



Tenaflly Integrated Preschool Handbook

2026-2027

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Our Mission and Vision

The Tenaflly Integrated Preschool Program provides a nurturing and inclusive environment where children of all abilities learn, play, and grow together. Our program fosters curiosity, independence, and confidence while building strong partnerships with families to support each child's academic and social success.

We value and respect every child's unique growth, offering opportunities for children with and without special needs to learn side by side, promoting empathy, acceptance, and meaningful relationships. With social-emotional development at the heart of our program, we help children build positive relationships, manage emotions, and develop a strong sense of self. Through purposeful play and hands-on exploration, we inspire creativity, discovery, and a love of learning, preparing each child for a smooth transition to kindergarten and lifelong success.

Administration

Mr. Michael Ben-David, Superintendent
Mrs. Brenda Yoo, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Sandy Mercedes, Director of Special Services
Mrs. Gayle Lander, Principal, Stillman Elementary School
Mrs. Erica Markovitz, Supervisor of Special Education

Location:

Walter S. Stillman Elementary School
Principal: Gayle Lander
Secretary: Mishona Waldis

Directory

Stillman Main Office	201-816-7710
Principal	201-816-7711
Nurse	201-816-7713

Helpful Websites:

[Tenaflly District Website](#)
[District Yearly Calendar](#)
[Integrated Preschool Website](#)

School Procedures

School Hours/ Closing

The school day will begin promptly at 8:45 am and will conclude at 3:00 pm. The preschool program will follow the Tenaflly Public School District Calendar, including inclement weather closings and delayed opening schedule.

Arrival and Dismissal:

We all play an important role in creating a safe and supportive learning environment for your child. Please ensure your child arrives at school on time and that a designated adult is available for pickup at the end of the day. Drop-off and pick-up will take place at the side door. Students should arrive at 8:45 AM and be picked up at 3:00 PM.

Parents and guardians must keep all contact information current. Only individuals listed on the Emergency Contact Form, with proper identification, will be permitted to pick up your child. This form should be updated whenever changes occur. In special circumstances, please contact the main office for assistance.

Visitors and Volunteers

As our youngest learners begin their educational journey, it's important to give them the time and space to adjust and build independence with their teachers. Throughout the school year, families will have opportunities to participate in engaging activities and volunteer in the classroom. Additional details about the [Visitors Policy](#) are available on the District website.

Attendance

Daily attendance is essential in developing a regular routine. It also sets a precedent for school attendance in the future. Students should arrive on time daily to participate in all scheduled activities for the day. Please let the school office know when your child is absent by calling the school office before 8:00 a.m. The safety of your child is our primary concern. A written request from the parent is necessary for early dismissal. Children must be picked up at the school office.

Blackboard Mass Notification System

- **This is our main means of communication with parents. This system will alert you to upcoming events as well as school closings and delays.**
- Please be sure to check your status on the **Blackboard Mass Notification System**.
- Alert emails and phone calls will be sent to addresses and numbers on file. It is the parents' responsibility to update these numbers and to inform the school of any changes in phone numbers or email addresses.
- All Blackboard directions can be found under the [parents tab](#) on the main page.

Illness Policy

You should keep your child at home if he/she has a fever or is contagious. When the child is fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication (i.e., Tylenol) they may return to school. Please do not give your child fever-reducing products before school in an attempt to "get through the day."

- **Lice**: Your child will be sent home if he/she is diagnosed with head lice, for you to treat with special shampoo to kill the lice and nits.
- **Chickenpox**: Return after lesions become dry.
- **Strep**: Return after 24 hours on medication
- **Vomiting**: If your child is sent home from school due to vomiting or demonstrates this behavior during the night, he/she should not be in school the following day. Children should be symptom-free for a full 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Conjunctivitis**: Students may return after 24 hours on doctor-prescribed eye medication

Personal Care Items

Each student should keep two full sets of clothing at school every day. Please ensure all items are weather-appropriate and include:

- Shirts
- Pants or a skirt
- Underwear and socks

In addition, please send a **crib sheet and blanket** every Monday. These will be sent home each Friday to be washed and should be returned the following Monday.

Children will need a **standard-size backpack** to carry their belongings and items home each day. Please **label all items with your child's name** to ensure they can be easily identified. If a child soils their clothing, the backup set will be used, and the soiled items will be sent home in a bag. Please return a clean replacement set the next day.

Meals and Snacks

Each day, children enjoy sharing snack and lunch time together, building patience, manners, independence, and language skills. Please send your child with healthy, ready-to-eat foods that are easy for them to handle independently—such as items cut into small pieces or peeled—and packed in small, manageable portions.

Students will eat lunch in their classrooms and may either bring lunch from home or purchase one through the HSA lunch program. Classroom teachers will share lunch ordering procedures at the start of the school year.

Rest Time

Each full school day includes a rest period of about one hour after lunch. During this time, relaxing music will play, and the lights will be dimmed to help children unwind. If a child does not fall asleep, they may rest quietly on their cot with a calm activity.

A cot will be provided, but please send a crib sheet and a small blanket in a labeled bag. Bedding will be sent home at the end of each week for washing and should be returned on Monday.

Outdoor Play

All preschool classes go outside each day as long as the temperature/wind chill is above freezing and it is not raining. Please plan accordingly and be sure your child is dressed for the weather with coats, hats and gloves as needed. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to have their children wear protective footwear, such as sneakers, each day to prevent injury during outdoor play. **Sandals and Crocs are prohibited.**

Birthday/Celebrations

Parents may join us in class to celebrate birthday parties. If not able to join us, you can still send in a snack for us to celebrate! Snacks should be small individual items. Some good choices are munchkins, fruit, cookies, or cupcakes. Please let your teacher know ahead of time what snack you will be bringing so that we can notify any parent of an allergy child to provide an alternate snack. Please email the teacher ahead of time to set up a day and time for the celebration. Party invitations passed out in school must be for all students in the class.

Toys

Toys from home should NEVER be sent to school unless requested by your child's teacher for a "Show and Tell" event. Your child may bring one small stuffed animal or doll to sleep with at rest time.

Communication

Open communication between our preschool families and teachers is a priority to ensure the best possible school experience for your child. In the preschool program we communicate with families regularly through email and phone calls. Please be sure to check your child's backpack each night for notes, newsletters, permission slips and other written communication.

Program Information

Our Curriculum: The Creative Curriculum for Preschool

Our Integrated Preschool Program uses *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*. The curriculum provides a balance of teacher-guided and child-initiated learning, with a strong emphasis on learning through play, exploration, and meaningful experiences.

Through this curriculum, children build knowledge and skills across all areas of development, including:

- **Social and Emotional Development:** developing self-regulation, confidence, and positive relationships.
- **Physical Development:** strengthening fine and gross motor skills.
- **Language and Literacy:** expanding vocabulary, communication, and early reading/writing skills.
- **Mathematics:** exploring numbers, patterns, shapes, and problem-solving.
- **Science and Technology:** investigating the world through observation, questioning, and discovery.
- **The Arts:** expressing creativity through music, movement, visual art, and dramatic play.
- **Social Studies:** learning about families, communities, and the larger world around us.

Children experience these areas of learning through daily routines and classroom centers such as blocks, dramatic play, art, library, discovery/science, math, and sensory exploration. Teachers plan both whole-group and small-group activities, while also giving children opportunities to make choices, practice independence, and follow their own interests.

The Creative Curriculum emphasizes that play is a child's work. Through play, children develop problem-solving skills, persistence, cooperation, and a love of learning, all critical foundations for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Conferences

There are two parent-teacher conferences each year, scheduled on the same dates as the elementary school conferences listed on the district calendar. The fall conference provides an opportunity for parents and teachers to share information and build an understanding of the child's needs. The spring conference focuses on reviewing the child's developmental progress and celebrating growth throughout the year.

Sample Daily Schedule

9:00-9:15	Unpack, Bathroom, Sign-In, Library Books
9:15-9:40	Daily Meeting • Calendar • “Mighty Minutes” Song or Game • Question of the Day • Yoga/Movement Break • Morning Message
9:40-10:10	Letter Work or Number Work
10:15-10:45	Small Groups
10:50-11:20	Specials
11:30-12:00	Lunch
12:00-12:45	Interest Areas/Centers Table Top Activities (Legos, Puzzles, etc.)
12:45-1:45	Quiet Time/Nap
1:45-2:00	Afternoon Snack
2:00-2:30	Read Aloud Large Group Activity or Game
2:30-3:00	PM Special or Play (Outside/Inside)

Preschool Code of Conduct

At the preschool level, we understand that all behavior—both positive and negative—serves a purpose. When children display inappropriate behavior, they are often trying to avoid something (such as an activity) or to gain something (such as a toy or attention). Our goal is to identify the reason behind the behavior and teach appropriate replacement skills to help children meet their needs in positive ways.

Our early childhood teachers take time to talk with students about their feelings and the situations that led to their behavior. Children are encouraged to use words to express emotions and resolve conflicts. Staff members support students by helping them verbalize their feelings, practice problem-solving, and develop self-regulation skills. Preschool staff use a variety of age-appropriate, research-based behavior intervention strategies including:

- Maintaining realistic expectations of children
- Providing clear and simple limits
- Preventive practices
- Modeling appropriate behaviors
- Positive redirection
- Conflict resolution /problem-solving techniques
- Providing logical and natural consequences for children's actions
- Removing children from the situation until individual counseling is possible

Preschool staff maintain open communication with families about student progress. Minor behavioral incidents may be shared by email, phone, written note, or in person. If a behavior becomes consistent, a conference will be scheduled. Strong home-school communication helps children understand that we are working together.

All student disciplinary matters will be addressed in accordance with district policies, handled on a case-by-case basis, and approached in an age-appropriate manner.