



The Little Lancers Preschool Program

at J. C. Solmonese Elementary School

Norton Public Schools



Family Handbook

2020-2021

It is the policy of Norton Public Schools to provide a learning environment free from discrimination or harassment. All students, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs including athletics and other extracurricular activities.

Welcome to The Little Lancers Preschool Program!

Contact Information

Mrs. Ann Marie Baker

Early Childhood Coordinator &
Assistant Principal of J.C. Solmonese School

508-285-0120

email: annmariebaker@norton.k12.ma.us

Mrs. Jeanne Sullivan

Director of Pupil Personnel

508-285-0194

email: jsullivan@norton.k12.ma.us

Mrs. Diana Savage

Team Chairperson for Preschool/JCS

508-285-0125

email: dsavage@norton.k12.ma.us

Mrs. Riitta Bolton

Principal of J.C. Solmonese School

508-285-0120

email: rbolton@norton.k12.ma.us

The Little Lancers Preschool Website:

<https://sites.google.com/norton.k12.ma.us/littlelancers>

Our preschool teachers and therapists can be reached via email, phone, or by a handwritten note. Please allow 24 hours for teachers to respond to your correspondence. The office phone number is 508-285-0120.

Educator: Monica Allen, M.Ed.

email: mallen@norton.k12.ma.us

Educator: Holly Butler, M.Ed.

email: hbutler@norton.k12.ma.us

Educator: Deirdre Greene, M.Ed.

email: dgreene@norton.k12.ma.us

Educator: Carin Tessier, M.Ed.

email: ctessier@norton.k12.ma.us

Educator: Jennifer Wakeling, M.Ed.

email: jwakeling@norton.k12.ma.us

Educator: Rebecca Macera, M.Ed.

email: rmacera@norton.k12.ma.us

Physical Therapist: Anielia Hodgson, M.S., P.T. email: ahodgson@norton.k12.ma.us

Speech & Language Pathologist:

Elizabeth Coger Norcliffe, M.S., CCC-SLP

email: enorcliffe@norton.k12.ma.us

Speech & Language Pathologist Assistant:

Jaclyn Bournazian, B.S., SPLA

email: jbournazian@norton.k12.ma.us

Occupational Therapist:

Emilie Packer, M.S.Ed, OTR/L

email: epacker@norton.k12.ma.us

Program Overview

The Little Lancers Preschool Program is the public preschool for Norton Public Schools. The preschool is an integrated preschool program. This means that the program is designed to serve and support typically developing children as well as children with delays or disabilities. A flexible and consistent structure and routine is offered, including activities designed to promote language and listening skills, gross and fine motor development, and social skills. There are also opportunities for imaginative and dramatic play, music, movement, sensory activities, and a wide variety of developmentally appropriate experiences. The preschool endeavors to create a strong foundation for future learning, and coordinates alignment with the Kindergarten program.

The preschool classroom enrollments are limited to fifteen students. In each classroom, there is one certified Early Childhood Educator (who is also licensed to teach children with disabilities) and at least one instructional assistant. There is also a team of therapists who collaborate with teachers to support identified areas of student need. These areas include speech language therapy, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. The staff members of the Little Lancers Preschool Program work together to create responsive and inclusive learning environments that are accessible to all children.

Our Philosophy and Goals

Children are the heart of the Little Lancers Preschool Program and they are at the focus of all that we do. Programming and curriculum are designed to facilitate optimum growth and development and to provide exemplary early learning experiences. In the integrated classroom, typically developing children model characteristic behaviors, social skills, and language for children with delays or disabilities. Instruction is flexible and can be modified based on what each child requires to make progress.

The preschool teachers and staff members strive to provide an environment with a hands-on, concrete, and multi-sensory approach to learning for all children. There are clear and consistent expectations for behavior. Programming is designed to develop the social skills of every child. Our preschool strives to maintain an inclusive, respectful, and honest community that is focused on learning and development. The classrooms are structured, individualized, imaginative and well-established, and the teachers and therapists are passionate and dedicated to early learning.

The preschool provides a developmentally appropriate setting that supports individual student needs. Each and every child is supported and challenged to function at his or her optimal level in the least restrictive environment. The preschool provides a positive approach to learning and discipline and prepares every child for the Norton

Public Schools Kindergarten program and beyond. The curriculum is thematically based, and it follows guidelines provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Early Education and Care. The preschool team works to revise and align curriculum regularly.

Community Peer Students

Community peers are vital to the success of the program, and all students are screened or evaluated as part of the Child Find Process each year. Community peers are identified as typically developing in the areas of socialization, behavior, self-help skills (must be toilet-trained), speech and language, and cognition. Community peers must turn 3 or 4 years old by August 31st of their attending year. In the event that a student is discharged from an Individualized Education Plan, he or she may have the opportunity to become a community peer student. Tuition payments will begin following the discharge meeting, and the student will follow the community peer schedule.

The community peers students attend school three or four days each week on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. The cost of the community peer program ranges from \$2,625.00 to \$4,725.00 per year. Families have the option of making ten payments, and tuition is due on the first Friday of every month. Families of three and four year olds are placed in requested sessions where possible, and we try our very best to accommodate all requests. Each session is two and a half hours long and does not include breakfast or lunch unless otherwise noted by teachers.

Morning Session: 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Afternoon Session: 12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Full Day Session: 8:30 a.m. To 2:30 p.m.

Every month, a calendar is sent home to families from teachers explaining unit activities and important information. A monthly newsletter will highlight happenings and upcoming events in the program, and will be sent to families via email. Please make sure that your current email address is on file at the main office so you receive all communication coming from the school.

Student Screenings

Preschool referrals are made through private preschools, daycare centers, pediatricians, Early Intervention centers, and families who relay concerns to our staff. When a child is referred to the preschool program for a screening (or formal evaluation), the staff first conducts a screening. The screenings are conducted for three, four and five year olds, and consist of parent questionnaires, one-to-one activities, and the use of a formal screening tool. This process assists preschool staff members in identifying a child's specific strengths and weaknesses. Children who present with significant deficits are referred for a targeted formal evaluation. Parents/guardians will get immediate

feedback from our preschool staff following the screening, and written feedback is provided within 7 to 10 days via mail.

If you have specific questions or concerns regarding your child and his or her IEP, please contact Mrs. Diana Savage, the Preschool Special Education Team Chair at 508-285-0125. Special education referrals can also be made via Mrs. Savage.

Policies and Procedures

Tuition: As previously mentioned, tuition for a Community Peer student ranges from \$2,625.00 to \$4,725.00 per school year. If you choose to pay in ten installments, tuition is due the first Friday of each month. Tuition payments can be made online through the Norton Public School website or by check or money order via mail.

- **Directions for Online Payment:** If you would like to make payments online, please go to the Norton Public Schools main web page and scroll down to “Quicklinks”. Select “online fee payments” and then, under transaction, select “Preschool Tuition 2019-2020”. Payments can be made by electronic check, MasterCard or Discover card.
- **Directions for Payment by Check or Money Order:** Tuition checks/money orders should be made out to Little Lancers Preschool and can be mailed to: Superintendent’s Office, 64 West Main Street, Norton, MA 02766. You can also hand deliver payments to the Superintendent’s office at this location. Unfortunately, we cannot accept tuition payments at J.C.S. at this time.

Contacting Your Child’s Teacher: If you would like to speak to your child’s teacher or therapist please contact the main office at 508-285-0120 to leave a message. Teachers are also available via email. Staff emails are found on the contact page of this handbook and on the school website. Please allow 24 hours for teachers to respond to you via email or phone message.

Sick Child/Exclusion Policy: Any time a child becomes ill during the school day, the school nurse will contact the parents/guardians directly. A child who presents with a fever over 100 degrees, vomiting, a rash, inflammation of the eye, diarrhea, or a communicable disease will be dismissed from school. Students need to be fever free (without a fever reducer) for 24 hours before returning to school. This policy is consistent in all public schools throughout the state, and is necessary to avoid outbreaks of illnesses.

Medication Policy: In order for medication to be administered at school, specific forms need to be completed by a physician and given to the school nurse. Medication distribution forms are available at the school nurse’s office. Please contact the school nurse with questions at 508-285-0127.

Absences: Please call the main office at 508-285-0120 if your child will be out on any given school day. Also, if your child travels to and from school on the minibus and will be absent from school, please notify Pupil Personnel Office as soon as possible at 508-285-0193 so that your child's bus driver can move onto the next stop.

School Closings: Our preschool follows all school closings listed under the Norton Public Schools for inclement weather, etc. Please refer to the district website for information regarding school closings.

Half School Days: From time to time, there are half days to conduct professional development for staff, to begin vacations, and to meet with parents for parent-teacher conferences. The preschool schedule for half days will be provided to families in September.

Snacks: Government guidelines prohibit the following foods in the preschool classroom: whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, chunks of raw carrots, large pieces of meat, and spoonfuls of peanut butter. Please do not send your child to school with these snacks. All snacks must be nut-free and peanut-free. For health and safety reasons, please label your child's snack and drink, or send snacks and drinks in a labeled container or lunch box.

Lunch and Rest For Full Day Students: More information to come from the teachers about procedures for bringing and buying lunch and milk at school.

Clothing: We try our very best to keep your child's clothing as clean as possible; however, your child will get messy in preschool! Please do not send your child to school in clothing that you don't want to get dirty. Removable clothing (i.e. hats, coats, etc.), backpacks and lunchboxes should be labeled, and children should wear shoes that are appropriate for outside play and running. Please send in a full set of spare clothes to school, labeled with your child's name in case of accidents or spills.

Toileting: Community peer students must be toilet-trained prior to entering our preschool. Please keep your child's teacher informed if there are changes to your child's toileting habits.

Backpacks: Please ensure that your child brings a full-size backpack to school to facilitate the safe transport of potentially fragile art projects.

Transportation: The safety of students is always our top priority. Please wait outside in the waiting area until the preschool doors are opened. We will unload children one car at a time, and ask that you remain patient during the drop off process. **DO NOT PASS CARS WAITING IN THE DROP OFF LINE.** Patience is essential during the drop process. Mini-buses will ALWAYS unload first. Please follow the same guidelines for pick up times as well. If you are arriving after 8:30, please park in the parking lot and bring your preschool student to the front office. If you would rather park your car and

walk your child over to the preschool doors, please make sure to park in a marked parking spot.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice a year, and individual conferences may be held at any point in the year if you have concerns regarding your child's development. Please contact your child's teacher or therapist if you have questions or concerns. Parent/Teacher Conferences follow the K-3 conference schedule and are generally held in late fall and early spring.

Volunteering

Community partnerships are essential to the Little Lancers Preschool Program. Our preschool works closely with Early Intervention, local outreach programs, families, parent-teacher organizations, the school site council, local nursery schools, and daycare centers. We welcome family participation in our preschool program. All volunteers must complete a CORI form before volunteering, and this can be done at the school's main office. Please contact your child's teacher to inquire about volunteer opportunities throughout the school year.

