This handbook outlines the program and policies of the Dover Nursery School. Please refer to it to familiarize yourselves with the school and to assist you in having your questions answered as they arise. This handbook is updated annually and is available on our website.

Parents are welcome in the nursery school at any time without announcement.

As a licensed child care center by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), we will make a copy of the state regulations available to you upon request, or you may look on their website: www.eec.state.ma.us. Families may contact EEC to view the program’s regulatory compliance history.
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Statement of Purpose

Dover Nursery School exists to provide children and families with a safe, heart-filled, supportive educational experience for preschool children from 2.9 to 5 years of age. Our mission is to help children to expand their sense of the world and to value their individual place in it.

DNS is open Monday through Friday with an experienced staff of one director and four teachers each day in two classrooms. DNS is owned and operated by Early Education, Inc. Located in the center of Dover, DNS has serviced children from Dover, Needham, Wellesley, Sherborn, Natick, Westwood, Medfield and Norwood for almost fifty years. Students attend the program from three to five mornings a week (8:30-11:30 a.m.; until 12:30 p.m. on Mondays), and many join us for “lunch bunch,” our extended day option with a 2:30 p.m. pick-up option. The student to teacher ratio is approximately 7 students per teacher. The program closely follows the school calendar of the Dover Public Schools. Registration occurs in the fall of the preceding year and students must be 2 years 9 months by September 1 to be eligible.

We provide a safe physical and emotional setting for children to develop character, peer relationships, intellectual curiosity, and the skills necessary for kindergarten. In a nurturing setting, students gain greater independence, self-mastery and interdependence. Our curriculum is designed to encourage a child’s personal development in cognitive, social, and emotional areas. Students are teamed to benefit from same-age groupings and mixed-age groupings. The program is rich in language through storytelling and dramatic play. It also includes multi-sensory curriculum units, music and instruments, process-oriented activities, creative expression, gross motor movement such as yoga and outdoor play, and fine motor skill development.

Dover Nursery School, Inc. is licensed and regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). DNS will not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. Toilet training status is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.
Our Educational Philosophy

The Dover Nursery School (DNS) is a friendly, creative and fun preschool experience for children. With the help of parents and the preschool community, we continually reevaluate and tailor our program to best address the following core goals and objectives.

- Provide a safe physical space for both indoor and outdoor activities.
- Address health and safety concerns proactively.
- Establish a consistent, balanced routine and allow for flexibility.
- Offer a trusting setting. Learn the rhythm of each child.
- Furnish a variety of age-appropriate equipment and materials that addresses gross and fine motor development, creative play, and stimulation.
- Teach self-help skills (such as dressing for outdoor winter play)
- Explore math, language arts, science, creative art, music, body movement, social studies and literature in the classroom.
- Honor the importance of supervised free play for social and emotional development among peers.
- Emphasize Character Development. Teach respect for yourself and others, fairness and honesty, responsibility, appreciate and support differences.
- Encourage and support self-expression, personal achievements and “finding one’s voice” in the classroom.
- Listen to parents and children continuously.
- Be process driven and not product driven.
- Celebrate small steps towards success.
- Expand the teaching skills of each staff member.
- Staff with skilled preschool teachers who have open minds, loving hearts, and the capacity to embrace change.
Dover Nursery School – A Typical Day

A program that teaches through love and support for all children, addressing the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of their beings.

8:30 a.m. School Opens - Individual Choice until Circle Time.

8:45 a.m. Morning Circle begins for all students. Welcoming, sharing, and exploration of our current theme.

9:00-9:15 a.m. Group Time. This teaches the students the distinction between everyone playing together versus individual choice. It may include building collaboratively, science, cooking, etc.

9:15 - 10:30 a.m. Individual Choice. Open Play might include: dramatic play, blocks, quiet reading, sensory table, science table, writing table, math manipulatives, independent and group play.

Gross motor two times a week.

Teacher-directed project(s) with one or more teachers. Students are grouped by age or stage of development to learn.

OPEN DOOR - classrooms are joined for mixed-age for 20-30 minutes each morning.

10:30-11:00 a.m. All toys and projects are put away. Everyone helps. Second circle. Bathroom and snack.

11:05 a.m. Outside recess.

11:30 a.m. School Closed.

12:30 p.m. On Mondays only, students bring a lunch to school.
**Curriculum Basics**

Our purpose at DNS is to honor each child’s unique learning process and to enable children to feel comfortable with themselves in our classroom setting. The staff will help children interact positively with their peers and teachers. The program includes supervised free play to encourage children to socialize with each other (in small and large groups). We teach that each one of us is part of a greater whole, such as the classroom, our families, and all creatures.

The curriculum is designed so that each child will have a sense of accomplishment in the areas of cognitive, social, and emotional development. Specific projects are chosen not for the value of the end product, but for the value of the process in challenging the child’s development. The student’s experiences will include a range of exploration through multiple intelligences. Music, art, movement, storytelling and dramatic play are part of the curriculum throughout the year to help develop literacy, positive expression, sensory awareness, confidence and positive self-esteem. Directed lessons are in small groups and are intended to foster and develop stronger listening skills, sequencing, critical thinking, problem solving, self-discipline and FUN.

Three-year-old students join our Tigers group for age-specific programming. Four- and five-year-old students join our Bears group for age-specific programming. Details about the curriculum themes will be made available during the school year through newsletters.

**Dover Nursery School Staff**

The student/staff ratio at DNS is 7/8 students per teacher. The staff is certified in CPR annually and in Pediatric First Aid biannually. Continual involvement in early childhood education is required of each staff member through workshops, lectures, conferences and continuing education courses.

The owner of Dover Nursery School is Early Education, Inc. and the Director is Gita Coutts. Gita is also the designated food program person and the center liaison for children with disabilities.

Gita Coutts and Lorraine Keith serve as the teachers of the Bears group, our 4’s group; students who will be eligible for kindergarten or just miss the cut-off. Jennifer Reiling and Susan Wolff serve as the teachers of the Tigers group, the three-year-old students.
**Enrollment – Registration Policy**

Children must be two years nine months by September 1 of the school year. Children may attend 3 to 5 days per week based on the choice selected by the parents/guardians and space availability. Returning students and siblings of students who have attended DNS will be given priority enrollment. Toilet training is not an eligibility requirement for enrollment.

Dover Nursery School requires parents, children and guardians to visit the program prior to completing a registration application. At the time of the scheduled appointment, the visitor will be given the Dover Nursery School Visitor Handbook that details the philosophies and policies of the school. We will do our best to answer any questions you may have regarding the school’s operation. Upon enrollment, families and children will be invited for an orientation of the program.

To all those who have visited the program and signed the visitor’s book, a registration form will be mailed to you or given in person. **A $95 non-refundable fee must be included with the registration application. A registration is not complete until DNS has received a completed “face sheet” form with the registration fee.** DNS requests families share their information regarding interests, needs, and all support services received by the child; such as therapeutic, educational, and/or social. A developmental history form is included in the enrollment forms and is required to be updated annually. If the number of registrations exceeds the spaces available, a wait list will be created based on date registration materials/fee were received.

Confirmation of enrollment will be by email to parents/guardians by a specified date. Once enrolled, half of the tuition is due by March 1 for the upcoming school year. If payment has not been received by this time, DNS will not hold your space and may give it to another child without prior notice to you. The remaining tuition will be due November 1. There are no refunds for absences or holidays.

**Enrollment in the Dover Nursery School is a commitment for the entire school year. Tuition is non-refundable nor transferable at any time.**

Tuition Fees for mornings 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. except Mondays which runs until 12:30p.m.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days per Week</th>
<th>Morning Fee</th>
<th>Payment Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>$7,050</td>
<td>two payments of $3,525.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 days</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>$5,300</td>
<td>two payments of $2,650.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lunch Bunch Fee:**

The cost is $45 per day, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. On Mondays, lunch bunch is $35, 12:30-2:30 p.m. Billing is monthly; payments are due by the first of each month. The drop in fee for ALL lunch bunches is $50.00
Payments

Tuition installments are due March 1 and November 1. If a parent is unable to pay on or before these dates, they are to contact the director to work out arrangements. Tuition is neither refundable nor transferable.

Payment for Lunch Bunch is due by the first of each month. Lunch Bunch is a commitment for the school year. Missed days are neither refundable nor transferable.

A $20.00 LATE FEE is to be paid for every 15 minute increment of lateness past child’s scheduled pick up time, each time a parent or guardian is late picking up and is due at the time of pick-up.

The Lunch Bunch (LB) Program

DNS offers “Lunch Bunch,” an afternoon program from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (12:30 - 2:30 p.m. on Mondays). Students may enroll for one or more days. There is one dismissal time at 2:30pm. Students do not have to attend in the morning to attend LB in the afternoon, however priority is given to morning students. Enrollment forms are available in the summer packet. The afternoon program is limited and scheduling is done on a first come first serve basis. The Lunch Bunch program usually begins after the first week of school and is a commitment for the entire school year.

Mondays: Let’s do Science!
Tuesdays: Let’s travel the world in 22 Lunch Bunches! Spanish with Ms. Roxana.
Wednesdays: Top Chef! / The World is our Stage!
Thursdays: Coach Pete and gross motor fun!
Fridays: Nature’s Classroom

The Lunch Bunch schedule is as follows:
11:30a.m.-12:00 p.m. Continued gross motor play outside or inside.
12:00 - 12:30p.m. Lunch (provided by parents)
12:30-1:15p.m. Quiet activities or rest
1:15-2:15p.m. Themed curriculum
2:15 - 2:30 p.m. Recess

School Year Calendar

In general, we follow the Dover Public Schools’ school calendar exceptions around the start of school and an earlier dismissal in December and June. The school calendar is handed out to all parents and is posted on the website.

Snow and weather: In the event of inclement weather, the director will determine DNS closing by 6:30 a.m. and will send an email to parents/guardians. We will attempt to remain open and let parents and staff choose their personal level of safety/comfort in traveling to school.
Child Guidance Policy of Dover Nursery School

The Dover Nursery School believes that a thoughtful, detailed child guidance policy will set clear expectations for staff, students, and parents. Our primary purpose for this policy is to insure that students and staff are physically and emotionally safe in our school so that we may maximize the potential for learning and growth.

Our experience has shown that children are responsive when valued and when they clearly understand what is expected of them. As a parent, it is important for you to understand what DNS will and will not do to manage behavior and safety in the classroom. Educators must provide guidance to children in a positive and consistent way based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of children by:

1. **Be aware of what contributes to a positive school experience for children:**
   - encouraging self-control and using positive child guidance techniques such as recognizing and reinforcing children’s appropriate behaviors, having reasonable and positive expectations, setting clear and consistent limits, and redirecting;
   - helping children learn social, communication, and emotional regulation skills they can use in place of challenging behaviors;
   - using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other teaching strategies to encourage appropriate behavior and prevent challenging behaviors;
   - identifying precipitating factors: boredom, change, frustration, and hurriedness;
   - intervening quickly when children are physically aggressive with one another and helping them develop more positive strategies for resolving conflict;
   - continually evaluate: physical space, curriculum, staff, expectations, parental input;
   - explaining rules and procedures and the reasons for them to children, and where appropriate and feasible, allowing children to participate in the establishment of program rules, policies and procedures;
   - discussing behavior management techniques among staff to promote consistency

2. **Child guidance strategies used on a daily basis at DNS to the goal of maximizing the growth and development of children and protecting the group and the individuals within it:**

   **Method of communicating directly with a child:**
   - ask child if s/he understands the situation
   - teach problem-solving
   - ask child to make the correction
   - offer choices or distractions
   - teach self-control, cooperation & sharing
   - remind child of appropriate behavior
   - lead child to a new activity
   - give advance warnings of transitions
   - remove child from an activity
   - cease the specific play; close the activity
• separate child to sit in a quiet area
• remove child from the classroom and sit with child outside

As a child’s guide:
• model acceptable behavior and safety; reinforce positive behavior  
• support child’s strengths  
• learn about each child and the family history  
• anticipate problems before escalation  
• move closer to a potential problem  
• don’t assume; listen to the child  
• consider health and fatigue of child  
• seek other staff members to assist  
• respect difficulties and feelings  
• support parents with articles, techniques, resources, or referrals

3. Actions that will not be used by DNS:

DNS follows state regulations detailed by the Department of Early Education and Care, the licensing body of preschool programs in Massachusetts. The EEC prohibits child guidance techniques that use any form of punitive punishment or physical restraint.

In detail, the following practices are strictly prohibited:
• spanking or other corporal punishment of children;  
• subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment including any type of physical hitting inflicted in any manner upon the body, shaking, threats, or derogatory remarks;  
• depriving children of outdoor time, meals or snacks; force feeding children or otherwise making them eat against their will, or in any way using food as a consequence  
• 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;  
• confining a child to a swing, high chair, crib, playpen or any other piece of equipment for an extended period of time in lieu of supervising.

Toileting and Diapering Procedures:

1. Diapering mat is located beneath the coat rack in the classroom.
2. A disposable covering will be used on the mat, large enough so that the child does not come in contact with the surface of the mat, and it will be disposed of in a closed receptacle lined with a leak proof disposable lining along with the soiled diaper and removed daily.
3. Mats will be washed and disinfected after each child has been diapered.
4. Staff will wear disposable gloves. Staff will wash their hands with soap and running warm water, using friction, after changing a child’s diaper. Hands will be dried with disposable paper towels.

5. Diapering:
   - Will be done next to the bathroom sink
   - A child’s diaper will be changed regularly and when wet or soiled
   - Parents will supply an adequate amount of clean, dry diapers and washing materials.
   - Each child is washed and dried with individual washing materials during each diaper change.
   - Fecal matter from diaper/underwear gets put into toilet
   - DNS will stock extra clean clothes for children; parents are asked to leave a set of clean clothes for their child in their child’s cubby
   - Staff will assist children in washing their hands with running warm soapy water and dried with disposable paper towels after diapering
   - Soiled clothes, linens and blankets will be placed in a sealed plastic bag and labeled with the child’s name, and returned to the parents at the end of the days
   - Soiled non-disposable diapers are placed in a sealed plastic bag and labeled with the child’s name, and returned to the child’s parents at the end of the day.
   - Children are toilet–trained in accordance with the requests of their parents and consistent with the child’s physical, emotional, and developmental abilities.

Toilet training has never been a requirement for enrollment at DNS and now the Department of Early Education and Care has mandated that this policy be required of all early education centers.

DNS Health Care Policy

Health Care Consultant: Dr. Alan Stern, Needham Pediatrics
781-444-7186
145 Rosemary Street, Entry K Needham, MA

Police and Fire Department: 508-785-1130

Nearest Emergency Health Care facility: 781-453-3000
Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital 148 Chestnut Street Needham, Ma

Poison Control Center: 1-800-222-1222

Boston Children’s Hospital 300 Longwood Ave. Boston, Ma

Emergency Back-up Person: Gita Coutts 508-308-6737

Dover Nursery School
17 Springdale
Dover, Ma 02030
508-785-0252
By law, students are not permitted to begin Dover Nursery School until a current physical examination by a pediatrician is on file and reviewed by the school. This requires some diligence on the part of parents/guardians to make sure that DNS has received and reviewed the paperwork before the first day of school. During the school year, DNS will give parents/guardians a reminder that a child’s physical will soon be expiring.

There are many components to the DNS Health Care Policy and we ask parents and guardians to read through the policies carefully. Staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid and are able to administer first aid care.

**Health Care Policy: Return of Child following Illness**

Please keep your child home if you suspect illness of any kind. This is not only for the benefit of your child, but also for his/her classmates and teachers. A child must be without symptoms for 24 hours prior to returning to school. Children may NOT attend school when:

- The child has a fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher; a high fever is a sign of infection.
- The child has a communicable disease.
- The child has uncontrollable diarrhea.
- The child is in the first 24 hours of starting an antibiotic medicine, unless allowed by the director, or as a doctor’s note may indicate.
- The child has head lice. This must be treated and all head lice and nits removed before the child can return. Chronic head lice may require a doctor’s note.
- The child is unable to take solid and liquid food.
- The child shows little ability to play.
- The child appears in poor general appearance and behavior.

**Health Care Policy: Mildly Ill Child at DNS**

If a child has any of the symptoms detailed above, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and notified to pick up their child right away. If a parent/guardian is not available, an individual listed as an emergency contact will be called and asked to pick up the child. In the interim, the child will be separated from the group (often in the upper play space or on floor pillows) and made to feel as comfortable as possible. A staff member will attend to the child’s food, drink, rest, play, and physical comfort needs. If the child is cared for in a separate room, the staff member will have teacher certification credentials and will be trained in the care of mildly ill children.

Children with mild symptoms of illness, including but not limited to, coughing, runny or stuffy nose, slight fever under 101, may remain in care.
Health Care Policy: Administering Medications

Staff members will not administer prescription, non-prescription or topical medications without signed authorization by the parents/guardians and/or a physician’s order. All staff are trained annually on the 5 Rights of Medication provided by EEC. This is for the protection of the children and the policy pertains to all circumstances. Parents/guardians may come to the school to administer medicine to their child.

The written parental authorization (valid for one year) must state that the specific medication is for the specified child and must be accompanied by a written order from a physician. All medications administered to a child, including but not limited to oral and topical medications of any kind, either prescription or non-prescription, must be provided by the child’s parent. No educator shall administer the first dose of any medication to a child, except under extraordinary circumstances and with parent consent. The order will not be valid for more than one year. The prescription medicine must include on the label: the specified child, the dosage, the name of medicine, and the number of times per day and number of days the medication is to be administered. Staff members will not administer medication contrary to directions on the original prescription container unless so authorized by a written order by the pediatrician. Topical ointments will not be applied to a child, nor will an over-the-counter allergy medication (e.g. Benadryl) be administered to a child without a physician’s written order.

Medications shall be stored in their original containers in the center’s First Aid box out of the reach of children or according to directions. Prescription medications requiring refrigeration shall be stored in a way that is inaccessible to children in a refrigerator maintained at temperatures between 38 and 42 degrees Fahrenheit. Those medications found in the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Schedules 11-V will be kept in a secured and locked place at all times when not being accessed by an authorized individual. Emergency medications such as epinephrine auto-injectors are immediately available for use if needed. When possible, all unused, discontinued or outdated prescription medications shall be returned to the parent and such return shall be documented in the child’s record. When return to the parent is not possible or practical, such prescription medications must be destroyed and the destruction recorded by the manager or supervisor in accordance with policies of the licensee and the Department of Public Health, Drug Control Program.

DNS will maintain a written record of the administration of any prescription or non-prescription medication for each child. It shall include the time and date of each administration, the dosage, the name of the staff member administering the medication and the name of the child. This shall be put in the child’s file.

Health Care Policy: Children with Allergies, Health Conditions and/or children with disabilities.

DNS is a nut free school.
No nuts are served at snack and parents are told not to send any food items that contain nuts in lunch boxes. Parents will be asked to list a child’s food allergies, health conditions (e.g. asthma), or health requirements of children with disabilities on the Enrollment Form and the Developmental History and Background form. An Individual Health Care Plan Form, signed by the child’s physician, will be completed for each child. The director will discuss the particular medical needs of the child, and/or training of staff in implementation of their child’s individual health care plan, with the parents/guardians, and if need be, with the physician (with a signed release of information form by the parents). The staff will be alerted in detail of the individual child’s specific health care needs and will adhere to the child’s health care plan including protection from that which make them allergic and that all specific measures will be taken to ensure that the health requirements of children with disabilities are met.

**Health Care Policy: Emergencies and Illness**

If a child requires emergency health care, a staff member will remain with the child at all times, including transportation by ambulance. Another staff member will telephone 911. Parents/guardians or emergency contacts will be contacted as soon as it is safe to do so. In the event a parent/guardian is not immediately reached, a staff member will remain with the child and messages will be left for the parents/guardians using contact numbers on record.

**Health Care Policy: Injury Prevention Plan**

Our goal is to prevent injuries from occurring both indoors and outdoors at DNS. As such, the following will be followed:

1. The classroom, bathroom, hallway and playground areas are arranged to minimize the possibility of injury. Staff will monitor safety on a daily basis and immediately remove or repair any hazard that may cause injury.
2. Staff members will properly supervise children at all times.
3. During fieldtrip walks, staff will bring a first aid bag/backpack, including parent emergency contacts, all emergency medications for children, first aid items such as gauze, band aids and disposable gloves, and a cell phone.
4. All sharp objects, toxic substances and fire hazards will be stored in a secure place where they are out of reach of children.

Parents will be notified immediately of any injury that requires emergency care beyond minor first aid. If parent or guardian cannot be reached, DNS will contact listed emergency contacts from child’s file. If any first aid is administered to your child, parents will be notified in writing within 24 hours of the incident and a copy will be kept in the child’s file. Minor first aid may include cleaning and dressing a cut and/or applying ice.

Regular fire drills will be conducted at different times of the day once a month.
Health Care Policy: Food and Food Preparation

Each morning snack is offered to the children at approximately 10:45 a.m. It will consist of at least two food groups, such as fruit and crackers. The snack is written and posted each day. Children often assist in the preparation of the snack. Our policy is to wash our hands with running warm, soapy water prior to food preparation. If a child has a particular food allergy, we will accommodate the child’s needs. All educators receive training in USDA recognized requirements and in food choking hazards.

Health Care Policy: Transportation of Children

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide and arrange for transportation of their child to and from the Dover Nursery School. There will be no transportation of children by automobile to or from DNS by a staff member unless directed to do so by a 911 operator or Town protective services officials. In the event of an emergency whereby the building must be vacated, the DNS staff will escort the children by foot to the Town House. Parents/guardians will be contacted by telephone as soon as possible.

Health Care Policy: Emergency Evacuation and Response

The evacuation of children from the program in the event of a fire, natural disaster, or other emergency situations the students and staff will vacate the building for a safe shelter. The Director will contact the local authorities, via phone call, to determine whether to evacuate or shelter in place in the event of a natural disaster. The designated meeting place outside and away from DNS is the Dover Town House, the official town shelter in cases of emergencies. All staff will use a head count system and attendance to check for all children to assure no child is left behind. Once the students and staff are safely relocated and attendance has been rechecked, the Director will notify local authorities, via cell phone, and diligent efforts by all staff members will be made, by cell phone, to communicate with parents. In the event a child cannot be located on the premises at DNS, staff will first notify 911 and then immediately contact the parents. DNS will conduct monthly evacuation drills during different times of the program day, and practicing with alternate exits. DNS will document the date, time, exit route used, number of children evacuated and effectiveness of drill. This plan will be reviewed yearly to keep current and to meet the needs of all children in care, including but not limited to those with disabilities who may need additional assistance during evacuation.

Loss of power, heat or hot water: Utility Company will be notified in cases of lost power, heat or hot water. In the event there is not a clear plan of action of restoring power, heat to 65 degrees or hot water within a reasonable time, the Director will call all families to pick up their children.
Communication with Parents/Guardians

We value the parents and guardians of our students. Please provide us with feedback and ideas regularly, either in person or in writing. If a response is sought, the administrator will willingly provide one. If a parent’s primary language is not English, DNS will work to locate a translator if needed. Parents and guardians are welcome to visit the program at any time without prior announcement.

Parent/guardians will be informed regularly on the progress of their child. The staff at DNS is observing your child’s progress on an ongoing basis during group time, creative free play, small group activities, snack time, and outdoor play. We see parents often and have the opportunity to talk with them on a regular basis before and after the school day. Any problems or concerns that arise will be discussed and worked out together. DNS posts daily classroom activities outside the classroom. Newsletters are provided approximately once a month via email.

We are available to discuss your child with you at any time. Telephone calls are made to parents in October to communicate about your child and parent/teacher conferences are offered in January/February. If a parent or guardian requests a formal conference, arrangements will be made for a mutually convenient time.

A written progress report of your child’s experience at school will be given to parents at least every six months (at the time of the parent/teacher conference). A copy will be given to the parents and a copy will be kept in your child’s file. If your child has disabilities, a written progress report will be provided at least every three months.

Referral Services

Regular observations are made in the classroom and playground to assess the development of a child’s physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development. As such, if parents or the director believe that a student might benefit from a consultation with an independent service, the director will provide referral services to the parents and assist in efforts to improve the child’s success. We will document observations and referrals, and with a written release by a child’s parent or guardian, DNS will be an active participant in providing necessary information to collaterals. We will work to accommodate the child’s needs in classroom activities and procedures. Should a child’s needs require that s/he leaves DNS, we will make every effort to make this experience as comfortable as possible.

Referral Process:

1. The staff will make ongoing, written observations of children in the program.
2. Staff members will inform the director of their concerns regarding a child.
3. The director and staff will document additional observations and recordings of the child’s behavior, and the child’s record will be reviewed.
4. The director will communicate with the parents and make arrangements for a meeting to discuss the concerns.

5. The director will recommend and offer a referral(s) to the parents along with written documentation of: the reason for recommending a referral for additional services, a brief summary of the program’s observations related to the referral and any efforts the program made to accommodate the child’s needs.

6. The director will document the parent conference(s), the recommended referral(s), and the results.

7. The director will ask the parents to sign a release of information so that communication may occur between the director and the collateral(s).

8. The director and staff will work to develop accommodations for the child’s specific needs in the classroom.

By law, the town in which you reside provides free observation and consultation services in the following areas: emotional, physical, intellectual, neurological, communication, health, developmental delay, autism, sensory (hearing, vision, deaf-blind), and specific learning.

The Federal IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education) Act requires school districts to provide services to children from age three through graduation or age twenty-three. Most often the initial referral will be to the Special Education administrator of the public schools in your town for evaluation and assessment.

Early Intervention Programs are services made available to children who are under the age of three. The director can inform parents/guardians of the child’s rights regarding the availability of services, as well as the parents’ rights. This includes the parents’ right to appeal the decision made as part of the evaluation and consultation process. If it is determined that the child is not in need of services from the Early Intervention Programs, or is ineligible to receive services, the director shall review the child’s progress at DNS every three months to determine if another referral is necessary.

Ms. Christine Smith, Administrator of Special Education, Dover Public Schools
(508) 785-0480 x1032 Smith@doversherborn.org
Elissa Yanko, Speech and Language, Chickering School 508-785-0480, x2206
Dover and Sherborn Early Childhood Website:
http://www.doversherborn.org/index.cfm/page/Special-Education/pid/10455

Special Education contacts in:
Needham – Mary Lammi, Director of SPED: Preschool and primary 781-455-0400 x233
Sherborn – Christine Smith, Special Education Administrator 508-655-0630
Wellesley – Kristen Spacey, Dept. Head Elementary Special Education 781-446-6200
Westwood – Special Education http://www.westwood.k12.ma.us/index.cfm?pid=17862
Medfield – Gina Dalan, Director of Pupil Services 508-359-7135
Department of Children and Families http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dcf/
Dentist: Dr. Ken Brede in Needham 781-444-1505
Pediatrician: Dr. Alan Stern, Needham Pediatrics 781-444-7186
Serving Children with Disabilities at DNS

If a child registers at Dover Nursery School with a disability, the director will meet with the parents to discuss the specific needs and issues of the child and the application will be accepted. If a child is enrolled at DNS, the director and staff will assess the child through observations and meetings with parents. With written parental consent, the director will request information from Local Education Authorities (LEA), Early Intervention Programs (EIP) and health/service providers or make a referral for services. With information received and parental input, the director will identify any specific accommodations in writing, such as modifications in child’s participation, group size/ratio, special equipment, and any other accommodations.

After these steps, it is the director’s responsibility to review the accommodations and determine whether or not they would place a reasonable or undue burden on the existing program. Considerations will include: the nature and cost of accommodations, the program’s financial resources, the effect on expenses and resources, funding or services available elsewhere, the number of employees, and any other impacts on the program. It is noted that accommodating toileting for a child with a disability is not an undue burden.

If the director discerns that accommodations do not present undue burden on the program, the child will be accepted/served and a program plan for the child will be developed/reviewed. Follow-up communication will be made with LEA, EIP service providers with parental permission. This will include a written notice with parental permission to the Special Education administrator that DNS is serving the child.

If the director discerns that accommodations present an undue burden for the program, the director will provide the parents with a written notice as to the reasons why, the parents’ right to a review by the Department of Early Education and Care. The notice will also be kept on file at DNS. The director will inform parents of other available services and prepare the child for termination.

Prevention of Abuse and Neglect Policy

Dover Nursery School takes precautions to protect children from abuse and neglect while in the program’s care and custody. The physical and emotional safety of our students is our number one concern. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, teachers and staff members in childcare centers are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). It is not the role of the teachers/staff to determine what is or is not abuse and neglect, only to report information or observations that suggest to a mandated reporter that abuse and neglect may be occurring. If a DNS staff member suspects abuse or neglect of a child, s/he will provide the information to the director verbally and in writing. The staff of DNS will cooperate in all state investigations and interventions of child abuse and neglect. Steps taken to ensure the safety of all children:

1. A background record check will be processed upon hire and repeated every three years, including a criminal record check, a DCF background
check, a sex offender registry background check and a national fingerprinting background check.

2. Staff will follow monitoring policies regarding safety checks and supervision of children and equipment both indoors and outdoors.

3. DNS will cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect, including identifying parent of children currently and previously enrolled in the program; providing consent for disclosure to EEC of information from, and allowing EEC to disclose information to, any person and/or agency EEC may specify as necessary to the prompt investigation of allegations and protection of children.

DNS has prided itself on the quality teachers that have been hired, not only because of their teaching credentials, but also for their commitment to safeguarding the children in our program. In the event that the director receives communication that a DNS staff member has been suspected of child abuse and neglect the following steps will occur:

1. The staff member will be removed from the classroom immediately and will be suspended from DNS, with pay, until DCF and EEC have completed their investigations and gives permission for the staff member to return.

2. The Director will contact EEC immediately after filing a 51A report.

3. The staff of DNS will cooperate in all State investigations of abuse and neglect.

4. In the event a 51A investigation is substantiated by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the staff member will be terminated immediately. The staff of DNS will cooperate with the family of the child and DCF to maximize effectiveness of the State intervention.

5. In the event a 51A is not substantiated by the Department of Children and Families, the staff member may return to his/her teaching position at DNS after EEC has completed its investigation and gives permission for the staff member to return. The staff member and the Director will meet to discuss terms of employment.

Termination and Suspension Policy

DNS reserves the right to terminate or suspend a child from the program immediately, however we have procedures in place to avoid the suspension or termination of a child from the program due to challenging behavior:

1. provide an opportunity to meet with parents to discuss options other than suspension or termination;

2. offer referrals to parents for evaluation, diagnostic or therapeutic services;

3. pursue options for supportive services to the program, including consultation and educator training;

4. develop a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program.

If we believe that the needs of your child might be best met from another program, we will refer the parents to appropriate resources and help to make the transition as smooth as possible for the child and the family.

If a parent cannot abide by the policies of the Dover Nursery School as outlined in this Parent Handbook, including being consistently late with payment and/or pick-up of
their child, the student may be suspended or terminated from the program. Any family enrolled at DNS known to use information that unjustly criticizes a staff member, other child/family and/or school philosophy may result in the child’s immediate termination from DNS. Non-payment of tuition is a reason for termination. DNS will provide written documentation to the parents of the proposed suspension or termination of the child and the circumstances under which the child may return, if any.

**Unauthorized Activities**

Dover Nursery School and its staff shall not allow children to participate in any activities unrelated to the direct care of children without the written, informed consent of the parent(s) or guardians. Activities include, but are not limited to, fund raising and publicity (including photographs and participation in the mass media). All class events will take place in Kraft Hall and its outdoor play area. DNS will not conduct research, experimentation, or unusual treatment involving children without the written, informed consent of the affected child’s parent(s) or guardian(s) for each occurrence.

**Children’s Records**

Any written information regarding your child is privileged and confidential. DNS will not distribute or release information in a child’s record to anyone without the written consent of the child’s parent(s). DNS will notify the parent(s) if a child’s record is subpoenaed.

Upon request, DNS will give parental access to the child’s complete record at reasonable times within two business days of the request.

A permanent log will be kept in the child’s record recording each time a child’s record has been released. Such log is available only to the child’s parent(s) and program personnel responsible for record maintenance.

A child’s parent(s) has the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant materials to the child’s record. The director will consider any parent(s)’ wish to amend or delete information in the child’s record and will discuss this amicably with the parents. The director, within one week after the conference, will provide the parent(s) with a written decision and reasoning behind her decision. If the decision is in the parent(s)’ favor, steps shall be taken immediately to put the decision into effect.

Any information that needs to be copied will be done so at the school’s expense.
**Student Transitions**

Students who will be leaving DNS to attend kindergarten/other schools: Parents have the option to submit forms from the new schools for teachers to complete. Parents may request an additional copy of their child’s most recent evaluation. Students and parents are encouraged to attend orientation meetings at their new schools. With parental permission, communication and collaboration between the child’s current teacher/director and future teacher/director may be arranged.

For all students: Teachers will speak about endings and next steps. Graduation ceremony will occur on the last day of school and preparations will be made in advance to afford students to talk about leaving Dover Nursery School or changing their group/teachers at DNS. Each student will receive a portfolio at graduation which is a culmination of their school year through photos, art, etc.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Dover Nursery School, please do not hesitate to call us at 508-785-0252.