



A Ministry of the United Methodist Church of Seaford

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Parent Handbook

SEAFORD COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

2160 Washington Avenue

Seaford, New York 11783

Phone: (516) 785-0070

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to Seaford Community Preschool! Our preschool is licensed by the New York State Office of Children Family Services (OCFS). We thank you for the trust you place in us to educate, care and nurture your child. The staff and I strive to provide the highest quality early childhood education in a setting that will both stimulate and instill a lifetime of learning. Our dedication extends to you, the parents, as we know the importance of the home-school connection. As a staff we are always available and strongly encourage you to contact us at any time to discuss questions or concerns about your child.

Early Childhood is a time of remarkable development. It is the time when children begin to see themselves in relation to the world around them as they develop physically, emotionally, socially and cognitively. Quality education can be a powerful facilitator throughout this process.

The purpose of this handbook is to make available to you our school policies and procedures. Please keep this handbook in a convenient location as you may need to refer to it from time to time. We ask you to read through it carefully as the information will help us all have a successful and productive school year.

I look forward to an outstanding school year!

Jeanine Cama

Preschool Director

TOPIC	PAGE
Mission Statement, Our Philosophy, Purpose and Goals	4
Our Staff Diversity	5
Our Programs	6
Admission and Enrollment Tuition Policies	7
Pick-up/Drop Off Attire	8
Outdoor Play Field Trips Classroom Birthday Celebrations Photography School Year Calendar	9
Inclement Weather Fundraising Transportation Safety Drills	10
Behavior Management	10-11
Health/Illness	11-12
Food/Allergy	12-13
Special Services Progress Reports/Conferences Parent/Teacher Communication	14
School Obligations	14-15
Parent obligations	15
Our Commitment to You	15
Preschool Contact Inquiries	15

MISSION STATEMENT

For over 50 years, Seaford Community Preschool has served the town of Seaford and its surrounding areas offering a unique experience in early child education.

Our students are tomorrow's leaders and our mission is to help each child grow to reach his or her full potential.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The Seaford Community Preschool is dedicated to the social, physical, emotional and intellectual growth of children. Our experienced, qualified staff is devoted to ensuring that our children learn to work, play and develop at their own pace in a safe, stimulating and nurturing Christian environment.

PURPOSE AND GOALS

The purpose of Seaford Community Preschool is to provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment for children ages 24 months through 4 years of age in the following areas:

PHYSICAL

- *To develop/strengthen gross motor skills through both indoor and outdoor play
- *To develop/strengthen fine-motor skills (pencil grip, use of scissors, stacking blocks, mastering puzzles) using a hands-on, child-centered approach
- *To develop/strengthen balance and coordination through both indoor and outdoor play

SOCIAL

- *To learn how to play cooperatively with others
- *To follow directions and classroom routines
- *To be respectful of others

EMOTIONAL

- *To separate from home more comfortably
- *To understand conflict/resolution
- *To develop/strengthen self-confidence

COGNITIVE

- *To develop language and communication skills
- *To practice problem-solving
- *To develop a love of learning
- *To see themselves in relation to the world around them
- *To discover personal creativity

SPIRITUAL

- *To learn and practice The Golden Rule
- *To provide a Christian foundation
- *To live each day in Christian example

OUR STAFF

Seaford Community Preschool prides itself on its highly qualified, experienced staff who are responsible for providing the best early childhood education possible for your child. These are individuals who have undergone training, certification and clearance from New York State (background checks, fingerprinting) before working in our classrooms. Once a staff member is assigned a position within our school, they are trained by the Director, cooperating teachers, colleagues and independent formal training. Substitute teachers undergo the same process as our permanent staff and are carefully supervised by the Seaford Community Preschool staff. At our monthly meetings, staff members are given the opportunity to listen, ask and discuss any current or upcoming school event(s) while our in-service training, mandated for all staff, provides current practices in early childhood education. Resources such as textbooks and websites are available for use as reference materials. Our staff is loving and completely devoted to the well-being and growth of every student.

DIVERSITY

At Seaford Community Preschool we are dedicated to creating a true sense of community which includes a diverse group of both staff and currently enrolled families. We are committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all its programs and services. Seaford Community Preschool is consciously and proactively inclusive of all areas of diversity including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, socioeconomic status, marital status, language, or disability. It is the policy of Seaford Community Preschool to make every reasonable accommodation necessary for children with special needs, as we are committed to the fair and equal education of all children.

In an effort to reinforce tolerance and acceptance of all human beings, we incorporate lessons into our classes through literature, music, and toys that highlight the importance of diversity and we welcome parent involvement.

OUR PROGRAMS

The Seaford Community Preschool offers a loving, nurturing environment for children ranging in age from 24 months to 4 years of age. Our classes currently meet 2, 3 or 5 times per week and younger children do not need to be toilet trained to enter our classes. All classes and age groups follow an age-appropriate curriculum designed to encourage learning through play.

TWO YEAR OLD CLASS

At 2, a child is introduced to the school environment without a parent or caretaker two **or** three times/week for two and a half hours. This class focuses on socialization as this is quite often the first formal separation from a parent or caretaker. Sharing, cleaning up, circle time and learning the importance of being a good friend are all practiced daily in addition to exposure to age-appropriate content such as five senses, holidays, shapes, colors and numbers. This class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm **or** Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm.

***Children must be 24 months old before entering this class.**

***Children are not required to be toilet trained to be enrolled in this class. The preschool staff will support children and families during the toilet-training process.**

THREE YEAR OLD CLASS

The 3-year-old classes which meet two, three **or** five times/week are a more formal introduction to basic identification of numbers and letters as well as their written names. Learning the structure of a classroom and introduction to written text are practiced daily as are necessary social skills such as good listening, following directions and sharing. These classes meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm or 2:00 pm, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 am -12:30 pm or 2:00 pm **or** Monday *through* Friday from 10:00 am - 12:30 pm or 2:00 pm.

***Children must be 3 years old by December 1st to enter this class.**

***Children are not required to be toilet trained to be enrolled in this class, but the expectation is that caregivers will begin the process shortly after school begins. The preschool staff will support children and families during the toilet-training process.**

FOUR YEAR OLD CLASSES

4-year-old classes meet three **or** five times/week. In both instances, the ultimate goal is to prepare students for kindergarten. Identifying and writing letters, shapes, numbers and colors as well as number sense and early reading skills are taught. A multisensory, developmentally appropriate approach is used to support the development of these skills. Social and communication skills, in addition to classroom routines are guided daily. Our three times per week class meets on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:30 am-12:00 pm or 2:30 pm and our five times per week class meets Monday *through* Friday from 9:30 am-12:00 pm or 2:30 pm.

***Children must be 4 years old by December 1st to enter this class.**

***It is expected that children entering the 4-year-old class will be fully toilet-trained.**

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT

*All student registrations must include an application and a non-refundable registration fee.

***No child will be admitted into the Seaford Community Preschool without OCFS FORM 4433 – Child in Care Medical Statement, indicating most current immunizations and proof that they are free from contagious and communicable diseases signed and stamped by your doctor's office (updated yearly).**

*Emergency Contact Forms and applicable parent authorization forms must be completed.

*If a child is not toilet trained, the parent must complete a Diaper/Clothing Change Authorization Form allowing one of the child's teachers to change his/her diaper. All necessary diaper-changing supplies are to be supplied by the parent.

TUITION POLICIES

Tuition is calculated on a yearly basis for families. Fees are based on a full school year, paid in monthly installments, and they do not reflect the number of days attended in a given month. Tuition rates for each school year are made public as soon as registration begins and apply for the entirety of the school year.

PAYMENT:

*Tuition must be paid on the first day of class of each month.

*Payments can be made in the form of **cash, check** (payable to Seaford Community Preschool), **credit card, debit card** or **bank transfers (ACH).**

*Please give cash payments to an office staff member so a receipt can be issued.

*Tuition checks must be deposited in the tuition box.

*If the payment check is not the same last name as the student, please write the student's name in the memo section of the check.

*Payments by credit card, debit card, bank transfers (ACH) can be made via the Brightwheel app-processing fees will apply.

***Post-dated checks will NOT be accepted.**

*If your check is returned to us for any reason, an additional bank charge of \$25.00 will be applied to your account.

*A **10% sibling discount** is offered to families with more than one child attending our school. This rate is applied to each additional child whose tuition is equal to or less than the first child attending and may be paid with one check.

*A **5% discount** will be applied if tuition is paid in full for the school year.

*Should you choose to withdraw your child from our school for any non-emergency reason, we require no less than 2 weeks notice BEFORE your intended date of withdrawal with the understanding that **our registration fee is non-refundable.**

*There is a 15-day grace period for all monthly tuition payments.

*For all payments received after the 15th of each month, a \$25.00 late fee will be added to your monthly total.

*Please **DO NOT** give your tuition to your child's teacher.

*Payments made will be applied to outstanding balances first, then to current tuition owed.

Unpaid tuition will be addressed in the following manner:

*Missed tuition will be addressed with a written notice as a reminder.

*Multiple missed tuition payments will result in your child not attending class until the outstanding balance is paid in full.

****If a situation arises resulting in your inability to pay tuition on time, please speak to the Director or Treasurer.**

PICK-UP/DROP-OFF

1. For security reasons, all must **enter and exit through the main entrance.**
2. Parents and caregivers please walk children directly to our front patio and when teachers come outside to gather the class, promptly say goodbye. If your child is having difficulty separating, give a warm hug & kiss and reassure them you will return when school is over. Our teachers will support you in this process.
3. Please be punctual at both drop-off and pick-up times as we strive to establish good routines!
4. If you need to speak with your child's teacher before or after class, we ask that you wait until all other children have entered or exited the building.
5. There is ***no parking on either side of the driveway entrance/exit*** as it blocks the vision of cars exiting.
6. The front door will be locked once all classes and staff have entered. Should you need to enter the school, please ring the front doorbell.
7. If someone other than the parent or previously authorized caretaker needs to pick up a child, **the school must be notified by telephone or written note before a child will be released.** In the event of an early pick-up, please call the office and a member of the preschool office staff will bring your child to you.
8. When picking up your child, please form a line outside on our patio at which time the teacher will dismiss each child to their appropriate parent or caregiver.

ATTIRE

*We ask that children come to school each day dressed in comfortable, easily washable clothing as "getting their hands dirty" is an essential component of learning at this age. Our staff makes every effort to keep children clean when using messy material by using aprons and smocks, but occasionally spills do happen. We also ask that appropriate footwear is worn for both indoor and outdoor play. Open-toe or open-back types of shoes are not considered safe or acceptable.

*Please do not allow your child to wear or bring expensive items to school as they can become lost and items such as jewelry are choking hazards.

*Each child is required to bring 2 changes of clothing in a Ziploc bag, labeled with their name and class in the event of an accident.

*In cold weather months, all jackets, sweatshirts, hats and boots should also be clearly labeled with your child's name.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Children will make use of our outside playground area on all days when the weather permits. Clothing should be appropriate to the season and footwear should offer the opportunity to play freely. When applicable, parents are responsible for applying sunscreen and insect repellent on their child prior to the start of each school day.

FIELD TRIPS

Throughout the school year, we offer age-appropriate field trips for our students. Notices regarding field trips will be given to parents well in advance of the actual trip and will contain all the necessary information for your child to attend. Signed permission slips and/or fees will be collected in advance. Should we require parent volunteers, your child's teacher will formally request your support.

CLASSROOM BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

In recognition of your child's special day, each child will be given a birthday crown and the opportunity to celebrate their birthday with their class. The birthday child can bring in a special item from home as well as a favorite book to be read aloud.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Throughout the school year, pictures are taken of our students participating in both day-to-day and special activities. These pictures are intended to capture special moments. Photos will be shared via the Brightwheel app and are only visible to your child's class. Photos are also occasionally used to highlight events on our website and to submit to local newspapers to advertise the wonderful programs we offer. Photographs are taken by our staff only. Upon enrollment, we ask that each parent to complete and return our *Photo Release Form* giving us permission to use your child's photograph or to decline from allowing us to use your child's photograph. You are welcome to take cell phone pictures of your own child at preschool events, but we ask that you refrain from taking pictures of other children.

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

The Seaford Community Preschool's calendar is aligned with the Seaford School District's openings and closings in relation to holidays and vacations and whenever possible during inclement weather. In September, we begin our school year shortly after the public schools start, and in June we end our year on or about the second week in June so as to avoid conflict with district programs. A copy of our calendar will be distributed to parents at the start of each year to be used as reference.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of snow or stormy weather, it is our intent to remain open if possible. If, however, we know in advance that dangerous conditions would prevent school from being in session; you will be notified via the Brightwheel app. Seaford Community Preschool will generally not have a delayed opening, only open or closed on bad weather days. Additionally, our website (seafordcommunitypreschool.com) and Facebook page (Seaford Community Preschool) will be updated the morning in question. If the Seaford School District is closed for inclement weather, the Seaford Community Preschool will also be closed.

FUNDRAISING

In an effort to enhance the quality of our educational program for your child, Seaford Community Preschool does engage in fundraising efforts throughout the school year. Participation is appreciated but not mandatory.

TRANSPORTATION

The Seaford Community Preschool does not currently provide transportation of any kind to children or their families.

SAFETY DRILLS

At Seaford Community Preschool we conduct fire drills every month to be prepared for an actual emergency. In the event of a center-wide emergency, the entire school would re-locate to Our Redeemer Nursery School located at 2025 Washington Ave, Seaford NY and parents/emergency contacts would be notified immediately via phone and the Brightwheel app. In addition to fire drills, we practice lockdown and shelter in place procedures twice a year.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

At Seaford Community Preschool, our goal is to help each child grow to his or her own potential. We completely understand that physical expression is often a preferred method with children whose non-verbal communication skills are still developing. Behaviors such as hitting, biting or pushing are not uncommon at this age. However, in the interest of safety we cannot tolerate excessive behaviors that are dangerous to both students and staff. Offensive language and physical harm to others will not be tolerated and are considered unacceptable.

We welcome and request parent involvement and support in this process. Our mission is to positively model and reinforce the importance of acceptable behavior by creating a positive environment to mitigate any discipline issues. The following strategies are followed by staff to positively engage and provide guidance to children:

- *listen to the children and respond to their needs

- *encourage children to use their words instead of physical reactions (ex: *asking* to play with a toy instead of grabbing it out of another child's hands)

*focus on what the children are doing well instead of what they may be experiencing difficulty with

*offer choices

*encourage conflict/resolution

*use a variety of discipline and behavior techniques

*discuss and carry out all rules consistently

*PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE positive behavior

Unacceptable behavior on a consistent basis prevents our teachers from providing the level of instruction all children deserve. If a child displays an unacceptable behavior the following sequence of events will occur:

- making eye contact and speaking in a calm voice, the child will be re-directed and guided to an alternative behavior choice
- the staff member and child will discuss how to avoid the behavior issue in the future
- the child's parents/caretaker will be notified by the child's teacher at pick-up time

If misbehavior persists...

- the child will be redirected from the person or situation causing conflict ("redirection" can help children learn appropriate behaviors by guiding them away from challenging behaviors/situations and toward more positive ones; helping the child from the area of conflict to discuss the inappropriateness of the behavior and how it could be dealt with in a more positive manner should the situation present itself once again)
- the parents will be notified of the behavior and reminded of our policy
- if a child continues to have difficulty after re-direction and discussion, a formal meeting will be called to include parents, teacher and director at which time a behavior plan will be discussed and developed by all parties in an effort to have the child remain in school this behavior plan will go into effect immediately with the understanding by parents that a continuation of the unacceptable behavior will result in the student's participation at our school being terminated.

HEALTH/ILLNESS

In the interest of providing a healthy environment for your child, we ask the following:

1. **OCFS Child in Care Medical Statement (LDSS-4433) must be submitted for each child before the school year begins.**

2. Please be sure to notify your child's teacher if your child has any food allergies or medical conditions.
3. Children who develop a fever of 100.3 or higher, vomit, have continuous colored discharge from the nose, or have discharge from the eyes will have a caregiver notified to pick up the child from school. **Children must be fever-free without medication, refrained from vomiting, cease to have continuous colored discharge from the nose, cease to have discharge from the eyes for 24 hrs before returning to school.**
4. Should an injury of any type occur to a child during the school day, once again, parents/emergency contacts would be contacted immediately. In an extreme medical emergency, the local emergency medical squad will be contacted to transport the child to a local hospital accompanied by the Director and child's teacher while every attempt will be made to speak with the child's parent, guardian or family physician. If immediate care is required and authorized contacts were not able to be reached, decisions will be at the Director's discretion based on the medical advice given by medical staff.
5. If your child is sick, please keep him/her home and call the school to inform us of their absence.
6. It is extremely important that you notify us if your child has a contagious ailment such as strep throat, conjunctivitis, lice or the flu.
7. If you know your child will not be in school, we request advance notice of the absence and reason.
8. Qualified staff members only will be permitted to administer emergency medications to children (epinephrine auto injectors, asthma inhalers and nebulizers).
9. In the event of an accident, an accident report will be filled out and the child's parent or guardian will be contacted and made aware of the situation immediately.
10. All staff members are required to wear rubber gloves when attending to incidents involving bodily fluids for the safety and protection of both children and adults.

FOOD/ALLERGY

A snack and/or lunch is provided daily by parents for their child only. We ask for **1** healthy snack and water to be sent in and lunch if your child's class stays at school for lunch.

Elijah's Law

Child care professionals play a critical role in protecting the health and safety of the children in their facilities, which includes allergy awareness. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 1 in 13 children is impacted by allergies. Allergies have the potential to create a life-threatening situation. Anaphylaxis (a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction) must be treated right away. By learning about allergies and preventing anaphylaxis, child care providers can save lives.

In November 2017, 3-year-old Elijah Silvera from New York City was given a grilled cheese sandwich while at day care despite having a known severe dairy allergy; Elijah went into anaphylaxis and died.

In 2019 New York State adopted new legislation called Elijah's Law. Elijah's Law impacts all child care facilities and requires them to follow state food allergy guidelines to prevent, recognize and respond to life-threatening anaphylactic reactions.

*Each classroom will have a posting with a list of individual children's allergies that is visible to all staff and volunteers caring for the child. All staff will take steps to prevent exposure to a child's known allergy, including but not limited to, reading food labels, handwashing, cleaning and all other regulations related to allergies and anaphylaxis as outlines in the OCFS Childcare Regulations.

*If your child has a food allergy, **WE MUST BE INFORMED UPON ENROLLMENT** as every effort will be made to accommodate your child's needs. In accordance with OCFS regulations (Office of Children and Family Services), required paperwork must be filled out for any documented allergy and/or medication administration. If applicable, you may be asked to provide food items suitable for your child for class parties or birthday celebrations. With your permission, we will also inform fellow class parents of your child's allergy and post the allergy information for all who enter the classroom to further ensure the safety of your child.

If your child develops an allergy after registration or at any time during the school year, please notify the office immediately.

*Any child with a known allergy will have the following documents on file when applicable:

- NYS OCFS form 7006 – Individual Health Care Plan for a Child with Special Healthcare Needs
- NYS OCFS form 6029 – Individual Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan
- NYS OCFS form 7002 – Medication Consent Form

*Our program will stock non-patient specific epinephrine auto-injector devices for emergency treatment of a person appearing to experience anaphylactic symptoms. Children who are enrolled in our program will have weights recorded based on their most current physical (as is required by OCFS) in order to determine which dose is most appropriate.

*We will stock the following doses:

- Infant/toddler dose (0.1 mg) for persons weighing 16.5-33 lbs
- Pediatric dose (0.15 mg) for persons weighing 33-66 lbs
- Adult dose (0.3 mg) for persons weighing 66 lbs or more

SPECIAL SERVICES

If your child receives a special service through their home school district (speech, OT, PT, etc.), please inform us upon enrollment. In accordance with OCFS regulations (Office of Children and Family Services), required paperwork must be filled out for any documented need that warrants special services. Additional paperwork must be filled out for any child who will be receiving special services provided by their home school district in the preschool building during school hours.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

At Seaford Community Preschool, parent involvement is strongly valued and encouraged. The home-school connection is a powerful way to establish the importance of education while building a solid foundation for each child. We recognize the importance of children seeing both their parents and school staff working cooperatively to help them succeed in all areas of growth. Parents are welcome to call or schedule a conference to discuss matters of concern with the Director or child's teacher at *any time* throughout the school year. In addition to formal conferences and meetings, we also encourage written notes, phone calls and conversations on a daily basis when pertaining to situations of a personal matter so that we may offer your child any extra attention needed.

The first week of each month you will be given a calendar and school newsletter with the special events and activities. The newsletter will explain the themes for the month, provide the date it occurs in your child's class, state any special items necessary (bring something from home, wear a specific color) and offer pertinent reminders to parents.

PROGRESS REPORTS/CONFERENCES

Seaford Community Preschool provides a mid-year and an end of year progress report for each child in our 2, 3 - and 4-year-old classes. Children are assessed on age-appropriate class goals with the sole intention of sharing with parents each child's *individual* growth progress throughout the school year. Each child develops at their own rate and the progress report is one measure to illustrate the tremendous growth that takes place over the course of the year. We are confident that you will find these reports both useful and informative.

If at any time throughout the school year you would like to inquire about student academic growth, please reach out to your child's teacher so a mutually convenient time can be set up to confer.

SCHOOL OBLIGATIONS

1. **Disclosure:** Information relating to a child or family (financial records, educational/ health records) is strictly confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone other than staff members at Seaford Community Preschool or authorized state agency personnel. Should a parent need this information forwarded to anyone else, we require a signed parental request.

2. **Security:** Our commitment to safety remains firm. All doors remain locked and our entrances/exits are under continuous video surveillance. Students will only be released to authorized parents or caregivers unless we are notified prior to dismissal.
3. **Tuition:** the school will notify parents of any pending tuition increases.
4. **Notification of Enrollment Termination:** Parents will be notified if their child's enrollment status is in jeopardy due to missing tuition payments or failure to comply with school policies.
5. **Mandated Reporting:** We are specially equipped to fulfill the important role of mandated reporter of child abuse or maltreatment. Under New York State law, we are obligated to report suspected cases of child abuse and maltreatment when presented with reasonable cause to suspect abuse or maltreatment.

PARENT OBLIGATIONS

1. A completed application, registration fee and updated medical/immunization forms must be submitted upon enrollment of your child and school staff must be informed of any medication(s) being taken by your child.
2. Photo Release and Diaper/Clothing Change Authorization forms must be signed and submitted by parents.
3. Parents must provide accessible emergency contacts for each child.
4. Parents will notify the preschool office in advance if someone other than the parent/caretaker will be picking up their child.
5. All mailings, conferences, emergency contacts and authorizations will be as directed to the custodial parent(s). All parents are encouraged to attend all functions at the school but it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to inform the non-custodial parent of such arrangements. Without an official custody or restraining order on file at our school, we must legally grant both parents access.
6. Parents are obligated to read and if applicable, reply to all communication notices sent home concerning their child.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

At Seaford Community Preschool we strive to provide the highest quality education for your child. We are committed to the individual growth of each child and welcome parent involvement in this process. This handbook is a guide to our policies and procedures. We fully recognize that additional issues may arise at which time we remind parents of the importance of open, two-way communication. Should you have any questions regarding our policies, please feel free to contact us.

We welcome and encourage parent feedback and direct you to the persons below responsible for the program:

Director of Seaford Community Preschool

Lynn Gagnon- License Building Coordinator of Seaford Community Preschool

Amy Nill- Office License Coordinator of Seaford Community Preschool

Pastor Enock – Seaford United Methodist Church

