances, fundraising, cleaning, maintenance, etc.) rests solely on the parent group. You are not only choosing a school for your child, you are committing to a community of families who rely on one another to make the school run smoothly.

Your major requirements:

1. A representative from each family must **attend bi-monthly general membership meetings** (up to a total of 4- Sept., Nov., Jan. & March) so that we may communicate and make schoolwide decisions. The membership meetings may also include parent education.
2. Each family will **work as helping grownup** at the school, as scheduled each month (usually once or twice per month depending on class size and frequency). If you are unable to work your scheduled time for any reason, *you are responsible for obtaining your own coverage.*
 - a. As a Helping Grownup, please aim to arrive ten minutes before class begins to assist with the day's set up and check in with your child's teacher about the plan for the day or for the mid day Pre-K switch, checking in with the morning helping grownup.
3. Families are required to **actively participate on their assigned committees**. We will always try to work with families to find the best fit. Committee positions are how the day in and day out operations of the school take place.
4. Families are required to **pay tuition** by the first day of each month by check or online platform.
5. Families are required to **pick up their child(ren) on time**. Please make every attempt to be timely. If you know you are going to be running late please notify your teacher via PS message or text. Children will often worry if they do not see their grownup at dismissal and this message will help us to calm any upset.
6. Families must help with the **cleaning of the school**. Each family will send a representative to a back to school cleaning, an end of year cleaning, and one schoolwide cleaning per child enrolled. Dates and times for these will vary throughout the year to better fit all schedules.
7. Families will **pack healthy snacks and lunches**, adhering to our allergy policy. Families will strive for waste free snacks and lunches.
8. Families will **dress their child(ren) for play and the weather**. Helping grownups should dress for play and the weather too.

Fines

The goal of the co-op is to work together, to create a wonderful cohesive program for our children and families. This is not possible without each family fulfilling their cooperative responsibilities. While we hope to not issue any fines/fees, the following are in place for failure to fulfill cooperative requirements.

Tuition- due on the 1st. Considered late after the 10th. \$25 late fee assessed after the 10th.	Missed cleaning- \$25 and a reschedule/make up task, Failure to complete reschedule/makeup task will result in \$100 fine.
Helping Grownup shift- You will be assessed \$30 to pay for an emergency sub. Repeated failure to fulfill helping grownup shifts may be cause for termination of membership.	Failure to fulfill committee responsibilities- result in a warning and a meeting with your committee/team leader and the directors. A second offense fine of \$100.00. A third offense board reviewing membership status, possibly resulting in membership termination
Failure to attend General Membership Meetings- \$25 fee will be assessed if 2 GMMs are missed. There will be additional fines for additional missed meetings.	Repeated tardiness in picking up your child may result in an issuance of fines. A fine of \$5.00 for every five minute increment will be assessed.

Procedure for Fine Issuance

If you have violated one of the school's rules or cooperative requirements and have a legitimate reason, you are welcome to submit a message to the President through ParentSquare citing your explanation. This letter will then be reviewed at the next board meeting and if found reasonable, the fine will not be issued. The letter must be received within two (2) weeks of the violation to be considered.

Fines are assessed by the Treasurer. Fines must be paid within a month of issuance or your membership will be in jeopardy. You will receive notice of the fine via email or through our communication platform.

Communication is Key

We understand that things may come up that could interfere with selected dates and possibly some cooperative responsibilities. Life does indeed happen. We ask that you reach out to the board member, director or teacher in charge of the affected date/event to let them know and see how best to figure out an alternative. Please be proactive. We are all volunteers managing our families, calendars and responsibilities. Keeping the lines of communication open is key to making all of the puzzle pieces come together.

Cleaning at Magothy

Routine cleaning at Magothy is done in three parts:

1. Helping Grownups tidy up the classrooms daily.
2. Super Cleaners thoroughly clean the floors and bathrooms on a weekly basis.
3. Schoolwide Cleanings give the toys and rooms a good scrub once a month.

If you see something minor that needs attention (trash to be taken out, full recycle bin, table to be wiped) please lend a hand. If you see something major or unsafe please notify the director(s) and/or president ASAP.

Enrollment and Payment Information

Inclusion Policy

Magothy Cooperative Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship, and other school administered programs. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, children, families and volunteers that we serve.

We strive to make our program accessible to all students regardless of ability or health needs. Indoor and outdoor areas are arranged so all children can move freely and make choices based on their abilities, interests and needs. We work with students who have an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and can assist parents with securing additional help and resources when there are concerns about a child's development. If your child has any disabilities or special health care needs, please let us know so that together we can determine the best supports for your child.

Enrollment

Enrollment is for the duration of the school year- September through May. We ask that families attend an Open House or speak with a director before submitting an Application. Applications are accepted on/after the registration window opens. If a spot is available, you will be required to pay the non-refundable registration fee (per family). If a spot is not available, you will be placed on the waitlist (no fee is required for the waitlist). Enrollment contracts will be distributed in April. New families are asked to attend an Enrollment Contract Meeting prior to turning in their contracts. All contracts are due with a non-refundable one month's tuition deposit on May 1st. All student forms MUST be submitted prior to the start of your child.

Enrollment Order: Families in good standing may register for the school year once the registration window opens for each category of families. 1) Current students returning to MCPS, 2) Siblings of current students, 3) MCP Alumni, 4) Members of Magothy United Methodist Church, 5) New Families. Within these priorities and in general admission, applications and contracts are processed in the order that they are received.

Re-enrollment: Classes are sized to provide a spot for every current student to matriculate to the appropriate class the following year. Families interested in enrolling their child in a second or third year at MCPS must submit an application during current family registration each year. Updated class information will be provided in December prior to the year in consideration. A delay in applying or submitting the contract and down-payment may result in losing your spot.

Waitlist: We maintain our waitlists throughout the year. In the event that a spot opens up we will reach out to families accordingly. There is no fee to be on the waitlist.

Enrollment TimeLine/Checklist

- ☐ Attend Open House
- ☐ Submit Application on Registration Day (typically in January)
 - ☐ Current Families
 - ☐ Siblings processed after current students
 - ☐ MCP Alumni
 - ☐ Magothy United Methodist Church Members
 - ☐ New Families
- ☐ Pay Non-Refundable Registration Fee (\$100 per family)
- ☐ Receive Enrollment Contract in April
 - ☐ New Families attend Enrollment Contract Meeting
- ☐ Return Signed Contract with Non-Refundable one month's Deposit by May 1st
- ☐ Submit all Student File Forms by August 1st
- ☐ Pay August 1st Tuition Payment (applied to January)

Payment:

Each family is responsible for tuition regardless of their child's attendance. Tuition for our calendar year (September - May) can be paid annually or monthly. We collect tuition on a bit of an altered schedule. Tuition is due May 1st (deposit with contract-applied to following May), August 1st (secures enrollment- applied to January), September 1st, October 1st, November 1st, December 1st, February 1st, March 1st & April 1st. No payment in January or May. Tuition is due the 1st of each month and a late fee assessed if not paid by the 10th. Payments to be made by check or through our online platform.



Arrival and Dismissal

Parking & Parking Lot

Park in the middle spaces of the parking lot or along the grass line. The spaces closest to the building are reserved for church members. Please do NOT leave your car running when you are away from it. Children may not be left in unattended vehicles.

When in the parking lot, move slowly, as if you were in your own driveway. Always assume there are children in the parking lot area and use extreme caution when arriving and leaving.

Attendance

Please make every attempt to arrive on time. Strive to arrive within the first 10 minutes of class. While we have a flexible schedule, children may feel uneasy about arriving once class has already begun and planned opportunities may be missed when arriving late.

If you will be late or absent from a class, please message your child's teacher.

Drop-off Procedure- Arrival

Please ensure your child uses the restroom before leaving home. When you arrive, wash hands, sign in on the class' sign in sheet and assist your child (if needed) to place their belongings (tote bag, snack/water, etc) in the appropriate places. We foster independence and encourage children to do as much as they can independently.

Class will begin at the scheduled time. Once the teacher welcomes you for the day the class area (typically the gathering area or the outdoor classroom) will be open for exploration and play. While you may see the teachers upon arriving, they will still be setting up or readying the space and themselves for the day. You may not drop children off early or leave children unattended. Please do not leave your child until the teacher has welcomed children.

When arriving early you may take a trip to the potty, take a walk on the trails, explore the garden area, help put out riding toys, assist with table setup, chat with friends in the riding toy area or read a book together.

Please be on time. Habitual tardiness can make it difficult to transition into class.

Sign-In Sheets

It is a licensing requirement that each grownup bringing their child to preschool sign their child in and out every day. Please be familiar with the daily sign-in sheets. Class binders also hold a calendar put out by your Class Coordinator.

If you will not be reachable while your child is at school, please provide an alternate contact and number on the sign-in sheet.

Pick-up Procedure- Dismissal

When you are picking up your child, park your car in the parking lot and walk to the designated dismissal area for your class. While we aim to have all student items gathered and ready for dismissal, we may need some assistance in rounding up items. Always wait until the teacher has dismissed the children and you have signed out your child.

You are welcome to stay and play, in a space not occupied by another class after dismissal. Please be sure to give teachers space to clean up for the day or offer to lend a hand. Children must be supervised at all times. School rules and policies still apply after class. Some common gathering places are the Playground, the riding toys, under the mulberry tree and the upper trails. Please ensure the space is tidy and ready for the next group when leaving the area.

Late Pick-up Policy

Please remember to pick up your child promptly throughout the entire school year. If you know you are going to be late, please message your teacher to let us know. Fines may be issued for repeated offenses.

At ten (10) minutes past the scheduled pick up time, a phone call will be made to attempt to reach the parents. If the parents are unreachable, the authorized pickup contacts list will be called.

Who Can Pick Up Your Child

Only individuals listed on the child's authorized pick-up list may pick up your child. This list may be updated at any time during the year. A new list must be completed each year. Anyone picking up a child must be able to verify their identity with a Photo ID before the child is released. Parents may authorize someone not on the authorized pick up list, in case of emergency or scheduling conflict, either by noting it on the sign-in sheet (along with a contact number) or by messaging the teacher. No unauthorized person(s) will be allowed to remove a child from the school without consent from a parent.

A Typical Day

Daily Rhythm

Our typical day is spent mostly outdoors. We have found that anything we can do in a brick and mortar classroom, we can also do outside. Throughout our day, children will have the opportunity to play, explore, discover, create, meet as a whole group, work independently, work in small groups, appreciate the natural world, enjoy stories, make music and so much more. We will also utilize our indoor classrooms, the Moon Room and Sun Room, during hazardous weather, for specific activities and to care for our animals. We recognize that our energy changes depending on the space we are in and believe it is important for our preschool students to have opportunities in all of our classrooms.

All of our classes have a flexible yet predictable schedule. We strive to maintain a predictable order of events but leave wiggle room for sustained play, completion of masterpieces/creations/puzzles, natural phenomena and inquiries. We do not have rigid time activity times or switches.

Each class will begin outside and with open play. Throughout the development of our day children will participate in open play, small group and individual opportunities, whole group circle, snack/lunch and adventure time. We also make time for whole class bathroom breaks. Classes will try to dismiss from a consistent location.

Teachers will share specifics about each class' rhythm at the beginning of the school year and update as needed.



Snacks & Lunch

At Magothy we model healthy eating habits and strive to be waste free. While cookies, cakes and candies can all be yummy, these are “at home treats” rather than for school snacks or lunches.

- Farm, Forest, Fauna, Finned and PreK on their short day will need a healthy snack each day. One to three food items and a reusable water bottle.
 - a fruit, crackers and cheese
 - yogurt and fruit
 - veggies, hummus and crackers
- PreK- (Feathered and Flying) will need a lunch and snack on long days.
 - Lunches usually contain a protein, fruit, veggie, grain or cracker
- Snack and lunch should be in separate containers.
- Please follow our healthy school initiative when choosing food items
 - No juice boxes, candy, gummies, cupcakes, marshmallows
- Snacks should be cut into bite sized pieces (especially grapes & tomatoes)
- Use reusable containers whenever possible. Please strive for a waste free snack. Any trash and recycling will be sent home.
- LABEL EVERYTHING- Clearly label on the outside of the snack bag /container/ water bottle
- Remember to share this information with anyone who might be packing your child's snack
- For allergy purposes we do not share snacks/lunches. However, classes may participate in a pre-planned shared snack, class cooked/baked item or sample food from the garden.

Gearing Up For School- What do I wear?

Play and outdoor exploration require weather appropriate clothing that allows for freedom of movement. Expect that your child and their clothing will get messy, and choose clothing that will let them feel free to participate in messy projects. Their boots will likely be muddy. Elbows may be painty and their pants may be dirt/grass stained. A great day at preschool shows not only through their smile but the dirt smudge on their cheek and under their nails. 😊 Clothing should be free of ribbons, strings, or sashes that could become tangled or hazardous while playing.

Clothing that can easily be pulled up and down are best for fostering independence in the potty. Please NO tight leggings or tights that your child cannot manage to pull down and back up again. Save belts, overalls, leotards and bodysuits for non-school attire.

Shoes

Children must wear closed toe shoes. We frequently navigate uneven surfaces on the trails and outdoor classroom. Sneakers are best. They are great for running, walking in the woods, climbing and riding bikes. Please refrain from sending your child to school in cowboy boots, flip flops, jelly shoes, heeled dress up shoes and party shoes.

Indoor shoes- Students should have an easy on/off shoe to wear inside like a crocs. These will be stored and kept at school.

Clothing

We spend time outdoors every day except in the event of hazardous weather. Dress your child in layers appropriate to the weather. This allows for self-regulation of body temperature and independence. Please be sure to label your child's outerwear.

FALL & SPRING

Universal Insulated Boots	Hat	Rain pants or bibs
Rain jacket	Rain/ waterproof mittens	

WINTER (colder temps)

Snow boots or Universal Insulated Boots	Snow jacket (warm and waterproof)	Snow pants or snow suit or layers under rain bibs
Insulated waterproof gloves/mittens or Warm fleece/wool mittens w/ rain mittens	Hat that covers the ears	Base layers (wool or synthetic)
Mid layer (fleece)	Warm Socks (wool)	

[Outdoor School Shop](#) has many options to outfit you and your child for any weather and season. Our website discount code is: **MAGOTHY**

Please check the hourly weather forecast for Jacobsville, Maryland (21122) when selecting clothing and gear for the day. Magothy is mostly shaded and often 5-7 degrees cooler than many nearby home locations.



Back Up Clothing

Each child should bring two complete seasonal changes of clothes marked with their names, i.e. underwear, pants, shirt, and socks. One will be kept in the storage pockets in the bathrooms. The second will remain in your child's tote bag. Remember to adjust back up clothing for the seasons and as your child grows.

Diapers/Pull-ups-

Potty training is a process. We ask that those in process come to school in pull-ups so they can try to go in our school bathrooms and develop potty independence. We are not able to diaper change. If a "stinky" accident occurs you will be called to come up to school and change your child.

Adjustment to Preschool

Starting preschool is a big step for children. Some children are eager and jump right into the new environment. Some children are nervous and take more time to settle into new routines. We start the adjustment period over the summer through playdates, social events and meet & greets.

Enrolled families are encouraged and welcomed to come and play in the outdoor classroom. Supervision of children is required at all times.

Strategies for Adjustment:

- Establish a predictable routine before coming to school
- Your child may be more comfortable bringing a security item such as a stuffed animal or photograph of the family
- Talk to your child about their day and that you will be excited to hear about something fun when you pick them up
- Look at some of the class pictures with your child. Have them tell you about the pictures or point out peers and things you see happening in the pictures.
- Use consistent language
 - I will be back at dismissal.
 - Today is a school day.
- For children that are upset when coming to school:
 - If the plan is to leave- leave quickly. Big hugs. I love you. I will be back at dismissal to pick you up and hear about your day.
 - If the plan is to stay- keep that the plan. Seeing your child is doing well and then ducking out is not permitted. Sneaking out leads to further uncertainties. We welcome you to stay and be an active participant of the class.
 - If you have decided to stay for a few minutes- keep that the plan. Negotiating, extending time and bargaining create further confusion and often upset. Sometimes using a timer can be helpful for both child and grown-up.
- Use true words. Be honest and confident.

Our Approach to Discipline

At Magothy we want every child to feel safe, loved and valued. We recognize that managing behaviors and regulating emotions is an ongoing life process that is influenced by development and experience. Our goal is not to place unreasonable expectations on children, but to assist them in their journey towards that end, in whatever ways are individually and age appropriate at the time. Our goal is not just to eliminate troublesome behaviors, but to model and teach children constructive behaviors that will last them a lifetime.

We carefully structure the environment to encourage positive social interactions by providing:

- rich and inviting learning areas and centers
- clearly stated limits, boundaries and directions
- predictable, consistent routines and expectations
- reminders, redirections, diversions and age appropriate choices
- polite and positive adult models
- a structured but flexible daily schedule
- rituals and cues to ease transitions
- encouragement and effective-praise
- activities that are engaging and challenging
- opportunities for making reasonable choices
- lots of opportunities for child initiated ideas and activities (being able to make choices)
- explanations and clarifying information as needed
- space from others if desired or needed. This could be a “thinking walk” with a teacher or director.

We help children develop skills that will encourage them to manage their own behaviors and identify & regulate their own emotions by teaching them to:

- express their thoughts and emotions effectively
- accomplish their needs and wants constructively
- solve problems and resolve conflicts constructively
- recognize and label their own emotions and feelings
- recognize and identify the feelings of others, develop empathy
- recognize triggers that may lead to non-constructive behaviors
- stop, breathe, and think before acting

We recognize that not all children are alike and not all children respond to the same approach to discipline in the same way. Should an individual child's needs dictate a different approach to discipline, the teacher, parent and director will collaborate on the development of a plan to provide necessary structure for the child to succeed in their social interactions.

Such a plan would be tailored to the individual needs of the child, while balancing the needs of the class and may or may not include logical and related consequences, the use of visual aides, props and cues, or graphic/concrete organizers to help the child succeed.

If a child is consistently a physical danger to themselves or the people and classroom environment (aggressive behaviors, biting, eloping) the following measures will be taken:

- The behavior will be communicated with the parents the same day of the occurrence. The teacher will ask for input and feedback. The parent(s) may need to pick their child up immediately in a severe case.
- With continued or escalated occurrences a conference with the parent(s) will take place. The teacher and parents will meet together to establish a plan of action for working through the behavior. The teacher will set a date to review progress.
- The parent(s) may be required to attend class with the child on the day(s) of their attendance for a preset amount of classes or a break of a predetermined number of classes may be taken. The parents, teacher and director will meet and discuss the plan.
- If further problems occur, the board may discuss possible removal of the child from the school.

Prohibitions

Anywhere on the school grounds and even with their own children, teachers and parents may NOT use:

- physical/corporal punishment, or threats of such punishment
- verbal abuse, belittling, combative/threatening language or demeaning children
- isolating children out of sight or hearing of parent and teacher (this is different than giving a child some space)

Health & Safety

Health Policies

The state of Maryland requires that all children have an annual medical examination. A physician's health form is due upon enrollment. A completed State Certificate of Immunization must be on file by the first day of school.

If this is the first time your child will be attending school, it may be the first time they will be exposed to children in a group in close proximity. It is quite likely they will catch a large number of colds at school, more than they would at home. With each cold they build some immunity. As their immunity level grows, they will catch fewer colds & illnesses.

Illness

The diligence of our community is the biggest mitigating factor we have in keeping our school healthy and safe. No one likes to stay home from school when they are feeling sick but it is essential that the Health and Safety Guidelines be adhered to so that our school community can remain healthy.

Students and adults must remain home if they have any ONE of the following in the past 24 hours:

- fever of 100.4 or higher
- diarrhea or vomiting
- pink-eye/ conjunctivitis (un-treated)
- Red or inflamed throat

Other symptoms that should be cleared by a doctor include:

- Nasal discharge that is thick and non-clear
- Consistent cough
- Rash
- Unusual irritability, lethargy

Families must report any communicable illnesses (strep throat, COVID, flu, RSV, Hand, Foot & Mouth, Fifth's Disease...) to the Director(s) as soon as possible. This helps us to know what actions and precautions to take. Family information will be kept confidential.

Getting Sick at School

If your child becomes sick at school you will be contacted immediately. We will keep your child comfortable with a familiar teaching team member while we wait for you to arrive. In the event a parent cannot be reached, we will call the emergency contact listed in your child's file. Sick students must be picked up in a timely manner.

Medicine Administration

If your child requires medication, including EPI pens, while at school please see our director. A Medication Administration Form must be completed by your child's doctor and medication must be in its original container along with an attached prescription (when applicable) to be kept at school.

Smoking

No smoking or vaping is allowed on the school grounds or while attending Enrichment Trips.

Sun Safety

The Anne Arundel County Health Department recommends applying broad spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher before going outside. While our areas are relatively shaded, please apply sunscreen to your child prior to coming to school. We are not permitted to apply sunscreen.

Helmets

Families are responsible for providing a properly fitted bike helmet (to be placed on their class tarp and taken home daily). Students may not ride on the riding toys without a helmet. The same rule applies for younger and older siblings. Helmet rules apply to before and after school as well.

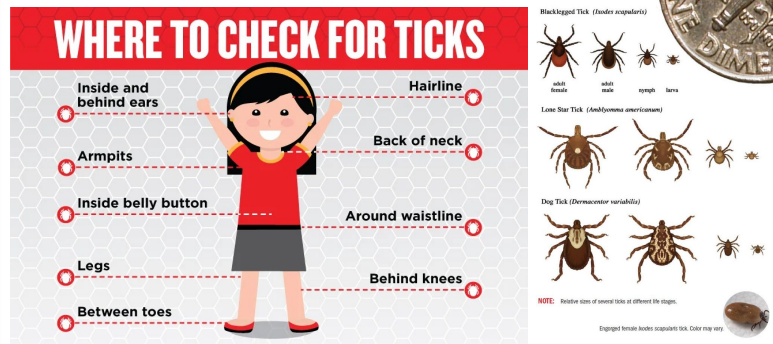
Bug Bites

The Anne Arundel County Health Department recommends using insect repellent with up to 10% DEET or picaridin content for children. Mosquitoes while pesky are a part of our world and often found at Magothy. Please apply bug spray to your child before coming to school. We are not permitted to apply bug spray to your child.

Ticks

Ticks are part of nature and in our area they can be found often. Ticks can carry diseases like Lyme and Anaplasmosis. Completing daily tick checks is a necessary part of being in nature. We talk with the students about ticks, share what they look like and what to do if they see a tick. Ticks, especially deer ticks, are very tiny. Wearing long sleeves and pants that are light colored, as well as tucking pants into socks are some ways to prevent ticks from getting onto your body. We also recommend a bath or shower for children after class. More information from the CDC on ticks- <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/>

****Making tick checks a part of your family's daily routine is a necessity. Please check your child daily for ticks****



Bees & Poison Ivy

Bees are celebrated at Magothy! We encourage children to respect, but not touch, our buzzing friends. In the unlikely event of a sting, we will provide comfort and monitor the child's condition. Parent(s) will be notified.

Our teachers identify poison ivy, share the information with children (how to identify, why we do not want to touch it, location) and steer clear of it on the trails. Fortunately, our area is pretty clear of this plant.

Foraging

Foraging is a great way to explore and connect with the world around us, spot seasonal changes, and broaden young palates. Teachers may identify and invite students to try known local edible plants such as wood sorrel, mulberry, sassafras, wineberry, and dandelion. Students are taught to only eat wild plants after checking with an adult, even if they have eaten it before. Teachers will ensure that foraging will not occur in areas that have had pesticides applied.

Animals at Magothy

We have several animals in permanent residence at Magothy. Animals are for viewing and at special times we may offer children the opportunity to touch and care for the animals. Currently in residence are: fish, firebellied and eastern newts, tadpoles/frogs, hissing cockroaches, hermit crabs, a corn snake, axolotl, blue tailed skink and a painted turtle. This list will change from time to time as we may be a temporary residence for a local animal or insect (spider, tree frog, tadpoles...). We are occasionally visited by a teaching team member's service dog. Children are never forced or required to interact with any animal. We always model respectful and calm bodies when observing animals in our classroom and in nature.

Washing and Sanitizing

Hand washing procedures are posted in all bathrooms. Children and adults must wash their hands after using the bathroom, and before snack/lunch, in accordance with The Office of Child Care mandate. Hands must be washed after handling animals. Hand sanitizer may be used as a back up.

All surfaces for snack, including the table and preparation space must be sanitized with bleach solution in a spray bottle before and after snack/lunch.

Accidents or Injuries

Play and taking reasonable risk spurs growth that helps children to develop good judgment, persistence, courage, resiliency, self-confidence, and improved motor skills. We encourage children to explore and develop their own risk assessment skills by allowing some play that includes age appropriate challenges, (balancing across a fallen tree, building with sticks, going up the climbing wall, etc.) Parents should anticipate a few scrapes, bumps or bruises now and then.

Allowing our children to choose, face, and overcome (or sometimes fail) small risks like these, make them safer in the long term as they build skills and confidence they can use in future situations.

When a child has a minor accident, the teacher will comfort the child. In addition, the school has band-aids, first aid supplies, and ice available. Parents are informed of minor accidents and injuries at dismissal. In the event of an injury requiring more than first aid the parent(s) (or Emergency Contact, in the event the parent(s) cannot be reached) will be contacted immediately. In the event immediate help is required, 911 will be called and a staff member will accompany the child to the emergency room until a parent or emergency contact is able to arrive.

Inclement Weather and Emergencies

School Closings

We follow Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) inclement weather decisions. AACPS inclement weather page- <https://www.aacps.org/closings>

- If AACPS are **closed**, Magothy will be closed.
- If AACPS have a **one hour delay**, Magothy will open one hour late and alter end times for Farm (10am-12pm) and Forest Friends (10am- 12pm).
- If AACPS have a **two hour delay**, Magothy will have a two hour delay. Morning classes (Forest, Farm and Feathered Friends (Wednesday only)) will be canceled. Fauna will shift class time- specifics will be communicated via PS. Afternoon classes are not affected by a morning delay.
- If AACPS have a **Virtual Day** due to weather, Magothy will post a schedule on ParentSquare.
- If AACPS have an **early dismissal** for weather, Magothy will post a schedule on ParentSquare.

Use your best judgment, if you do not feel it is safe in your area to drive to school, please stay home!

Emergencies

Again, the diligence of our community is the biggest mitigating factor we have in keeping our school healthy and safe. If you see or hear of something unsafe/dangerous, contact our director(s) or a teacher, board president immediately.

- All teachers carry walkie-talkies, cell phones and have student contact information in their trail bags.
- In the case of a weather-related emergency, students and teachers will shelter in place in our designated area, away from windows. Teachers regularly check the weather and make/shift their plans accordingly.
- In the case of a fire, classes exit quickly and safely out of the nearest exit and convene in the parking lot.
- If we must evacuate the campus, we will relocate to one of our planned rally points and inform parents.
- In the event of an emergency, families will be contacted via ParentSquare to notify them of the emergency and any changes to pick-up procedures for that day.

For additional information on our emergency procedures please contact the director directly. We do not publish this information in order to protect the safety of students and staff.

Safety Drills

We conduct regular safety drills as required by MSDE to help prepare students in case of an emergency. Every effort will be made to keep these activities straightforward. We do not want to frighten the children, but we do want them to feel prepared and calm in case of an emergency.

Helping Grownups

All Helping Grownups should come to school prepared for the weather, to play and to be actively engaged with the class. Being a Helping Grownup looks like reading stories, playing a game, overseeing a painting opportunity, exploring the sandbox, adventuring on trails, taking a step back to watch children in action, assisting with snack/lunch time, creating with playdough or shaving cream, cleaning up materials, tidying the classrooms, interacting with your child and their peers and so much more. Being a helping grownup is one of the most rewarding experiences of the co-op.

While being Helping Grownup you can expect to:

- Observe your child interacting with their teachers and peers
- Get to know your child's classmates
- Learn alongside your child and their teachers
- Witness magical moments
- Gain a deeper understanding of your child developmentally and socially
- Learn techniques and language/phrases used at school
- Work together as a community to keep our school safe, clean and healthy

Mandated Reporters

Anyone interacting with children who has reason to believe that a child has been subject to abuse or neglect must immediately inform the Director. In complying with the mandate to report, the person so reporting is given immunity from criminal or civil penalties or liability when that person, in good faith, makes a report. Such reports are confidential.

Taking Phone Calls

You are welcome to answer the phone if you hear it ringing. “***This is Magothy Cooperative Preschool, may I help you?***” If needed, please take a message and leave on the Director's desk.

Siblings

Siblings are permitted to attend class with helping grownups as long as they are safe, not disruptive to the class and you are able to perform the duties as a helping grownup. Helping Grownups often find it rewarding to be in class with just their preschooler. Some families will sibling swap and watch the younger siblings for each other during helping grownup shifts.

Communicating with the Children

We all come to MCP with different ways/experiences of interacting with children. When you enter the school grounds you must follow the ways of the school and teacher. All discipline situations within the classroom will be cared for by the teacher.

Tricky Moments

There can be some moments that may be tricky while being Helping Grownup. Always know that the teachers and directors are there for support and guidance. Some examples of tricky moments are:

- Your child does not want to leave your side
- Your child does not want to share you with their classmates
- Conflict between children
- Preventing personal fears or dislikes (spiders, snakes, spinning) from leaving an impression on the children

Helpful Language and Phrases

Separation

- “Can you come help me with...?”
- “Check out this really cool _____ I found.”
- “Yesterday, we built a really awesome tower. Can we do that again?”
- “I see “insert friend’s name” over there. Let’s check out what they are doing.”

Whining

- “It’s not a crying/ whining thing. It’s an (asking, helping, team work...) thing.”
- “Are you hurt?”
- “Does something on your body hurt or does your heart/feelings hurt?”

Love for one another and the world around them

- When possible taking time to stop and explore what/where the children’s interests lead
- “Ms. Kim, Thank you for helping me today.”
- Demonstrating and celebrating kindness
 - “_____ you made my heart smile by checking on a friend.”
- Being excited and caring for nature

Anger/ Upset / Tantrum

- “It’s fixable!”
- “Can I help?”
- When possible giving space or the time to “get through the tunnel”
- Offering an alternative
 - “Check this out! We have another vehicle available.”
- “I can see that you are (name the emotion). It’s okay to be (emotion). It’s not okay to throw blocks at a friend. When I am (emotion) I like to (name acceptable choices- stomp feet, take a break, hug a stuffed animal tightly). Would you like to try that?”

Turn Taking

- “When you are finished, Natalie would like a turn.”
- “While Colin is using the shovel let’s look under the rock and wait for a turn.”

Responding to creations or projects

- “Tell me more.”
- “Tell me about it/ tell me about the colors you used.”
- “What is your favorite part?”
- “Show me how it works / moves.”

Risk Taking- Instead of saying “Be careful!”

- “What’s the plan for... climbing the tree/ moving that rock?”
- “How will you get down from there?”
- “Notice how the logs are wet. They seem slippery...”
- “Try using your airplane arms.”
- “Big stick = big space.”

Standing Back/ Restraint

- Giving the children space to explore/ problem solve
- Encouraging children to talk it out (modeling/ assisting when needed)
- Watching and observing

Choices/Behaviors

- Offering two acceptable choices
 - “Let’s make a different choice. You can throw the acorns into the woods or you can roll the acorn to your friend.”
- Reinforce desired/positive behaviors
 - You did it! You packed up your snack.
 - You did it! You used walking feet to get into line.
- First/ Then
 - “First we clean up. Then we will have snack. First toys. Then snack.”
- Say what you want to see... not what you do not want to see.
 - Walking feet vs. stop running
 - Pass the animal to your neighbor’s hands vs. don’t throw the animal



Guidelines for Class:

- Children must always be supervised. Never leave children unattended.
- Our teachers position themselves around the yard for good visibility. When not engaged in an activity, position yourself for additional supervision.
- For children who like to challenge themselves physically (for example, jumping from the climber) but you are feeling uncomfortable or unsafe you can say, “Wow that was a big jump, but that makes me nervous. Let’s find another place where we can jump.”
- Swings: Limit pushing the children on the swings. Encourage children to use their legs and bodies to pump.
- Slide: We go up the ladder and down the slide on our bottom, feet first. One at a time on the big slide. Climbing up the slide is not permitted.
- At the end of each school day all cones and riding toys must be put away, sheds must be locked and sandbox covered.
- Encourage hand washing after sneezing and coughing and/or having fingers in the nose or mouth.
- If toys or items go into children’s mouths. Please put the toy/item to the side until it can be washed.
- Please remember school rules apply after hours. It is important for consistency that these safety guidelines are followed at all times. See posted examples in playground areas.

Special Occasions

Holiday & Seasonal Celebrations

At Magothy Cooperative Preschool we celebrate the changing of the seasons and selected holidays. Our celebrations are simple and focus on the sentiment, stories, games, songs and food tasting. We typically do not ask for items to be brought to school for exchanging or giving. Instead, we focus on the experience/sentiment part of the celebration. There will be some exceptions where teachers may ask for a specific type of item. We kindly ask that you do not send in trinkets, toys, candy or items to be shared unless asked by the teacher.

Birthday Recognition

We celebrate our friends’ birthdays by having them take their Trips Around the Sun. This is a special Magothy tradition. We will celebrate on the day closest to your child’s birthday. Oftentimes parents like to be the Helping GrownUp on their child’s birthday. **We do not celebrate birthdays with food or trinkets. Please do not send these items.** You are welcome to bring a favorite story or game to be read/played during class.

Enrichment Trips

Enrichment Trips are kind of like field trips. They are scheduled by an Enrichment Trip Coordinator. We try to offer one enrichment trip per month. Whenever possible, we will offer these on two different days of the week. This allows you to choose which one to attend. Most likely resulting in you going to the trip on a non-class day. RSVPs will be collected via Parent Square. We often have to turn in headcounts ahead of time.

Enrichment Trips are optional. You are welcome to attend all of the trips, only a few or none. Do what fits best for your schedule. A family member always attends with the child and transports their own children. Families are welcome to carpool to the location.

School Social Events

Throughout the year we will host several social/community events. These events are optional. We encourage you to attend if your schedule allows, as it is a great way to connect with the wider community and have more Magothy fun. These events will be posted on Parent Square and most of the time will ask for an RSVP. There may also be opportunities to help with and volunteer during these events. Please help us prepare for these events by RSVPing. Social Events may include a Fall Festival, Monster Mash preschool dance, Lantern Walk, Spring Festival and Family PotLuck.

Communication

ParentSquare

ParentSquare is our primary communication tool. School wide information, class specific updates, RSVP for events, sign ups, calendar information, pictures, private messages and more will all be found on Parent Square. Active participation on Parent Square is required of each family.

ParentSquare may be used to organize out of school activities such as playdates and birthdays but we ask that your class group not be used for outside business.

There are additional groups within Magothy's Parent Square that you can join. Some examples of groups are Social-Community Page, Magothy Exchange Group, Raise Right Forum and Plant Exchange.

Teachers will share daily/weekly recaps to inform families of the adventures and happenings from class. These recaps may include titles of books read in class or details of a new discovery. Donation requests for class projects may also be included. To stay best informed, please be sure to read through each recap.

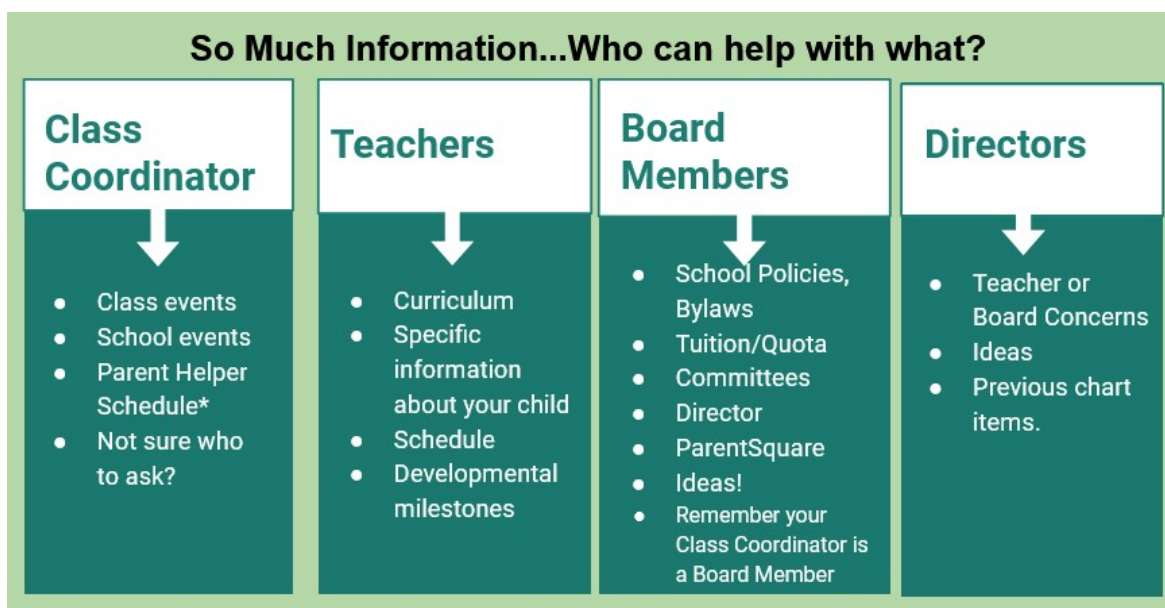
Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled for the late fall (over Thanksgiving Break) and spring. However, if at any time you would like to check in about your child, do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher or a director. We will always make time to discuss any concerns, celebrations or questions.

Please keep us informed about any big changes or life events for your preschooler. Changes and life events can often bring about big emotions or different behaviors. Having this knowledge will help us to best support your child during this time.

Assessments

Teachers are always observing and reflecting upon the class and each child- informal authentic evaluation. They adjust the opportunities/activities to best meet the needs of the class and individual children. Teachers use anecdotal records (informal observations) and work samples to help inform and prepare for parent-teacher conferences. As needed teachers may use milestone checklists, developmental screenings and progress reports.



Privacy Practices

This notice describes how information about you or your child may be used and disclosed and how you can gain access to this information. Please review it carefully.

Our Duties

We aim to maintain the privacy of your child and your family's information.

Permitted Uses and Disclosure

We may discuss your family in the ordinary course of maintaining the school. Some of these uses may include:

- **Teacher/Parent Communication:** Our teacher will verbally communicate with you in private about any concerns.
- **Board Meetings:** We may need to discuss your family's private information during our board meetings. We strive to keep these discussions professional and sensitive. We also attempt to avoid discussing family names if possible: "One of our families is having an issue with..."

Disclosures without Authorization

We may disclose information about you without your specific authorization, as follows:

- **Serious Threats to Health or Safety:** We may disclose your medical information to a public agency or to inform other parents in the case of an infectious disease outbreak. We will do our best to not disclose names.
- **Victims of Abuse, Neglect, or Domestic Violence:** We may be required to disclose your family's information if we feel anyone in your family is being abused or neglected.
- **Law Enforcement:** We may be required to disclose your family's information in conjunction with a criminal investigation by a federal or state law enforcement agency.

Your Rights

- **Confidential Communications:** You may ask that we communicate with you in a particular way to maintain your family's confidentiality. Your request should be in writing.
- **Inspect and Copy:** You may request access to inspect and copy your family's file. Your request should be in writing. We will act on your request within two weeks.

Please remember you may be privy to private information about children or families while helping in class. We ask that you not discuss another family's private information in any way.

Church Relations

We strive to keep our relationship healthy with Magothy United Methodist Church. It is important for us to be good neighbors. Together we work hard to ensure the space we use is well maintained and clean.

Please help us to be good neighbors by:

- Keeping quiet voices and calm bodies when moving through the church building.
- Driving slowly through the parking lot and being mindful of others.
- Leaving parking spaces closest to the church entrance open for church members. Please utilize the middle parking spaces and the grass line.
- Removing any trash to the dumpster.
- At the end of the school day: Ensuring all riding toys are put away in the shed, the playground is tidy and the sand box is covered.
- Always remove any soiled diapers from the bathrooms to the outside dumpster.
- Clean up any mess in the bathrooms.
- Ensure we follow any guidelines set forth by the church such as a "Please keep this door shut" or "Turn off lights when leaving" sign.
- Refrain from gathering around the front doors/ Fellowship Hall doors of the church or in the front hallways of the church to ensure church groups are not disturbed.
- Be friendly. Lend a helping hand to someone carrying a heavy bag. Share your smile and a little wave or "Hello!"

Asbestos Management

In October 1986, the U.S. Congress enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). Under this law, comprehensive regulations were developed to address asbestos problems in public and private schools. These regulations require most schools to inspect for friable and non-friable asbestos. They also require development of asbestos management plans that address asbestos hazards and implementation of response actions in a timely manner.

Our program for fulfilling these regulations is outlined in our asbestos management plan. This plan contains information on our inspections, re-inspections, response actions and post-response action activities, including periodic surveillance activities that are planned or are in progress. Magothy hires a company to inspect on a three year cycle and the Department of the Environment also conducts inspections.

Our tiles underneath our current tile and carpet are suspected of having asbestos. They are managed by being encapsulated. The building's original ceiling tiles are also suspected of having asbestos, and are managed by being contained above our drop ceiling. Asbestos becomes a hazard when particles become airborne through disturbance or friction.

You can review this plan during normal business hours. If you have any questions about reviewing our management plan please contact our director.