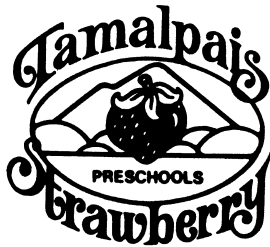


# **Tamalpais Preschool Parent Handbook**

## **2025-26**

Information to ensure the safety of our children  
and the smooth operation of the school.



410 Sycamore Avenue  
Mill Valley, California 94941  
Tel: 415-388-4286

[Director@tamalpaispreschool.org](mailto:Director@tamalpaispreschool.org)  
[www.tamalpaispreschool.org](http://www.tamalpaispreschool.org)

# HELPFUL HINTS

## HELPING YOUR CHILD ADJUST TO PRESCHOOL

\*\*\* Plan enough time for your child to dress and have breakfast. Try to avoid a "last minute rush" by having lunches prepared, sweaters ready, car keys in place, etc. It is best for your child to arrive at school feeling relaxed.

\*\*\* Dress your child appropriately for school. Growing and learning are a messy business, and dressy, restrictive clothes interfere with a child's freedom to explore new things.

\*\*\* Bring your child to school between 9:00 and 9:10AM. It may be difficult for a child (who is just learning social skills) to come into the program after everyone else is busy at work.

\*\*\* Our Early Morning Child Care from 8:00 to 9:00 AM is often a quieter, more relaxed time for a reticent child to begin school. Please note there is an additional charge of \$12.00 for Morning Care. Be sure to sign in upon arrival through Brightwheel.

\*\*\* Arrive on time to pick up your child from school. It may be upsetting for a child to be the last one at school when everyone else has gone home or when your expected time of arrival has passed. (A child may feel abandoned and afraid, and may refuse to come to school for a while after such an experience.)

\*\*\* Please be considerate of everyone by keeping your child home when he or she is not feeling well. A child with a cold, cough, or intestinal upset does not have fun at school, and it is unfair to risk infecting other children. Note our illness policy.

# HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Monthly emails will tell you important dates, special events as well as curriculum themes and projects. The newsletter is accompanied by a Preschool calendar of Afternoon Enrichment activities.

**BRIGHTWHEEL:** This is our main form of communication with parents, both with your child's lead teacher or privately with the Director. Weekly group emails and photos inform parents of some of their child's activities and curriculum during the school day. Please remember your child's teacher is focused on caring for your child during the day so you might not receive an immediate reply.

**A CLASS LIST** with e-mail information will be available in September to help with carpools, birthdays and play dates.

**QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS** are best addressed by telephoning the Director before (8:30-9:00 AM) or from (1:40-3:00PM) the school session, as there is not much quiet time to have any adult discussion during the busy morning. In addition, messaging through Brightwheel is a welcomed way to connect or schedule a time to meet.

**CONFERENCES:** Parent conferences with the group teacher occur in the fall and spring. Sign-up sheets will be available a few weeks before the scheduled conference weeks. Additional conferences can be arranged as requested.

**VISITS AND VOLUNTEERS:** Parents are welcome to visit our school to see "what's happening at school". Please check with your child's group teacher to arrange a visit. Volunteer opportunities will be listed in our monthly newsletter or by our room parents or Board members. Volunteers need to meet California state vaccination requirements.

# PRESCHOOL INFORMATION

## **CURRICULUM**

Our Thematic Approach includes a wide range of topics, which appeal to children and encourages them to participate in the daily activities. Science, art, music, and movement activities help the children experience "hands-on" learning and develop classroom and pre-academic skills. Check out the newsletter each month to find out about the theme.

## **NUTRITIOUS SNACKS**

Daily snacks are provided in the morning and in the afternoon. Snacks may include crackers, cereal, vegetables or fruits and water. Organic foods are provided whenever possible.

## **BIRTHDAY TREATS**

We love to celebrate birthdays at school – please check with your classroom teacher for birthday celebration information.

## **LUNCHES**

Children bring their own lunches to school, usually in a lunch box. We recommend inserting an ice pack to keep food cold and encourage families to use reusable containers. We strive to have "waste free lunches". Foods cannot be microwaved at school.

Nutritious lunches give children energy and begin a lifetime habit of healthy eating. Pediatricians advise parents to avoid foods which may cause a child to choke. Please avoid popcorn, nuts of all types, uncooked celery and carrots, hot dogs (ok if cut in smaller pieces), whole grapes and hard candy.

## **NUT-FREE SCHOOL**

Due to a few severe nut allergies among our students, we are a nut-free school. **We need your help** – please avoid nut butters, nut oil or any food containing nuts in lunches or treats brought to school for any occasion. Acceptable alternatives to nut butter may include sunflower butter or soy butter.

# HEALTH POLICIES

## PHONING SCHOOL

Our main telephone number is 415-388-4286 for the Office, Ocean and Garden Room classes. To reach the Creek Room in the morning please call (415) 388-9286. We have an answering machine on for those times when all of the teachers are occupied with children. We check messages for pickup updates before pickup times at 1:00, 3:00, and 5:00 PM. We reply to calls in the afternoons.

## ILLNESS

If your child is sick, please keep him or her at home. Illness includes a cold, cough, intestinal upset, fever or contagious disease. We will call you or authorized persons to take your child home if he or she becomes sick at school. Ordinarily, a child may not return to school within 24 hours of being symptom free (without any fever reducing medication). Your child should return feeling well and completely non-contagious. We want to maintain a healthy school setting for all.

## EXPOSURE TO ILLNESS

You will be notified of exposure to contagious diseases or conditions. Notices will be sent via Brightwheel. You must notify us immediately of any contagious diseases in your home, incl Covid.

## TOILET TRAINING

Children who attend Tamalpais Preschool can work on toilet training at school, but must start at home. Toilet accidents are expected when children are adjusting to the school setting, but children are not considered toilet trained until they are regularly successful at school. We are happy to work with families to support the toilet training process in partnership with work at home to fully accomplish toilet training together. Talk with the Director or your child's teacher about their potty routine and training process.

## HEAD LICE

Children who have indications of head lice infestation will be sent home from school and may not be re-admitted until treatment is complete and the child is lice and nit-free. The Director, or an assigned staff member, will check children's hair in the morning before they are readmitted back to school. Lice checks may be performed monthly.

# SIGN-IN POLICY & PARKING

## SIGNING IN AND OUT

As required by State Licensing Codes, the adult bringing or picking up a child from school must sign them in/out. You must use Brightwheel for signing in and out and register all 'authorized contacts' who are permitted to drop off/pick up your child in our account.

## AUTHORIZED PICK-UPS

We will only release your child to persons authorized by you on the emergency information cards and by a written message prior to pick-up. In an emergency, a phone message concerning a change in pick-up plans may be acceptable. However, in such a situation, we will ask for identification of persons previously unknown to the school's staff. Children can only be released to individuals over 18 years of age, unless parents or guardians sign a form indicating otherwise.

## Parking:

Parking is permitted in the designated Preschool spots ONLY.

## DROP OFF GUIDELINES

Parents need to drive to the parking lots via the Sycamore Avenue driveway. Do not enter the Camino Alto driveway – it is an "EXIT ONLY/ONE WAY" street. Please drive past the front door very slowly (3-5 mph), as families are walking by to enter the school. DO NOT enter the school while leaving your car blocking the driveway.

Parents are required to park their cars in the designated School spots and escort their children to the front door of the classroom. A teacher will greet each child at the door. Parents must sign the child in as indicated above on their mobile device or our iPad at the front door.

Our drop off in the mornings is from 9:00-9:10am and the afternoon pick-up is from 12:50-1:00pm. We appreciate your patience during these busy times, please consider safety and be considerate of others.

## PICK-UP GUIDELINES

Please note: Children need to be picked up on time at 1:00, 3:00 or 5:00 pm SHARP. Aftercare or late charges apply for children picked up late. Families can lose Aftercare privileges if they are continually late for pick-up.

At pick-up time, please wait by the front door for a teacher to bring your child and his/her belongings to the door after you sign him/her out. We ask that parents move away from the front pick-up area after they have received their child, so that we may safely continue the pick-up procedure for other children. If you are running late to pick up your child, please call to inform the staff at 415-388-4286. Teachers will contact parents and people on the emergency list when children are not picked up on time, also late charges may apply.

# WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

## **LABEL BELONGINGS**

We love to see labels on clothes, lunch boxes, thermos bottles and tops, books, blankets, and any other items brought from home.

## **CLOTHING**

We strongly recommend comfortable and carefree clothes for children. We encourage children to wear smocks in the art room, but be prepared for messy clothing anyway. Paint just has a way of creeping under smocks and onto shoes and sleeves. Also, please pack an extra set of clothes in a Ziploc bag for pee-pee accidents or heavy water play.

## **SHOES**

Our first concern at Tamalpais Preschool is your child's safety. Always dress your child in appropriate shoes for climbing, running and riding. Children need to wear shoes that have rubber-soles and that tie or Velcro securely. Please avoid: Cowboy boots, rain boots, Uggs, Jellies, Crocs, moccasins, party shoes, clogs and flip flops. Sturdy sandals with rubber-soles that have straps with buckles or Velcro are fine. Boots of any kind prevent children from climbing safely.

Sometimes your child may insist on wearing their special shoes to school (such as rain boots on rainy days). Wearing them to school is fine, but please bring a change of shoes for play. We will help them change into safe shoes before their play begins. Also, please do not bring umbrellas to school. They are not safe.

## **TOYS**

Toys from "home" work against your child's overall adjustment. Toys get lost, taken by others, and distract your child from the wonderful learning equipment at school. Please leave toys at home, especially if they are a one of a kind favorite stuffed toy.

## **ARTWORK**

We emphasize the creative process, not necessarily a finished project. Children choose which art projects they wish to experience and may not bring home an art project each day. Some children do not like to do a "product" oriented piece of artwork, their project "may not be dry yet", or we are saving it for display or for individual portfolios given out at the end of the year.

# PRESCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

## PRESCHOOL GOALS

We strive to provide your child with enriching, stimulating and enjoyable experiences in all areas of child development involving social, emotional, behavioral, physical, sensory-motor, cognitive, and creative growth. Enhancement of your child's self-esteem is our primary goal. We hope each day will be wonderful, fun and fulfilling for your child in the following areas:

- Independence (self-help, transitions, perseverance, confidence building, making constructive choices)
- Social interactions (cooperation, conflict resolution, empathy and respect for others)
- Classroom skills (taking turns, following directions, time management, taking risks, physical skills, increasing attention)
- Pre-Academic skills (pre-math and science, pre-reading and writing, learning through active play)

## POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Preschool is a time to develop social skills of sharing, taking turns, expressing feelings sensitively, listening to friends and teachers, and following directions and routines. Misunderstandings, conflicts, and a certain amount of misbehavior is normal and expected. Our teachers use a positive approach to discipline, explaining and modeling appropriate behavior.

Occasionally, a child's behavior at school may endanger his/her or another child's safety. If this occurs, the parents will be called and the situation will be discussed. If the situation warrants, the child may be asked to leave for the remainder of the day. If the misbehavior continues, please refer to the Director for detailed steps that will be taken.

## UPSET AND UNHAPPY CHILDREN

If a child becomes upset at school and cannot be calmed by a teacher, parents will be telephoned or messaged on Brightwheel and requested to come to school to help their child feel better. A teacher will always be close by to comfort a distressed child, but there are times when only a mom or dad will do!

# PRESCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

## **RESPECT FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES**

We expect parents to be respectful of others in our school community by avoiding gossip and being respectful of diverse parenting styles and children's personalities

# PRESCHOOL EVENTS

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Our Parent Board of Trustees welcomes comments, suggestions, questions and volunteers! The Board meets monthly to emphasize school support, parent interactions, fundraising & school finances.

## EQUIPMENT AND ENRICHMENT FEE

There is an annual Enrichment & Equipment Fee which helps pay for special guests, visitors to the classroom, fund new play equipment and special projects materials. You will receive an invoice in September for this fee. It is \$175 for T/Th program, \$225 for MWF program and \$275 for M-F/pre-k program.

## FUNDRAISING

Our Board hosts various events throughout the year to raise funds for our preschools. They are often designed to build community at the same time and are always fun! Additional donations & company matches are also welcome also at any time. We are a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation. Please contact our COO, Rose Moran for more information.

## PRESCHOOL EVENTS

Tamalpais Preschool hosts several events for families throughout the year. Keep an eye out in our newsletters and special flyers!

## BABYSITTING

To maintain a professional student/teacher relationship, and for insurance liability requirements, teachers and staff of Strawberry-Tamalpais Preschools are **prohibited** from working for families currently enrolled at the preschools in a capacity in which the teacher is solely responsible for the enrolled child (i.e. babysitting, chauffeuring, etc.).

## CALENDAR

Tamalpais Preschool runs from late Aug - early June, plus a summer program. We try to follow the local public school calendar as much as possible with respect to holidays & staff in-service days.

# **PRESCHOOL EVENTS**

## **CHURCH & EVENTS**

Please note that we lease our space from the Mt. Tamalpais United Methodist Church, which hosts prayer groups and events for parishioners and the surrounding community. We ask that you be respectful and kind to our neighbors, which includes respecting designated parking.

# TUITION & BILLING PROCEDURES

## BILLING QUESTIONS

Any questions about billing should be addressed to Rose Moran, our Chief Operating Officer: 415-246-4941, [rosesp1@yahoo.com](mailto:rosesp1@yahoo.com). Teachers cannot answer billing questions.

## TUITION

Tuition fees are based on our "September through June" calendar and are divided into ten equal monthly payments for your convenience. The first payment is collected prior to beginning school as your 'deposit'. The 9 remaining payments are billed Sept through May. Full fees are due for the months in which holidays occur. The operating expenses of the school must be met each month from tuition fees. No refund is given for days missed, including absence for illness, vacation or unexpected circumstances.

Bills are emailed on the 5th of each month through our online payment system, Brightwheel. Tuition is paid in advance and Child Care charges are billed in arrears. Payment is due by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month; a \$15 late fee will be charged for tuition not received by the 31st. In addition, there will be a charge at an annual interest rate of 18% (1.5% per month) on any unpaid balance over 30 days. There will be a \$10 fee charged for all returned checks.

## AFTERCARE ENRICHMENT

Questions regarding Afternoon Enrichment should be addressed to the Preschool Director or the Afternoon Enrichment Staff.

Late pick-up results in additional fees. When lateness for the 1:00 and 3:00PM blocks occurs, the charge incurred is the amount of an additional Child Care Block (\$24 or \$26/block). When the first 5:00 lateness occurs, a \$5 fine is charged for any part of each 15 minute segment of time. Subsequent 5:00 lateness incidents result in a \$25 fine for any part of each 15 minute segment of time. Abuse of pick-up promptness may result in loss of enrichment privileges.

There is a 45 minute rest time between 1:00 and 3:00PM block, as required by California State Law. Children who nap, nap during that time.

# **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

## **WITHDRAWAL**

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

When parents have a concern or complaint, the following steps should be taken:

Step 1: Parents are encouraged to attempt to resolve concerns directly with the child's teacher, Director of the school and Chief Operating Officer. Often problems are reconciled at this level.

Step 2: If the problem is not resolved to the parents' satisfaction, a phone call should be placed to the President of the Board of Trustees. The President will then schedule a meeting with all parties involved, and attempt to reconcile the issue.

Step 3: If the issue is still not resolved to the parents' satisfaction, they may address the Board of Trustees directly. This is done by contacting the President and setting an appointment to attend the next scheduled monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Step 4: The Board of Trustees will then respond in writing to all parties involved. The Board's decision will be final and without provision for appeal.

### **WITHDRAWAL**

During the September-January semester, withdrawal may be made in any month provided 30 days notice is given before the beginning of the next month or full fee for that month must be paid. However, withdrawal from the February-June semester must be made by notification prior to January 20<sup>th</sup>, or full tuition will be charged for the February through June semester. Due notice of withdrawal is notification by mail or telephone to the Director.

The school reserves the right to exclude children from enrollment or attendance if parents do not abide by Corporation Policies; if a child does not abide by standards of conduct as determined by the staff; or if a child appears ill, over-fatigued, or immature for the daily program.

## **HOURS OF OPERATION FOR PRESCHOOL**

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Morning Block
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Daily Program
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Aftercare/Block 1
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Aftercare/Block 2

Tamalpais Preschool Mailing Address  
PO Box 1012  
Mill Valley, California 94942