



Preschool 2026-2027 Student-Parent Handbook

**BE
RESPECTFUL**

**BE
RESPONSIBLE**

BE SAFE

**BE A
PROBLEM
SOLVER**



MISSION AND VISION

- Create a culture of academic excellence through inclusive and innovative learning opportunities for the whole child.
- Empower all learners to reach their full potential in a globally competitive world.

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Welcome & thank you for choosing Sycamore Preschool! We are proud to be an early childhood program licensed by the State of Ohio Department of Children and Youth. This handbook contains information regarding Sycamore's Preschool Program. The purpose of this handbook is to provide Sycamore Community Schools' students and parents/guardians with specific information concerning major policies, procedures, and regulations.

While every effort is made to present the information accurately, the information contained in this handbook is continually updated, and the actual text of the policy, procedure, or law should be consulted as the authoritative source of information.

Questions regarding this handbook should be directed to the Preschool Supervisor.

OUR DISTRICT MISSION

Create a culture of academic excellence through inclusive and innovative learning opportunities for the whole child.

OUR DISTRICT VISION

Empower all learners to reach their full potential in a globally competitive world.

OUR DISTRICT VALUES

- Academic Excellence
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Community
- Character
- Collaboration



A directory of all staff can be found on the district website: www.sycamoreschools.org

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

The preschool lottery process begins in January for the next school year. In February, families will be notified if their child is selected or placed on a waiting list. If selected, families will receive next-step instructions, including a tuition agreement, tuition deposit, and full registration requirements. Children must be 3 years old by August 1 and potty trained unless identified for special education services.

Student Records

All student records are confidential and are protected by the Privacy Act. Only school staff and the child's natural parents/legal guardians have access to the records. In addition, when a child on an IEP withdraws from the school, the student's new school must request school records in writing.

Tuition

Tuition is charged for students without an Individualized Education Plan. Upon acceptance into the Preschool program, a deposit is required at the time of registration to hold the student's spot. The remaining tuition will be charged in monthly installments for October-May payable by the first business day of each month. Failure to pay by the thirtieth day of the month will result in removal from the program. Payment can be made via check or through the district's online payment system.

Refund of one-half the monthly tuition payment will be made if your child is withdrawn from the 1st to the 15th day of the month. No refund will be made if withdrawal occurs after the 15th day of the month. The Preschool Supervisor may, in her discretion, authorize full refund of tuition if a student is withdrawn from the program by the mutual recommendation of the parent and district.

Returned Checks

When the district receives a check from a parent that is returned marked "insufficient funds," the Treasurer shall provide an opportunity for the payer to make proper payment (including any returned check charges) or to arrange for a satisfactory payment schedule. If payment is not received within sixty (60) days, the payment schedule is not adhered to, or the monies do not appear to be collectable, the Board of Education authorizes the Treasurer to remove the fee or charge from the District's accounts Receivable and to take appropriate action against the parent/guardians.

DISTRICT CALENDAR AND ATTENDANCE

Hours of Operation

The district program has classrooms at Symmes Elementary operates Monday through Thursday. Morning sessions run 9:10–11:50 a.m., and afternoon sessions run 1:15–3:55 p.m. Busing is provided for all preschool students, with session times determined by each student's future elementary school of attendance.

Sycamore Preschool operates on the same calendar as the Sycamore School District.

When the district is closed, Preschool classrooms are also closed. Please see the academic calendar located on the district website.

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for successful school achievement. Therefore, students are expected to attend class on a regular basis.

Regular attendance is essential for successful school achievement. Therefore, students are expected to attend class regularly. Please report your child's absence through one of the following methods:

1. Call the Symmes Attendance Line at **513-686-1707**
2. Email our attendance office at syattendance@sycamoreschools.org
3. Parent Square

School Closing and Delays Due to Emergencies

When schools are delayed or closed, the district will place a detailed announcement on the district website, www.sycamoreschools.org, as well as on the district's social media pages. In addition, Sycamore parents/guardians will receive a recorded call and text message at the home phone and mobile phone that is associated with their contact information in our student database system. All changes to contact information should be made in Final Forms.

School Closing and Delays Due to Inclement Weather

School closings and delays are based on concern for the safety of students, parents/guardians, and employees, and most school closings occur during winter months. During inclement weather, Sycamore Community Schools will typically operate as follows:

School Opening is Delayed:

- Morning Preschool classes will be canceled
- Afternoon Preschool classes will operate as usual

If schools are delayed or closed, the district will inform all media and place an announcement on the district website (www.sycamoreschools.org) and the district Facebook page (www.facebook.com/sycamoreschools).

OUR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Curriculum and Instruction

Our program is committed to providing a high-quality educational experience for every child. To achieve this, we implement a research-based curriculum (FrogStreet) that guides our daily activities and long-term learning goals. Our educators use this curriculum, along with insights from ongoing assessments, to provide purposeful and intentional activities tailored to children's individual needs and development. We continually use assessment data to adjust and refine our instruction to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

Daily Schedule

Our program features hands-on, inquiry-based learning through a state-approved curriculum that encourages each student to think critically and develop problem-solving skills. Every activity helps children build confidence while learning to live, work, and play with others.

Daily, students will participate in whole-group and small-group instruction, play-based centers, music and movement, and recess.

Formal Child Assessment

To monitor your child's developmental progress across all domains, we conduct a comprehensive formal child assessment (Early Learning Assessment) twice annually. The results of this assessment are shared with you, the parent, to provide a clear picture of your child's strengths and areas for growth. This is a critical step in our partnership to support your child's success.

Child Screening and Follow-Up

Within the first 60 days of enrollment, and annually thereafter, your child will participate in a comprehensive screening using a standardized tool (Sycamore Curriculum-Based Assessment and Acadience Preschool Early Literacy Indicators). This screening is a brief check to identify any potential developmental needs.

The results of the screening will be shared with the family within 30 days of the screening being completed. If the screening suggests a need for further evaluation or support, we will refer the child to our intervention team within 60 days of the screening date. We will then follow up with you within 30 days from the date of referral to support the next steps. We are dedicated to the early identification of needs and ensuring every child receives the support necessary to thrive.

Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year to allow families an opportunity to share any concerns or celebrations with their child's teacher.

CLASSROOM DESCRIPTIONS

Our preschool program offers a full continuum of settings with classrooms ranging from general education through specialized programming. There is at least a licensed teacher and a teaching assistant in each preschool classroom. The licensed teacher is a college graduate and holds certification/licensure as required by the State of Ohio. The classroom teacher and teaching assistant work closely to plan and provide learning experiences for young children. Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech/Language Pathologists, and Psychologists are also available to support children who have identified special needs. Typically developing children in the Sycamore Preschool classrooms must be able to function and care for themselves in a large group setting and must be toilet-trained. Children receiving special education services are not required to be toilet-trained.

The following is a list of our offerings:

Specialized Classroom

This classroom serves our students with significant communication, sensory, adaptive, and safety awareness needs. The teacher is an early childhood intervention specialist and provides general education and specially designed instruction to students. There are no more than 8 students in this classroom.

Integrated Classroom

The integrated classroom serves both typically developing students and students receiving special education services. The teacher is duly certified as an early childhood intervention specialist and PreK-3 general education teacher. The teacher provides the general education and specially designed instruction to students. There are no more than 16 students (50% are typically developing, while up to 50% receive special education services).

General Education Classroom

The general education classroom serves both typically developing students and students receiving special education services. The teacher provides the general education curriculum to students. An early childhood intervention specialist provides the specially designed instruction to identified students. There are no more than 16 students, with 10 students typically developing, and up to 6 identified students may be placed in this setting.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Sycamore Preschool Programs adhere to the guidelines set by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth with regard to student/staff ratios, required in-service trainings and professional development, and employee recruitment. We strive to provide the most efficient and appropriate supervision to all of our children in order to maintain a safe environment. The preschool staff is recruited, employed, assigned, and evaluated in accordance with adopted Sycamore Board of Education policies and without discrimination on the basis of age, race, national origin, sex, or disability. Preschool staff must pass a criminal background check as required by the State of Ohio law and maintain an up-to-date licensing file.

Nondiscrimination Policy

The Board is committed to an environment in which all individuals, including students, staff, job applicants, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business, are treated with dignity and respect. The Board prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, religion, sex, economic status, age, disability, military status, or legally acquired genetic information.

The Board designates the following individuals to serve as the District's compliance officers: Name/Title: Mark Zimmerly, Director of Operations, and Lisa Zelvy, Director of Pupil Support Services. Address: Sycamore Community Schools, 5959 Hagewa Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45242 Phone: (513) 686-1700 Emails: zimmerly@sycamoreschools.org and zelvyl@sycamoreschools.org.

The compliance officer is responsible for coordinating the District's efforts to comply with applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1975. The compliance officer is responsible for addressing any inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination or retaliation in a prompt and equitable manner.

Emergencies

Emergency medical forms will be kept on file in the Nurse's Office, and a copy of each will be given to the staff members. Parents/guardians or other responsible adults listed on the emergency forms will be contacted in case of emergency. **PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE ALWAYS CONTACTED FIRST.** The State of Ohio, Department of Education and Workforce requires that **three** contacts and numbers be listed on every registration form. Sycamore School District will periodically request an updated form be completed to ensure accuracy due to moves, changes in employment, etc.

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

Drop-off and pick-up procedures will be shared by preschool teachers.

Late Arrival Procedure:

If your child is late arriving to school, please proceed to Preschool Door 15. Please press the buzzer to connect with the front office and provide your child's name and teacher so they can notify the preschool staff. While waiting, scan the posted QR code with your smartphone to complete the digital sign-in, or ask the staff member to complete the form if you do not have a smartphone. Finally, a preschool staff member will meet you at Door 15, confirm your sign-in, and escort your child directly to their classroom.

Early Sign-Out Procedures:

To sign your child out of school early, please proceed to Preschool Door 15. Press the buzzer so the front office can notify your child's classroom, then scan the posted QR code with your smartphone to complete the digital sign-out. Please ask a staff member to complete the form if you do not have a smartphone. When the preschool staff member arrives with your child, present a valid government-issued photo ID so they can verify you are listed as an authorized contact on the Emergency Medical Form and ensure your sign-out is complete. Once your ID and sign-out are confirmed, your child will be released directly back into your care.

***Notification from the parent is required when a change (i.e., time, mode) occurs in your child's regular transportation plan. Send a note in your child's backpack or call the school office.

Statement of Security/Access

All doors to the Preschool will remain locked at all times. To enter the building, visitors must enter through the main door and press the buzzer to the right of the door. A staff member will buzz you in. All visitors must report to the office.

All staff members will wear a picture ID badge. Phones are located in each room for communication with the office. School cell phones or walkie/talkies are used to communicate between the playground and office.

A parent or other authorized individual is **REQUIRED** to come into the building to pick up and sign the child out. Parents/guardians are not to take the child from the playground without being signed out first. No child will be allowed to exit the building on his/her own. If your child is to be picked up by someone other than the individuals listed on your registration form, please notify the child care office in writing. Only emergency telephone notification will be permitted. The childcare office is also to be notified, in writing, if there is an individual who should not be permitted to pick up your child due to court-mandated custody.

DISCIPLINE

Sycamore Preschool follows all guidelines provided by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and the Ohio Department of Children and Youth.

The Program's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:

1. There shall be no cruel, harsh, or corporal punishment, or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
2. Discipline shall not be delegated to a child.
3. No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so that the child may regain control.
4. No child shall be placed in a locked room or otherwise confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, box, or similar cubicle.
5. No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself/herself or his/her family, or any other verbal abuse.
6. Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat or sleep, or for toileting accidents.
7. Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
8. Discipline shall not include the withholding of food, rest, or toilet use.
9. Separation shall be brief in duration, and age and developmentally appropriate. The child shall be within sight and hearing of a school child care staff member, and in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.

10. The program shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.
11. A staff member who suspects that a child has been abused or neglected is to immediately notify the public children's services agency, and a serious incident report is to be completed and submitted to the department in accordance with section 2151.421 of the Revised Code.

Safety of Children

- Children will be supervised by a faculty member at all times throughout the day.
- The outside play area will be supervised so that all children are visible to a member of the teaching staff at all times. Children will be supervised going to and from the outside play area and the classroom.
- Written notification from the parent is required when a change occurs in a ~~our~~ child's regular transportation plan. No exceptions will be made to this policy.
- A monthly fire drill will be held.
- Emergency plans are posted in the classrooms in the event of a tornado or fire.
- A faculty member trained in first aid and recognition of communicable diseases is available at all times. A first aid kit is always on site.
- The school registered nurse is available for students.

We feel our goal is best accomplished by the following:

1. Positive language and manners will be used to communicate limits, clarify expectations, and provide simple, consistent explanations
2. Children will be redirected back to appropriate tasks
3. Providing a structured environment
4. Children are recognized with praise for respecting limits

A child having behavior problems during his/her time in the classroom may:

1. be removed from the group to a designated area
2. for serious or recurrent problems, the parent/guardians will be notified
3. for continuous serious or recurrent problems or infractions, a child's enrollment may be reviewed

FIELD TRIPS, CLASSROOM VISITS, AND PARTIES

FIELD TRIPS

Sycamore recognizes that there are multitudes of learning resources outside of school walls that can enhance education through hands-on, meaningful experiences. Therefore, field trips that are educational in nature may be arranged.

Field trips are not to be considered "outings" or days off from school. They are, in fact, extensions of the curriculum and of the school. Therefore, all field trips will be educational in nature and will be related to the subject matter and the objectives of instruction at a particular grade level. Field trips are lessons. Appropriate instruction will precede and/or follow each field trip.

No student will be allowed to participate in a field trip without the permission of a parent and a completed "Medical Authorization" form in Final Forms. Prior to the field trip, parents/guardians will be given information describing the excursion. All field trips are taken on Sycamore School Buses, or families may choose to drive themselves. A person trained in first aid and CPR, a first aid kit, and all medical and emergency forms will accompany the staff on field trips. All medications for children whose parents/guardians have signed an

authorization for the school to administer such medication under life-threatening circumstances will be taken to the field trip site.

Birthdays

Students often like to celebrate their birthdays with their classmates. Parents/guardians **must** contact the child's teacher prior to making any birthday celebration arrangements or bringing in items or snacks to share in order to be made aware of student allergies and the number of students in a class. Due to student allergies, certain foods and balloons are not permitted in school or certain classrooms.

Classroom Visits

Classroom visits should be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance with the Preschool Supervisor and your child's teacher. Parents/guardians must sign in and wear a visitor badge. Classroom visits are limited to 30 minutes.

Class Parties

A Homeroom Parent/Party Planner will work with your child's teacher in planning festivities. Parents/guardians may participate by providing snacks and party supplies.

HEALTH AND RECORDS

Health Records

The Ohio Administrative Code requires preschool programs to secure health information from a child's parent no later than the first day of attendance. Upon admission to the program, you should have received the forms that must be completed. In the event of an injury or incident, families will be provided with notification within the same day of the incident. A log of student injuries/incidents is kept in the Preschool Supervisor's office for licensing purposes.

Medication Policy

We shall administer no medication, vitamins, or special diet without permission from the parent and doctor. In the event that medication must be administered, a Sycamore School District Medication Request Form should be secured from the nurse's office and completed by the child's parent and physician. These forms will be kept in the child's file, with the child's medications, and in the classroom. Sycamore Preschool follows the Sycamore School District Medication Policy.

Snacks

Snacks are provided in the preschool in the morning and afternoon. Healthy minds need healthy fuel, so our snack offerings strictly align with USDA Smart Snacks in School guidelines - focusing on whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and low-sugar options to support your child's growth and energetic day. Every snack is served with fresh 1% white milk.

Monthly snack menus are posted in our classrooms for your reference. If your child has a food allergy or dietary restriction, please notify both the school nurse and your child's classroom teacher. If you choose to send your child to school with an additional drink or snack from home, please strictly adhere to our nut-free policy.

Communicable Disease/Illness

1. A communicable disease chart shall be posted and accessible to all staff members.
2. A person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease or other illness shall observe each child daily as he/she enters a group.
3. All parents/guardians shall be notified if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease when applicable.
4. Any child suspected of having a communicable disease shall be isolated immediately in an area set aside from the group. A child who is isolated is always accompanied by an adult who is within sight or hearing of the child. An isolated child is provided with a mat or cot and a blanket until discharged. The mat shall be sanitized with an appropriate germicidal agent, and the blanket shall be laundered upon discharge of the child. Any child with the following signs and symptoms shall be immediately isolated and discharged to the parent, guardian, or person designated by the parent:
 - a. Diarrhea
 - b. Vomiting
 - c. Difficult or rapid breathing
 - d. Yellowish skin or eyes
 - e. Conjunctivitis (no red eyes/crustiness present to return to school)
 - f. Temperature of 100°F when in combination with any other sign of illness (such as lethargy, abnormal activity, vomiting)
 - g. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
 - h. Stiff neck
 - i. Unknown rashes of any kind.
5. A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated from other children, and the parent or guardian called to take the child home immediately. The child shall be carefully watched for worsening of his/her condition.
 - a. Unusual spots
 - b. Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
 - c. Untreated, infected skin patch(es)
 - d. Severe coughing
 - e. Evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestations
6. No child may return to childcare until all signs or symptoms of illness have disappeared (temperature free, etc.) for at least 24 hours after the symptoms are gone. Children with head lice shall be excluded from childcare until application of an effective pediculicide.
7. Children who are mildly ill but do not show symptoms of a communicable disease shall not be encouraged to participate in activities of an active nature, unless they so choose. Parents/guardians shall be notified of the child's symptoms and behaviors.

STATE LICENSING

Sycamore Preschool is licensed to operate by the State of Ohio Department of Children and Youth. The license is posted in the Preschool Supervisor's office. A toll-free telephone number is listed on the facility's license and may be used to report a suspected violation of the licensing law or administrative rules. The licensing law and rules governing child care are available for review at the facility upon request. Our licensing record is available from the Department of Children and Youth upon request.

GENERAL INFORMATION

CHILDCAREPOLICY@CHILDRENANDYOUTH.OHIO.GOV

If you have concerns, you may report them to DCY at 1-877-302-2347 OPTION 4.

It is unlawful for the facility to discriminate in the enrollment of children based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or disability.

The administrator and each employee of the facility is required, under Section 2151.421 of the Ohio Revised Code, ORC to report their suspicions of child abuse or child neglect to the local public children's services agency.

Concerns, questions or input can be directed to Lindsey Hake, Preschool Supervisor (hakel@sycamoreschools.org; 513-686-1740 x5028).