

PARENT HANDBOOK

Westford Preschool

at St. Mark's



Revised July 2013

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🌀 INTRODUCTION 🌀

Welcome to Westford Pre-School at St. Mark's! We have been serving children from 2.9 – 7 years since 1964 in St. Mark's Church. We have a bright, spacious and cheerful environment in which to care for and teach your child. Our developmentally appropriate curriculum encourages exploration and learning through free play, art, music, story time, science, math and literacy activities.

We offer morning preschool classes. We also offer an extended day option with "lunch bunch" and our afternoon enrichment classes.

I am most proud of our teaching staff. We have a very low staff turnover with many of our staff having been here for six to twenty years! Our teachers are the best and truly care about and enjoy working with young children.

We are private, nonprofit, and non-denominational. We are licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.

Please call, e-mail, or visit us online or in person!

Louise Marinilli
Director

Contact Information ⓘ

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www.wpsk.org

Our Philosophy and Statement of Purpose

At Westford Preschool at St. Mark's, we believe parents are a child's first teachers. We look forward to working with families to provide a safe, nurturing and accepting environment in which children can thrive as they make the transition from home to wider social and academic settings. Guided play fosters the ability to cooperate in a group, take turns, speak, listen, share and self regulate. These social interaction skills are the most important factor in school readiness and the foundation that children need to learn academic skills. We build self-confidence through careful modeling, questioning and guidance. Our goal is to help children see themselves as problem-solvers, risk takers and capable learners and to give them a successful start to school.

It is our goal to foster the cognitive and creative potential of every child in a stimulating environment. We provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum in an academic setting following the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care Curriculum Guidelines. The program's curriculum and teaching methods are grounded in the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) principles of child development.

CLASS INFORMATION

Class Schedules

We have two, three, and four day morning preschool classes for ages 2.9 and older. To extend your child's day, we also provide "lunch bunch", enrichment programs and before and after school care.

Morning Preschool Classes

Two-day AM	9:00 - 11:30	Tues, Thu
Two-day AM	9:00 - 11:30	Mon, Wed
Three-day AM	9:00 - 11:30	Mon, Wed, Fri
Three-day AM	9:00 - 11:30	Tues, Thu, Fri
Three-Day AM	9:00 - 11:30	Mon, Wed, Thu
Four-day AM Fall Fives	9:00 - 11:30	Mon - Thu

Lunch Bunch 11:30 - 12:30 Mon - Fri

Afternoon Classes

Enrichment Classes 1:00 - 2:00 OR 1:00 - 3:00 Mon - Thu

Dismissal Times

Please note the dismissal times. A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged after 11:40 AM for our AM classes, 12:40 PM for our Lunch Bunch, and 3:10 PM for our PM classes. In the case of an emergency, a parent must notify the school and a teacher will stay with the child until arrangements can be made to pick up the child.

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch is available to all students and is limited to 20 children per day. The space for your child is considered reserved when payment is received. Children participating in the Lunch Bunch will bring their lunch to school from home.

For the AM classes, at dismissal time (11:30) a teacher will gather the Lunch Bunch. They will get their lunches and eat in one of the classrooms. After lunch they will free play until dismissal at 12:30 PM.

Oral Health

EEC requires all children that are in care for more than 4 hours or eat a meal, while in our care, brush their teeth. WPS staff will assist children in tooth brushing following lunch. Parents are asked to bring a toothbrush from home, in a case, in their child's lunch box or to provide a toothbrush to be left at school if they will be doing lunch bunch on a regular basis. Toothbrushes need to be replaced every 3 months.

Enrichment Classes

These classes are available in monthly sessions centered on a particular theme, such as science, music, or nature. These classes are taught by certified teachers with a maximum of 20 children per class. Enrichment classes offer you and your child flexibility.

You can enroll your child for a single class, or regularly for one or more afternoons throughout the school year. Depending on your choice of classes, your child can attend school all day until 3:00 or come to school an additional afternoon. Children staying all day will have a rest time after lunch.

Summer Fun Time

We offer a four day per week program during the summer for three weeks. Each week is centered around a different theme.

∞ ADMISSIONS, TUITION & SCHOLARSHIPS ∞

Enrollment

To enroll, children need to be 2 years 9 months old (2.9). Students are required to have an annual physical carried out by a licensed physician, the results of which are reported to the school on a signed School Health Form. Included on that form must be a complete, up-to-date history of immunizations. All medical and emergency forms must be at school prior to your child's first day. Massachusetts regulations dictate that we cannot allow your child to attend school unless this information is in your child's file and up to date.

A mailing is sent in mid-February to all parents on our mailing list. Children are accepted into the fall class from all registrations received by the close of the Open Registration date in the following order:

- Current returning students
- Siblings of current or former students
- New students placed according to parental contact date

Students may enroll during the school year if space is available.

Parents are invited to visit us at any time with their children. If you wish to ensure you have someone available to answer your questions, please call to make an appointment.

Westford Pre-School at St. Mark's does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or marital status.

Late Entry Enrollment

All children, including siblings, whose birthdays fall after September 1 can be placed on our late-entry waiting list for the month in which they turn two years and nine months.

We will accommodate all age-appropriate children on our waiting lists, and then give preference to the oldest child on the waiting list. If two children have the same birth date, a sibling will be given preference. If two non-siblings have the same birth date, the first listed will be given preference.

Withdrawal/Termination

We expect that you are registering your child for the school year, but we recognize the following exceptions:

The child is not adjusting satisfactorily to the school program. This will be determined by conference with parents, teachers and the Director. A referral procedure will be followed and written documentation will be given to the parents.

Removal of the family from the area (a permanent move)

Family emergency which makes continued enrollment impossible

Your tuition is two months behind as per the tuition payment policy.

All other withdrawals require thirty days notice in writing or one tuition payment in lieu of notice. We will help a child prepare for withdrawal in a manner consistent with his/her ability to understand. Letters concerning withdrawal should be sent to:

Board of Directors
Westford Pre-School
PO Box 271
Westford MA 01886

Tuition

Please note that you are agreeing to pay an entire year's tuition when you enroll your child. You are not paying for each month separately, and do not receive a discount or refund for months in which school vacations, holidays or occasions you keep your child out of school (such as a family vacation) occur.

The annual tuition is divided into 10 monthly payments, the first of which is due in the spring prior to the school year beginning in the fall and is non-refundable. The nine remaining payments are due on the first of each month from September 1 through May 1. You will be given a sheet of tuition coupons upon your enrollment.

Your child will be excluded from all field trips if tuition payments are not up-to-date. If your tuition is two months behind, we reserve the right to terminate your child's placement after the fifteenth of the following month if tuition is not brought up to date.

If there is an outstanding balance as of June 30, you will not be allowed to have any of your children attend until the outstanding balance is paid.

Scholarships

Purpose of a scholarship:

- To allow a child currently attending to remain in that program if the family's financial situation should change and the parent(s) would otherwise have to withdraw the child (loss of job, illness in family, family emergency).
- To allow enrollment of a child whose parents are unable to pay. A scholarship could be requested by the Rector, Director, Staff or Board member, Public School Personnel, Parent

Granting of a scholarship:

Scholarships, when funds are available, are granted at the discretion of the Director and the Board of Directors. All names are held in strictest confidence.

Scholarships are available on an income based sliding scale. The Board will be kept informed as to the amount of the scholarship but not to whom it was granted.

Priority will be given to children/families currently in the program, then granted on a first come - first served basis.

CALENDAR

We are in session from after Labor Day until the first week in June. Our summer fun program runs from the end of July to mid-August for four weeks.

Cancellations or Delays

If Westford Public Schools cancel or delay due to weather or road conditions, we cancel or delay also.

If Westford delays opening one hour, we delay our morning classes one hour.

If Westford delays opening two hours, we cancel our morning classes with afternoon classes, Lunch Bunch and Enrichment meeting as scheduled.

If Westford cancels afternoon kindergarten, we cancel our afternoon classes.

You will only be notified by phone if school needs to be canceled for any other reason (such as no heat or a conflict with St. Mark's Church).

Snow Days

We do not make up snow days.

No-School Days

There are two planned no-school days when the staff meets to discuss progress reports. There are other planned no-school days for parent/teacher conferences. Preschool conferences are held in January.

You have received a calendar showing all planned no-school days. Each month you will also receive a newsletter showing dates of special activities for your child's class. The newsletter is available by email and/or hard copy. It is important to read and save the newsletter so that your child can participate fully in our program and not miss activities.

Closing the School

In the case of an emergency necessitating the closing of the school for the remainder of the day (such as fire, natural disaster, power outage, or loss of heat or water), parents will be notified by phone. Anyone unable to reach a parent on the phone tree will notify the Director, who will call the emergency numbers for that child. If evacuation of the building is required, parents will be notified when called as to the location of their children.

Special Party Days

Although snacks are provided daily by the school, each parent may be asked occasionally during the year to provide part of the supplies for a Holiday party.

We celebrate birthdays as well as 1/2 birthdays for all those with summer birthdays. Due to the increasing number of children with food allergies, we are no longer able to allow parents to bring in a special snack for their child's birthday. Please do not send in "goodie bags" or other items for your child to hand out to classmates. If you would like your child to bring something special we suggest special plates or napkins for snack time.

If you can volunteer that day as a helper, your "presence" is the best "present" you can give.

☞ COMMUNICATION AND INVOLVEMENT ☞

Communication

We feel communication between parents and staff is of the utmost importance. If you have questions, complaints or problems, contact us! Parents and teachers may bring their complaints to any teacher, the Director, assistant Director, any school Board member, or the Vestry of St. Mark's Church.

Also, please let us know when there are any changes within the family which may affect your child's behavior (such as the death of a pet or the sickness of a relative).

Class Representatives

From each program, at least one parent representative is selected. This "class rep" is the liaison between the school and the parents. Please contact any member of the preschool Board for complaints and/or ideas you would like to share with the class or school, or for answers to any questions you may have.

Progress Reports and Parent/Teacher Conferences

Two times each year for our preschool classes, we prepare a written progress report for each child, with a copy for the parent(s). Conferences are scheduled in January after progress reports are sent home. In addition, we are required to bring any special problems or significant developments to your attention as soon as they arise. Conferences may also be scheduled at any time by parent or teacher request. If your child is disabled, you will receive a progress report every three months.

Assessment and Referral

If your child is thought to have a special concern, we will first observe him/her and report any observations to the Director. A written record of the observation will be placed in the child's file. If a concern is evident, the Director will contact the parent(s) for a conference with the teachers and/or Director. The parents will be provided with a brief summary of the observations of the staff and any efforts the staff has made to accommodate the child's needs. We will also provide to the parents a referral to a specialist, including a written reason for the referral. We will obtain written consent from the parent before any referral is made. A current list of referral services is kept on file. The Director is always available by appointment for individual conferences at your request and will provide assistance in making referrals.

Referrals may be to:

- Your pediatrician for vision or hearing screening
- Family Counseling Services
- Special Education Department in your home town
(in Westford - Director of Special Education Services, 692-5565).

Lending Library

We have available for loan several books and of interest to parents of young children about such topics as child development, behavior management and hyperactivity. The lending library is located in the hallway. Please sign out books that you borrow and return them in a timely fashion so others may read them also.

Parent Volunteers

Although parent volunteering is not required, it is encouraged. This helps to improve the quality of our program and also benefits the children. There is a volunteer calendar available outside each classroom. Also, we have a monthly newsletter to help parents stay informed as well as daily plans that are posted.

If your being here disrupts your child, we reserve the right to ask you not to volunteer for a while. Your child's adjustment to the program is our primary concern. It is not unusual for a child to act differently in the presence of his/her parent.

Volunteer Guidelines

- Assist in the art activity, help outside, put names on papers, play games in small groups, serve a snack, read a story, help at cleanup time, escort children to the bathroom (if a CORI has been received), and just be an extra lap whenever a child needs one.
- Share your special talent! (play an instrument, tell stories)
- USE SCHOOL RULES: "walking feet", "indoor voices", "bell means stop and listen".
- Be positive when correcting behavior - avoid "no" or "don't".
Instead of saying "Don't throw the blocks" say "Blocks are for building". Instead of saying "Don't run" say "Please use walking feet."
- Encourage children to handle disputes verbally: "Use your words".
- Remind of rule and give one more chance or divert to another activity.
- Seek guidance of teacher in classroom.
- All volunteers will work under the supervision of the classroom teachers.

Please note daily schedules for preschool classes are posted in each area of the school. Every day each child has the opportunity to play outside, make an art item, play in the free play area, practice a skill, hear a story, sing a song and have a snack. The schedule ensures that each child has an opportunity to do all of these things.

Parents' Rights

You have the right to make unannounced visits to your child's room while your child is present. You have the right to request an individual conference with the staff. We have the responsibility to make the staff available. You have the right to meet with either the Director or her designee prior to admitting your child. You are also given the opportunity to visit the classrooms either at the meeting or prior to the enrollment of your child.

You will receive in writing:

- Written statement of purpose
- Types of services provided
- Referral policy
- Behavior management policy
- A list of suggested nutritious foods for snacks and meals
- The policy for identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect
- The transportation plan
- A copy of the health care policy (if you request it)

- The procedure for administering medication
- The procedures for providing emergency health care
- The illness exclusion policy
- A copy of the fee schedule

(All of this information may be contained in the Parent Handbook).

We have a procedure for allowing your input in the development of policy and procedure. We allow you to make suggestions, but it is up to us to decide whether or not they will be implemented.

❧ HEALTH AND SAFETY ❧

Health Care

We must notify you immediately of any injury which requires emergency care. We must also notify you, within 24 hours, if any first aid is administered to your child.

All staff are certified in first aid and CPR. In the case of an accident or injury, first aid will be administered by a teacher. Emergency contact lists are located in the first aid kit in each classroom. If necessary, the parent, child's physician or ambulance will be called. All injuries are logged in the Injury Report Log, and reported on an Injury Report Form to be signed by the parent and kept in the child's record. The Health Care Policy is posted in each classroom and is on file in the Director's office.

Mildly Ill Children

Mildly ill children shall be isolated on a mat while the teacher calls a parent. Books, crayons or paper will be supplied if the child wishes.

Medication Policy

Medication will only be administered if it is an emergency situation or if it is required to complete a prescribed dosage. Medication will only be given by staff members who have completed the EEC Medication training and a record will be kept in the child's file according to EEC regulations.

- No medication will be given to a child without written parental authorization.
- All prescription and non-prescription medication shall be administered only with a written order from a physician (may include the prescription label). This order will include specific instructions as to dosage, times and duration.
- Topical non-prescription medications require written parental authorization
- All medication must be in its original container and labeled with the child's name.
- All medication will be kept in the emergency box.

Infection Control

Children must be excluded from school if they have:

- **Fever** greater than 100 degrees orally. Children need to be fever free, without fever medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Diarrhea** within previous 24 hours.
- **Vomiting** within previous 24 hours.
- **Strep throat** – for 24 hours after treatment has begun and is fever free for 24 hours. Children may not

attend school while awaiting the results of a strep test.

- **Impetigo**– for 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- **Conjunctivitis** (pink eye)-for 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- **Rash**– if accompanied by fever or behavior change until a physician determines that illness is not a communicable disease.
- **Head Lice**– until no nits present.
- **Pertussis**– for 5 days of appropriate antibiotic therapy.
- **Severe cold** – persistent cough and/or heavy nasal discharge.
- **Appear sick but with no apparent symptoms**

Toileting

Children will be encouraged to visit the bathrooms a minimum of two times during the course of a two and a half hour day accompanied by a teacher. If a child needs to use the facilities at any other time, the child will be accompanied by a teacher or CORI'd adult. All children will wait with the adult in charge in the hallway outside the bathrooms while others use the facility. There will be no more than 10 children in any group using the facilities at one time.

No child shall be punished, verbally abused, or humiliated for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.

Children shall wash their hands with liquid soap and running water after toileting and before snack. Individual paper towels are provided at the child's level for hand drying.

Staff shall wash their hands with liquid soap and running water after assisting children with toileting or toileting themselves, before handling food, after coming in contact with bodily fluids or discharges and after cleaning. Individual paper towels shall be used to dry hands.

Clothing soiled by feces, urine, vomit or blood shall be double bagged in plastic and stored apart from other items.

Extra school owned clothing is available for changing purposes, and must be laundered and returned after being worn by a child.

Diapering

Diapers shall be checked every two hours and changed regularly when soiled or wet.

A cushioned, waterproof pad and disposable covers are available in the Yellow Room bathroom. The pad shall be used only for diapering, and shall be cleaned with a disinfectant cleaner after each use. The disposable pad shall be for single use only.

Children shall be washed and dried with individual, disposable wash cloths during each diaper change.

Running water is available in the diapering area for hand washing. Children's hands shall be washed thoroughly with liquid soap and running water after a child has been changed.

Staff members shall wash their hands with liquid soap and running water after changing the child. Individual paper towels shall be used to dry hands. Children and staff must wash their hands after coming in contact with bodily fluids or discharges.

Clothing or cloth diapers soiled by feces, urine, vomit or blood shall be double bagged in plastic and stored apart from other items. Soiled disposable diapers must be double bagged in sealed bags and placed in a separate covered container. The container must be emptied at least daily.

Diapering areas and hand washing areas are separate from areas used for food preparation.

Child Abuse

Our staff shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in our care and custody. All our staff are trained in child abuse policies, and are mandated reporters.

As per the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care: All staff attend workshop on recognizing child abuse.

PREVENTION OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- (a) WPS shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in the center's care and custody.
- (b) WPS shall develop and follow written procedures for the reporting of any suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect as required by M.G.L. c.119, 51A. The procedures shall include:
1. All staff are mandated reporters and shall report suspected child abuse or neglect. The report shall be made either to the Department of Social Services (454-5255) pursuant to M.G.L. c.119, 51A, or to the WPS Director.
 2. The WPS Director shall immediately report suspected abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Services, pursuant to M.G.L. c.119, 51A.
 3. The WPS Director shall notify the Department of Early Education and Care immediately after filing a 51A report, or learning that one has been filed, alleging abuse or neglect of a child while in the care or custody of the center or during a program related activity.
 4. WPS shall cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect, including identifying parents of children currently or previously enrolled in the center; providing consent for disclosure to the Office of information from, and allowing the Office to disclose information to, any person and/or agency the Office may specify as necessary to the prompt investigation of allegations and the protection of children. Failure to cooperate may be grounds for suspension, revocation or refusal to issue or renew a license.
 5. WPS shall develop and maintain written procedures for handling any suspected incident of abuse or neglect, which includes but is not limited to ensuring that an allegedly abusive or neglectful staff member does not work directly with children until the Department of Social Services investigation is completed and for such further time as the Office requires.

🌀 SCHOOL POLICIES 🌀

Legal Status

We need to be notified immediately of any change in the legal status and the results of all judicial and administrative proceedings regarding your child.

Transportation

Transportation is the parents' responsibility. We provide a class list to assist you in making carpool arrangements. For safety reasons we ask that you enter the parking lot from Graniteville Road and exit onto Cold Spring Road. Please do not park on the ramp in front of the Church as it blocks the flow of traffic.

Westford Public School buses are used for all field trips.

Sibling Policy

All field trips are limited to current students, their teachers and parent chaperones. Younger or older siblings will not be included. The purpose of our field trips is to provide our students with a safe and well supervised off-site experience which will serve to increase their knowledge of the world around them. These are planned considering the interest level and attention span of three to five year olds as a special experience now that they are "big enough".

Similarly, siblings cannot accompany parent volunteers on regular class days-- our program is not licensed for or set up for younger children. Because parent chaperones are a very necessary ingredient in this venture, we do not wish to exclude anyone from helping us. Many parents often are able to trade babysitting with other preschool parents. All chaperones must have completed a CORI through WPS.

First Aid on Field Trip

We provide a ratio of three to five children with one adult by using parent chaperones.

One teacher is designated to carry the first aid kit with emergency list.

If the parent is present, the nearest teacher supports the parent such as providing first aid or phoning. If the parent is present:

For a minor cut or injury, the teacher administers first aid and reports the injury to the parent upon dismissal using an injury report form which must be signed by the parent and returned. The original is returned to the parent and a copy is placed in the child's record. The information is entered in the Injury Log.

For a more serious injury, the teacher administers any first aid required, and comforts the child while another adult calls the parent, emergency contact, or child's doctor for further instructions. The injury is reported as above.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Lunch Recommendations

Children ages 3-5 should have the following components in their lunch:

- 3/4 c. milk or fluid
- 1-1/2 oz meat or poultry
- 1-1/2 oz cheese
- 1 egg or 3 Tbs. peanut butter
- 2 or more servings of fruit/ vegetable
- 1/2 slice of bread or alternative

Some suggested ways to meet the recommendations include: juice box or thermos of milk, 1/2 sandwich (peanut butter and jelly, sliced lean meat and cheese, egg salad), fruit (apple, orange, banana), carrot or celery sticks, yogurt. We suggest that desserts be kept to a minimum. When children find these in their lunch box, they are tempted to eat them first and are often too full to eat the nutritious foods.

Behavior Management

Our behavior management is consistent and based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of the children. We direct behavior management to the goal of maximizing the growth and development of the children and for protecting the group and the individuals in it. Where appropriate and feasible, children participate in the establishment of such rules, policies and procedures.

To foster self-management we:

- Have group discussions concerning appropriate behavior
- Plan activities with the children's development and needs in mind
- Encourage the child to verbalize his/her complaint
- Re-direct the child to another activity
- Separate the child from the group with adult supervision
- The Director to talk with the child. She may call the parent to remove the child for the day.

We prohibit:

- Corporal punishment or spanking of children
- Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect or abusive treatment
- Depriving children of meals or snacks
- Force feeding children
- Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet; or forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing a child to remain on the toilet, or using any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting
- Kicking (we remove the child's shoes immediately)
- Tantrums: The teacher in charge handles the situation unless she requests help. We remove the child from the area to a quiet location and stay with the child until calm. We never mention former tantrums.

Suspension

A child will only be suspended if the Behavior Management procedures have been followed, and, in the opinion of the staff, the child is still a threat to the safety of the other children in the program. The Director will call the parents to pick up their child and will provide them with a written statement with the reason for the suspension. A child is never suspended for more than one day.

❧ REQUIRED POLICY STATEMENTS ❧

Your Child's Records

- **Inspection of Record**

You have the right to view your child's entire record upon request. We must provide access within two business days unless you consent to a delay. You have the right to receive a copy of any part of the record, although we may charge a reasonable fee for the cost of duplicating the materials.

- **Confidentiality of Record**

Information in your child's record is privileged and confidential. Except where the regulations specifically authorize access by third parties, no individuals or organizations other than yourself and school personnel working directly with your child are allowed to have access to information in your child's record without your specific, informed, written consent.

We maintain a written log which identifies anyone who has had access to or received any information out of the record. This log is available only to you and school personnel. You will be notified if your child's record is subpoenaed.

- **Amendment to Record**

You have the right to add information, relevant comments, or other written materials to your child's record. You also have a right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted.

You are entitled to meet with the Director (or his/her designee) to discuss your objection to information that is in the record, and to receive a written decision. The Director will give you a decision in writing, stating the reasons for the decision, within one week after the conference. If the Director's decision is in your favor, he/she shall immediately take steps to put the decision into effect.

Disposition of Record

Upon your written request, when your child is no longer in our care, we can give you your child's record or transfer it to any other person or organization that you identify.

Providing Information to the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)

We must make available to the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care any information required to be kept and maintained under regulations. This includes information in your child's record. Authorized employees of the Office are not to remove identifying case materials from these premises and are required to maintain the confidentiality of individual records.

Availability of Regulations

The center must have a copy of 606 CMR 7.00, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Group Day Care and School Age Child Care Programs, on the premises, available to any person upon request. If you have questions about any of the regulations, ask us to show them to you.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire Emergencies and Evacuation Plan: In case of fire, we evacuate the premises according to plans posted in all rooms. The teacher will take the emergency box and the attendance sheet. The school gathers at the sandbox, and we take attendance to assure all children have been evacuated. The Director will bring a cell phone in the event the Fire Department or parents need to be contacted.

Fire drills will be held each month at different times during the day. A log shall be kept in the Director's office noting the date, time, and effectiveness.

Earthquake: Children would be brought to center of room away from windows and evacuated to sandbox area when safe to do so.

Power outage: School is closed if no power. If power outage occurs during school, National Grid will be notified and an approximate duration of outage will be determined. If needed parents will be notified by phone to pick up children.

Water Loss: School is closed if there is no running water. If occurs during school parents will be notified by phone to pick up children.

Heat Loss: School is closed if there is no heat. If occurs during school parents will be notified by phone to pick up children.

Bomb Threat: Any call of threatening nature will be recorded as accurately as possible and reported immediately to the Westford Police. Children will be evacuated from building if necessary.

Any suspicious package, article or letter will be reported to the Westford Police. It will not be touched.

Medical Emergencies: All teachers are certified in First Aid training and CPR. First aid kits are located in the kitchenette area and in each classroom. In case of injury or illness the teacher present will provide first aid. The parent will be called if necessary or an ambulance if transport to medical facility needed. Emergency cards for each child are kept in each classroom.

Missing Child: An immediate search of premises to be conducted. Westford Police to be notified. Parents to be notified.

Unauthorized or Suspicious person: Any staff noticing a suspicious person on premises to notify the director who will question the person. Teachers to secure safety of children until identification can be made. Westford Police to be notified if warranted. All Sexual Offenders Record of Information received to be posted in the teacher's lounge.

Shelter in Place: Children will remain inside the building and windows closed in the event that Public Safety officials advise.

Widespread emergency: In the case of a widespread emergency, children to be transported by public school bus to Westford Academy or Blanchard School which are emergency shelters for the town of Westford. Parents would be notified by cell phone of the nature of the emergency, children's location, and the need to pick them up. Teachers will remain with the children until all have been picked up by a parent.

FACILITY AND STAFF

Facility

We are very excited about our facility! We have three large classrooms, each measuring over 700 square feet. The attractive colors and numerous windows in each classroom provide a bright and cheerful environment in which children can play and learn. The glass windows in the Director's office give a clear view of the entrance and hallway at all times.

The hallway has been widened to allow more room for parents and children at drop-off and pick-up time. During school hours, the education wing is used solely for the preschool, and is safely secured from the rest of the building.

Outside we have a large playground area where the children can use riding toys such as wagons, scooters and tricycles. We also have a climbing structure with a slide. Pails, shovels, and construction type trucks are available for the children to use in the sand area.

Teachers/Staff

Our staff is deeply committed to children and to providing a nurturing and comfortable environment. All staff meet monthly to plan and coordinate curriculum.

The staff also participates in Early Childhood conferences and workshops. All teachers meet or exceed the Department of Early Education and Care requirements for teacher certification. Our staff also is able to draw upon their own experiences as parents.

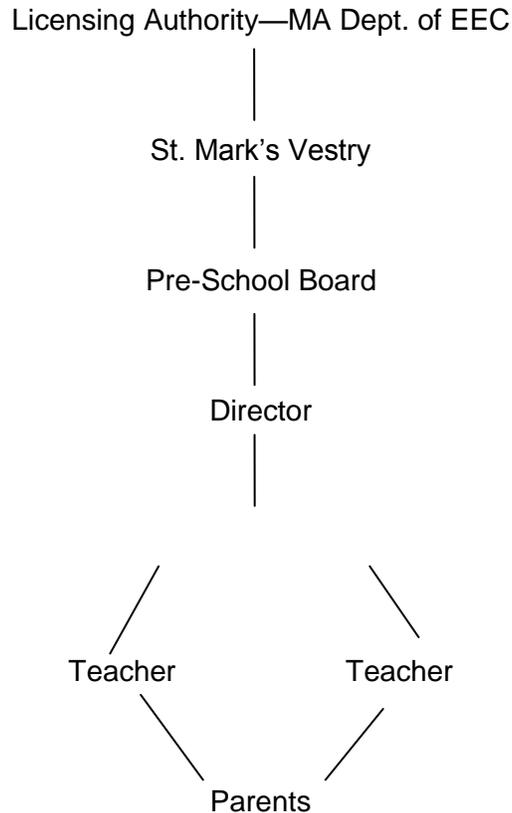
As the staff feels communication is of utmost importance, you are welcome to meet at any time with the teachers and/or the Director about any concerns or questions you may have.

Board of Directors

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care is the licensing authority for Westford Pre-School at St. Mark's, which is governed by the Westford Pre-School Board of Directors.

The Board meets monthly and sets all policies governing the school. The chair and at least one other member are also members of St. Mark's Church. At least three members of the Board shall be parent representatives from the school classes. The Director and the Treasurer serve as non-voting members.

Any parent may bring a concern at any time to any member of the Board.



Parents may contact the MA Department of Early Education and Care for information regarding program compliance history;

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
10 Austin St
Worcester, MA 01609
(508) 798-5180

Responsibilities of Board Members

- Attend Meetings

- » Attendance is required at the regular monthly meetings which are held during the school year. The meeting time and day will be determined at the first meeting.

- » Special Board meetings may be called if the need arises. Notification of these meetings will be in writing.

- » Regular meetings will routinely include the presentation of, discussion of, and voting on reports given by the Secretary, Treasurer, and the Director. Other topics may include but are not limited to:

Financial management -- salaries, budgets, fees and tuition, purchase of supplies and equipment

Compliance with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care regulations -- licenses and certifications, staff qualifications

Parental suggestions, concerns and/or questions

Miscellaneous issues -- staff changes, program changes

- Manage Parental Concerns

- » Identify specific concern
- » Present the option of discussing the concern at the time or specifying a time to discuss it by telephone
- » Explain Board policy regarding parental concerns:

The concern will be discussed at the next board meeting

The parent's name will be kept confidential unless otherwise requested

The Board's response will be communicated to the parent by the Board member contacted

If the parent is still concerned, the Board will respond in writing.