



MENDHAM TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK 2026-2027



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Mendham Township Elementary School

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PRINCIPAL WELCOME LETTER

Dear Mendham Township Preschool Families,

This preschool parent/student handbook is designed to provide you with specific information and guidelines pertaining to our academic expectations, staffing, services, district policies, and general operating procedures. Please carefully review the contents of this handbook and refer to it throughout the school year.

Additional information about our school, such as curriculum, teacher pages, event calendars, schedules, important announcements, and district-wide resources, is available on our website at www.mendhamtp.org. A digital copy of this handbook is also located on our school website.

The relationship between home and school is vital to the success of all students. The MTES administration, faculty, and staff are here to provide you with support and answer any questions you may have. If you need assistance, please contact us. A detailed listing of district and school staff with contact information is located on the first few pages of this handbook.

Warm Regards,

Julianne Kotcho, Principal

***Mendham Township, a caring, supportive and involved school community
provides all students with a comprehensive educational experience of the
highest quality in a nurturing environment serving as a foundation for
life-long learning and responsible productive lives.***

Every Student, Every Day!



PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

The Mendham Township School preschool program emphasizes care and safety, and nurtures learning through fun and exploration. The scheduling, pacing, and rhythm of these activities are recognized via the principles of early childhood education, which encourage each child to develop and grow at their own pace. Throughout the program, children will enjoy experiences that stimulate academic, social-emotional, and physical growth. Fostering a love of learning is key for this program. Children will also learn and grow in self-esteem and respect for others.

The goal of our program is to help children reach their full potential. The program will promote children's growth and learning through the following goals:

1. Involve children in their community to develop their social and living skills.
2. Encourage expression and acceptance of feelings, whether sad, joyful, or otherwise.
3. Our school is a supportive and nurturing place, where children reach their potential.
4. Each child's strengths are valued.
5. Each child's learning style is supported.
6. Each child is given opportunities to demonstrate understanding and knowledge in a number of ways.
7. Each child learns to acknowledge the worth of every individual, and all students know they make a difference.
8. Parents are partners, and the entire community is involved in the education of our children.
9. Our students and parents know we care about children.
10. Every student-Every day!

PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL GOALS

The following educational goals outline the developmental milestones for students to achieve by the end of Preschool Four. Throughout the program, children will build these foundational skills through unique and differentiated learning experiences. Families will receive separate report cards for Preschool Three and Preschool Four that detail the specific skills and achievements expected by the end of each school year.

Language and Literacy Development

- Identifies rhyming words
- Verbally expresses ideas and feelings clearly
- Follows two- or more-step directions
- Answers questions with complete thought
- Asks questions to further understanding
- Participates in story time interactively, including predicting and comparing
- Shows general knowledge of how print works
- Identifies letters of the alphabet

Math Development

- Rote counts to 20 and uses one-to-one correspondence up to 10
- Understands and uses positional words
- Sorts a group of objects by one or more properties
- Creates and extends patterns
- Understands and uses measurement words and tools
- Reproduces shapes: circle, square, and triangle
- Recognizes numerals 0-10
- Identifies 6 basic shapes and 8 basic colors

Fine Motor Development

- Traces lines accurately
- Demonstrates correct tripod grip
- Correctly writes First name
- Can use scissors accurately

Social/Emotional Development

- Listens while others speak
- Works well independently and plays cooperatively in a group
- Puts forth best effort and accepts correction
- Acknowledges the feelings of others
- Completes work within a reasonable time
- Cleans up after work/play
- Follows classroom rules
- Respectful of adults, peers, and classroom materials
- Displays self-control and self-confidence
- Respectfully verbalizes needs

Gross Motor Skills

- Throws, catches, and kicks with control and accuracy
- Walks forward and backward along a line
- Demonstrates basic locomotor skills (running, jumping, hopping, and galloping)

STUDENT ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

School Day	Arrival	Dismissal
Full Day	8:45	3:20
Early Dismissal	8:45-9:00	12:35
Delayed Opening	10:50	3:20

Apollo Before Care 7:15 a.m. - 8:45 a.m./Apollo After Care 3:20 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

The program follows the regular school calendar September - June.

Each child within the program must arrive at school before 9:00 or will be considered absent for the day.

Authorized Pick-Up

Only people whose names are on the Approved Pick-Up forms/Emergency Contacts/Pick-Up Plan will be allowed to remove children from school. When a parent calls to inform us that someone other than the normal pick-up person is coming to pick up a child, the District Staff reserves the right to ask for that individual's picture identification. Please remind that person to bring photo identification when picking up your child.

ONLY THOSE INDIVIDUALS ON YOUR CHILD'S EMERGENCY PICK-UP FORM WILL BE ALLOWED TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD.

DAILY LIFE

Ratios

Our preschool classrooms have one (1) certified preschool teacher and a minimum of one (1) classroom aide to assist the teacher and students. Typical class size range: 12-15 students.

Classroom Environment

The classroom is set up with the following centers to allow for independent exploration and play:

- art
- blocks/construction
- books/quiet area
- dramatic play
- fine motor/math manipulatives
- science/sensory table
- cubby/storage area
- Technology Center
- writing center

Daily Schedule

The program day is from 8:45 a.m. - 3:20 p.m. Drop-off runs from 8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m, and pick-up is from 3:20 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. The program follows the regular school schedule, Monday through Friday, excluding specific holidays and teacher in-service days.

In addition to classroom learning, your children attend enrichment classes such as Art, Music, Library, Gym, Technology, Spanish, and STEM. Children also have unstructured playtime daily, during which they use either our indoor centers or the outdoor playground.

SAMPLE PRESCHOOL SCHEDULE	
8:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Table Play/Arrival	12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Rest Time
9:00 a.m. - 9:20 a.m. Circle time & Music/Movement	1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. Bathroom
9:20 a.m. - 9:40 a.m. Language Literacy Block	1:45 p.m. - 2:15 p.m. Math/Science Block
9:40 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Learning Centers	2:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Afternoon Snack
10:30 a.m. -10:50 a.m. Handwashing and Snacktime	2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m Outdoor Recess
10:50 a.m.- 11:30 a.m. Special	3:00 p.m. - 3:10 p.m. Story Time
11:30 a.m. - 11:50 a.m. Outdoor Play	3:10 p.m. - 3:20 p.m. Clean up/Pack up
12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. Lunchtime	3:20 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. Dismissal

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance and punctuality are important habits for our students to develop and maintain throughout their lives. Please make every effort to ensure your child arrives on time every day they are healthy. Mendham Township School District requires students to attend school regularly to ensure continuity of instruction and classroom participation.

In the event your child is sick or will be absent for any reason, please complete this [ABSENTEE FORM](#)

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Student Sign-in & Sign-out

1. Parents/Guardians who bring students to school late must sign their child in at the Main Office desk.
2. Parents/Guardians picking up students early must sign their child out at the Main Office desk.

Pick Up Patrol

We use a cloud-based app called [Pick Up Patrol](#) to streamline student dismissal. An initial setup email will be sent to all families with instructions for setting up their accounts. This program allows parents to send their child's dismissal plans via computer or smartphone without writing notes or calling the main office. The cut-off time to enter your child's dismissal on Pick Up Patrol is **2:00 pm**. Teachers will receive an e-mail notification of student dismissal plans at **2:10 pm**. Cutoff time to input your child's dismissal on an **EARLY DISMISSAL** day is **11:00 am**.

In the event of an emergency or other unavoidable issues, please call the main office at (973) 543-7107 x152.

Notify the school, in writing and on Pick Up Patrol, if there are any restrictions regarding individuals to whom your child/children should not be released.

Notify, in writing, the office and the classroom teacher when parents must be away from home for an extended period of time. Include the name of the individual(s) responsible for the care and supervision of the child/children and the address and telephone number if they are not staying at your home.

Arrival & Dismissal Information: Bus Rider, Car Rider, Walker & Aftercare

The Mendham Township School District is primarily a busing district. Students are assigned to bus routes and stops to guidelines set by the Board of Education Transportation Department.

1. Children in grades PK-4 may ride only the bus to which they are assigned, unless given special permission by the Transportation Supervisor and Principal.
2. Plans on Pick Up Patrol are required by a parent/guardian any day a child in PK-4 is not taking the bus home from school.
3. Older siblings with preschoolers will be dismissed at 3:20 pm. Children taking buses will be called for dismissal at 3:40 p.m. Walkers will be dismissed to the main lobby to meet with their aide before buses have departed for safety reasons. The designated aide walks with the children to the crosswalk at the bottom of the entrance and West Main St. prior to buses being dismissed. Children are supervised as they cross the street by our crossing guard.
4. Children being picked up in the car line will be dismissed first to the New Gym. Preschool students will be dismissed when you arrive in the car loop. **All parents picking up their children are to remain in their car and not cross the line of traffic for the safety of both you and your child, as well as to consider those in the line and the efficient operation of the line.**
5. Students riding the bus are dismissed directly to the buses in the circle at the front of the school. Classroom teachers supervise their classroom, walking them to their designated exit. Various school faculty & staff are on supervisory duty in the hallways and on the sidewalk to ensure your child's safety and to assist students in finding the proper bus.

*Students remaining in the building after dismissal will be supervised by the Principal/Assistant Principal/designated staff, and attempts will be made to contact parents/guardians and emergency contacts.**

BEFORE & AFTERCARE

Apollo Before & Aftercare

Before school program: 7:15 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.

After-school program: 3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Preschool students enrolled in the Aftercare program will be dismissed at 3:30 pm, with an aide walking them down to the Cafeteria.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

TOILETING INFORMATION

Children enrolled in preschool MUST BE TOILET-TRAINED before attending preschool.

Children must be wearing underwear. A child who has frequent accidents each day or wears pull-ups is NOT considered toilet-trained.

Why must children be toilet-trained before starting preschool?

Our classrooms are not equipped for diapering or pull-up changes, and state regulations require strict procedures for changing and disposing of soiled diapers. When a teacher must assist with frequent toileting accidents or clothing changes, it reduces instructional time and takes an adult away from supervising and engaging with the rest of the class.

We understand that accidents happen, especially as children adjust to a new school environment. Teachers will assist children as needed while encouraging independence. Parents will be notified of any accidents.

A toilet-trained child should be able to:

- Tell a teacher they need to use the bathroom before it becomes urgent.
- Stop their activity and go to the restroom independently.
- Pull clothing up and down without assistance.
- Wipe independently (3-year-olds may need minimal assistance).
- Get on and off the toilet independently.
- Wash and dry their hands.
- Wait briefly if the bathroom is occupied or the class is away from the classroom.
- Wake from nap if they need to use the restroom.

Teachers will remind children to use the bathroom throughout the day, including before nap time, and will provide assistance when needed. Children should, however, be able to complete toileting routines with minimal support.

What parents can do

Please send your child in clothing that is easy for them to manage independently and provide a complete, seasonally appropriate change of clothes to keep at school.

Transition period

We recognize that every child reaches this milestone at their own pace. Children will have the first **four weeks of school** to demonstrate consistent independence in toileting as they adjust to the preschool environment.

Accident Policy (after the first four weeks)

- *1–2 accidents in one week:* Parents will be notified, and an action plan will be developed between parent and teacher.
- If potty training cannot be achieved through the action plan, the child may be required to remain home for a period of time or until fully toilet trained.

This policy is not intended to shame or punish children or create hardship for families. Its purpose is to ensure a safe, healthy, and productive learning environment for all children by allowing teachers to focus on supervision, instruction, and classroom engagement. We appreciate your understanding and partnership as your child reaches this important milestone.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health Policies/Sending a Child Home

Usually a child's teacher will bring a health concern to the attention of the school nurse (i.e., your child seems warm or has an unusual rash). We will use the following criteria to determine when to send a child home:

1) The school nurse will assess your child by appearance, checking your child's temperature and evaluating whether your child's behavior is any different than usual.

2) Occasionally, a child is not ill enough to be sent home but is just "not themselves". The parent will then be called by the school nurse so that a mutually agreed decision can be made about what care should be given. You may decide to come for your child or have another caregiver pick them up. If your child has to be sent home, please remember that, for your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of contagion, we ask that they be picked up within 1 hour of notification.

Fever/Contagious Diseases

**MTES sends a letter to parents if a student in their child's classroom has a contagious illness such as chicken pox, strep throat, scarlet fever, influenza, pneumonia, or lice. This letter outlines what to look for so you can follow up with your pediatrician for further evaluation if your child shows any of these signs or symptoms.*

If your child went home with a fever, with diarrhea, or because he/she has vomited, as per the NJ Health Department, your child must be free from vomiting, diarrhea, and fever (**without fever-reducing medication**) for 24 hours before returning to the program.

In case of a contagious disease, such as chicken pox, strep throat, influenza, or pneumonia, a doctor's note will be required before your child can return. We understand that it is difficult for a parent to leave or miss work; therefore, we suggest that alternative care arrangements be made in advance. If a child has been absent due to a communicable disease, a doctor's note **MUST** accompany your child to school upon his return.

Parent Requirements

If a child is sick or injured at school, we will notify the parent/guardian. In some cases, we may request that you come immediately to pick up your child; in other cases, we will only inform you of your child's situation so that you can decide whether action should be taken.

The following list is provided for sending a sick child home (based on NJ State Health requirements):

- fever of 100.0 F or more
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- suspected ear or eye infection
 - child pulling on ear
 - complaining of earache
 - yellow eyes
 - red eyes with discharge
- sore throat and/or severe coughing
- sores/rash (other than diaper rash)
- weeping and/or bleeding skin lesions - untreated by doctor
- infected, untreated skin patches

Important to Understand

- Child might not be technically sick but still not belong in a group setting nor fit for group play
- sick children are better off at home where they can receive individual care
- We are not diagnosticians; only a medical doctor can say for sure if a child is ill. We are going by symptoms and what your child tells us or indicates to us.

Child out sick may return to program when...

- temperature is normal for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication
- child is symptom-free or a licensed medical doctor indicates that your child poses no serious health risk to themselves or other children

If a child has been out of school ill for 3 or more days, it is necessary to bring a doctor's note upon returning to school

Administration of Medication

The school nurse will administer medications. However, all medication packages must be labeled with the child's name, and the physician's orders must be current.

Non-Prescription Medication

Only the following non-prescription (over-the-counter) medication will be administered -

- Acetaminophen
- Tums

General Policies for Prescription and Non-prescription Medication

All prescription and non-prescription medications are stored in the Health Office and are administered only by the school nurse. All medication brought into school must be brought by the parent, NOT placed in a student's backpack.

Parents should send medication to school in the original pharmacy bottle, not in a bag or envelope. The bottle must have a label with:

- child's name
- doctor's name
- name of the medicine
- how much and when to give the medication

For your convenience, you can download the medication administration form on our school website. This form provides the school nurse with permission to administer non-prescription and prescription medications during school hours, with a parent's signature. *All prescription medications given during school hours MUST have a physician's orders.

Asthma/Respiratory Disease

If your child has asthma or any type of respiratory illness and needs to have an inhaler administered during school hours, either daily or as needed, the school nurse will need physician's orders and medication. *All forms are available on our website under the heading NURSE HEALTH FORMS.

Injuries

We will notify you when your child is injured. Minor injuries are washed with soap and water; if necessary, ice is applied, and a Band-Aid is applied as well. Serious injuries (broken bones, lacerations that need stitches) are reported immediately to you. If needed, an ambulance will be called. Minor injuries to the face and/or head are reported to you as soon as possible. Other minor injuries will be reported to you when you pick up your child. All injuries to a child will be documented in an accident report.

Emergency Forms/Immunizations

State licensing, as well as local and state health departments, requires that we keep immunization records for all our students. Please let the school nurse know when your child receives immunizations. For your child to continue in the program, immunizations must be kept up to date, and a record of the immunization must be documented to the school nurse.

Communicable Disease Policy

A child who contracts any of the following diseases may NOT return to the school without a physician's note stating that your child presents no risk to him/herself or others

- respiratory illnesses
- gastrointestinal diseases
- contact illnesses - chicken pox, impetigo, German measles, Hepatitis A, lice, influenza, salmonella, scabies, measles, Shigella, Coxsackie, Meningococcus, mumps, strep throat or whooping cough

If your child is exposed to any of the above communicable diseases while here at school, you will be notified in writing.

Preschool Flu Shot Mandate-insert here?

LUNCH, SNACK, REST TIME

Mendham Twp. Elementary School classrooms are **peanut- and tree nut-free**. All classrooms are required to follow our school's **Food Allergy Guidelines**. Please review these guidelines so you are familiar with our protocols.

Meal and snack times offer excellent opportunities for students to practice independence, socialize, develop healthy eating habits, and practice good manners. Times are allotted throughout the day for students to have lunch and snacks in their classrooms. We encourage you to pack healthy food options including fruits, cheese, yogurts, etc. These eating practices developed in childhood tend to shape future food choices. Presenting healthy foods to children in a positive and consistent manner begins the lifelong process of nutrition management. All food should be labeled in a lunch and/or snack bag. Please make sure the items from home are ready to eat and use a thermos or ice packs, as we do not have access to fridges for storage or microwaves for heating.

Food Allergies

Children with food allergies, either mild or severe, are required to have an **Emergency Health Care Plan Form** completed by the parents and child's pediatrician. Health Care Plans must be submitted with the doctor's stamp and forwarded to the school nurse prior to the start of school. Parents are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the school nurse and teacher to review specific needs and HCP.

Snack:

Students are responsible for bringing a morning and an afternoon snack to school daily. Please make sure that your lunch and snacks are **peanut- and tree nut-free**.

Lunch

Preschool students will eat lunch in their classrooms daily. Your child's teacher will share their lunch and recess schedule with you at the beginning of the year.

Students order lunch using MealOrders.com. To add funds to purchase food on MealOrders.com, you must log in to MySchoolBucks.com. Lunch orders for that day's selections must be placed by 8 am on MealOrders.com or the *MealOrders app*. If orders are not placed by 8 am, a student can only order a bagel bag or a muffin box (this includes Pizza Fridays). The kitchen does not accept cash or checks; all payments are made through MySchoolBucks.com, and all orders must be placed through MealOrders.com. You may order up to *3 weeks in advance on MealOrders.com (*as long as meal options are posted). If you have questions about ordering food-allergy-safe lunch options, please reach out to Diane Gerstner (dgerstner@mendhamtwp.org).

Rest Time

It is a statewide requirement that all students be provided with at least one hour of nap/rest time each day. Students will have their own cot/mat. Please send in the following items with your child:

1. A fitted standard crib sheet (28 x 52 inches)
2. A small blanket, no bigger than the size of your child's body

These items will be sent home each Friday to be washed. Please return on Monday to start the new week.

DRESS

Preschoolers learn best through play, so they should come to school dressed in comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing that allows them to explore, move freely, and participate fully in all activities. Layered dressing permits students to be comfortable regardless of individual classroom temperatures. We try to go outside every day, except during excessive heat, active precipitation, or cold advisories. It is extremely important that children are sent to school with appropriate clothing and footwear for safe play (**NO backless shoes or flip-flops**).

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Change of Clothes

All changes of clothes must be labeled with your child's name. Students need two changes of clothing (2 tops, 2 bottoms, 2 pairs of underwear, 2 pairs of socks, and 1 set of sneakers). If your child has an accident, the soiled clothing will be sent home in their backpack. Please note that accidents can happen during fun activities, too! Sensory and water play may occasionally result in wet or messy clothing. To help keep your child comfortable, we may change them into their extra clothes when needed. Please be sure to send a spare set of clothing with your child to replace the soiled clothing the following day!

Bedding

1. A fitted standard crib sheet (28 x 52 inches)
2. A small blanket, no bigger than the size of your child's body

These items will be sent home each Friday to be washed. Please return these items on Monday to start the new week.

CARE OF PROPERTY/LOST AND FOUND/ TOYS FROM HOME

We encourage our Preschool Families to refrain from sending children into school with toys. While we understand that our youngest learners are often excited to bring in special toys from home, we do not want their items to be misplaced or accidentally broken. Each classroom is full of toys and materials that the class has access to daily. If, by chance, a child brings in a toy from home, they will be asked to keep it safely in their backpack until the end of the school day.

All personal items that come into the classroom, including backpacks, lunch boxes, changes of clothes, bedding, jackets, socks and shoes, should be labeled with your child's name. Unclaimed items from the Lost and Found.

SAFETY DRILLS & EVACUATION POLICIES

Emergency Drills

The New Jersey Department of Education requires schools to conduct at least one fire drill and one security drill each month. These drills help prepare children and staff to respond safely and efficiently during an emergency. *Because our students are young, drills are conducted in a calm, age-appropriate manner to minimize stress.* Parents will receive notification after all security drills have been completed.

Fire Drills

Fire drills prepare children and staff for emergencies that require a rapid evacuation of the building. Evacuation maps are posted in every classroom for reference. During all fire drills and emergency evacuations:

- Leave the building through the nearest exit.
- Walk quickly—do not run.
- Remain calm, quiet, and follow staff instructions.

Security Drills

Schools are also required to conduct one security drill each month. These drills help children and staff practice responding safely and effectively in the event of an emergency. Per New Jersey State regulations, parents will be notified after all security drills are successfully completed. These drills may include:

- Lockdown

- Active intruder
- Evacuation
- Bomb threat
- Shelter-in-place

Parents and Visitors

All parents, visitors, and guests in the building are required to follow emergency procedures, including evacuating when directed during fire or other emergency drills.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES (Parent Square)

There are many ways to receive information from school and keep up with the latest news, student activities, and special events. Please visit our school website for important information on our school, academic programs, calendars, services, special features, and social media channels. Please take time to visit our website before the start of school to familiarize yourself with it.

Parent Square:

ParentSquare is a communication platform that connects MTSD schools with families, teachers, staff, and administrators. It combines multiple communication methods into a single interface, enabling streamlined notifications, collaboration, and increased family engagement. New families should receive an invitation email to register and set up their Parent Square account. Please ensure that you register now, as all communications will be posted via [Parent Square](#).

VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS

Lobby Guard

1. All visitors *must* register via Lobby Guard located in the main entrance vestibule.
2. Visitors must register via Lobby Guard or use their assigned Lobby Guard tag to receive a visitor badge before entering the building.
3. All exterior doors are locked during school hours. Video surveillance cameras are installed throughout the building to monitor activity.
4. Relatives, siblings, friends, or neighbors may not attend classes during regular school hours, excluding special activities approved by the building principal.

Animal Visitation & Pet Therapy Visits

Animals may not be brought to school without permission from the classroom teacher and building principal. These visits should help support the elementary curriculum and the social, health, and wellness of our students. Animals are not permitted on the bus and therefore must be transported by a parent in a safe container. *MTES does schedule monthly pet therapy visits with our preschool classes. Students may opt out of any encounter with animal visitors in the class.*

BIRTHDAY & HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

We encourage parents to share their children's birthdays and holidays with classmates to help students learn about diverse cultures and nationalities. Please make arrangements for any celebration with your child's classroom teacher. No food items should be sent into school for birthday celebrations (see Food Guidelines).

Birthday party invitations may be distributed as long as ALL students in the classroom are attending.

The following Classroom Celebrations are held:

- Halloween ~ October (NO CANDY)
- Thanksgiving~ November
- Holiday ~ December
- Valentine's Day ~ February (NO CANDY)
- St. Patrick's Day~ March
- End of Year ~ June

COMMUNICATION & ASSISTANCE

Communication between school and home plays a major role in a child's academic achievement and social growth. The various modes of communication in the Mendham Township schools are:

1. Preschool Back-to-School Night
2. Fall and Spring Parent Conferences
3. Tiger Folders
4. Weekly MTES Friday Folder *via Parent Square*
5. Notes between parents and educators.
6. Telephone, email, and personal conferences.
7. Progress Reports.
8. Pre-School report cards are sent home at the end of the 2nd & 4th Marking Periods.

If you have any concerns about your child's progress, we encourage you to reach out to your child's teacher directly first. If your child's teacher has concerns about their progress, they may contact I & RS (Intervention and Referral Services). If this referral is made, you will be requested to provide information to assist the committee. An action plan will be developed with strategies for the teacher to implement, and home strategies will be provided for support. If you have any concerns or questions, please contact aridente@mendhamtwp.org.

DISCIPLINE/STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Guidance and Discipline Policy

Our goal is to work in partnership with families to help children develop self-control, confidence, independence, and respect for themselves and others. We encourage children to understand the consequences of their actions, make positive choices, and develop appropriate problem-solving skills.

Our approach to discipline is based on *gentleness, understanding, consistency, and prevention*. Teachers clearly communicate expectations, model positive behavior, and use positive language to guide children. Whenever possible, teachers focus on what children *should* do rather than what they should not do (for example, "Feet belong on the floor" instead of "Don't stand on the table."). Children are encouraged to think of alternative solutions, consider the consequences of their choices, and, with teacher support, redirect their attention to positive behaviors and activities.

We believe that children thrive when they feel respected, valued, and successful. Positive discipline and reinforcement are used to promote appropriate behavior and build self-esteem.

Our program follows the school's *Code of Conduct* and uses age-appropriate consequences to help children understand classroom expectations. Teachers and families work together to support each child's success and develop strategies that meet their individual needs.

If inappropriate behavior continues, the following steps may be taken:

- Ongoing communication and documented discussions between teachers and parents/guardians.
- A meeting with the parent/guardian and the school principal to develop a support plan.
- A temporary request for the child to remain home if needed.
- Referral to the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Team.
- Referral to the Child Study Team, when appropriate.

**The Mendham Township School District reserves the right to immediately terminate a child's enrollment if a severe and flagrant problem occurs, which jeopardizes the welfare of other children in the program.*

DISCONTINUATION OF ENROLLMENT

Termination of Services

The Mendham Township School District reserves the right to terminate preschool services under the following circumstances:

- Failure to pay or repeated late payment of program fees.
- Failure to submit required enrollment documentation, including immunization records.
- Repeated late pick-up of a child.
- Physical or verbal abuse toward staff.
- Failure to meet the program's toilet training requirements (see Toilet Training Policy).

Mendham Township School District is committed to working collaboratively with families to support each child's success. Every reasonable effort will be made to address concerns and implement appropriate interventions before a child is removed from the program, except when immediate action is necessary to protect the health, safety, or well-being of students or staff.

Behavioral Supports Prior to Removal

When behavioral concerns arise, the District may implement one or more of the following supports:

- Redirect inappropriate behavior using positive guidance and age-appropriate consequences.
- Evaluate and adjust the classroom environment, activities, or supervision as needed.
- Reinforce positive behaviors through encouragement and praise.
- Apply behavioral expectations and consequences consistently.
- Provide verbal reminders and warnings.
- Document ongoing behavioral concerns while maintaining student confidentiality.
- Communicate with parents/guardians and hold conferences to develop strategies that support the child's success.

Behavior That May Result in Removal from the Program

A child may be considered for temporary or permanent removal from the program if persistent behaviors significantly impact the safety or well-being of the child, other students, or staff. Examples include:

- Repeated, uncontrollable tantrums or aggressive outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal aggression toward staff or other children.
- Repeated or excessive biting.

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