

CIRCLE NURSERY SCHOOL

FAMILY HANDBOOK

REVISED
August 2024

FAMILY HANDBOOK

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the staff and the Director, welcome to CIRCLE NURSERY SCHOOL located at the North Madison Congregational Church.

HISTORY

Circle Nursery School was established in 1998 as an outreach program of the North Madison Congregational Church. The goal of the Board of Directors was to open a high-quality program that would operate as a non-profit, keeping tuition as affordable as possible. That first year, Circle Nursery School opened with an enrollment of 16 children. Over the years our program has served up to 65 families a year while maintaining one of the lowest child to staff ratios in our area. We are dedicated to providing a high quality, nurturing pre-school experience for the children of our community.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The program is administered by the Director, who is selected by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is the governing body of the nursery school. It is made up of members of the North Madison Congregational Church and the parents of the Circle Nursery School. The Board of Directors meets on the third Monday of each month (except July and August).

Mission Statement

The mission of Circle Nursery School is to provide exceptional early childhood education in a play-based curriculum for the young children in our community. Highly qualified and dedicated professionals work in harmony with our families to create an environment where children feel cherished and are encouraged as they learn and grow.

Philosophy

We believe all children are born with a natural curiosity and a desire to learn about their environment in their own unique way. It is our job to cultivate that love of learning through meaningful play, intentional teaching, and a solid partnership with the family.

Our rich & stimulating curriculum inspires imagination, discovery and problem-solving, allowing children to experience success in both teacher and child directed activities. We provide many opportunities for parents to participate in the program and encourage them to share their knowledge and passions with the

children. By providing this enriching and comfortable atmosphere, children gain confidence and independence while exploring at their own pace. This solid foundation allows children to develop a positive self-image and the motivation to learn throughout their lifetime as well as developing the ability to establish trusting, cooperative relationships with other children and adults.

Goals and Desired Outcomes

CNS supports the following goals and outcomes for children and families:

- Children attending Circle Nursery School will demonstrate growth and learning in all aspects of childhood development; cognitive, social-emotional, physical and creative expression.
- Children will be provided a variety of hands-on, age-appropriate activities that promote curiosity and exploration of their surroundings and culture.
- Teaching Staff will strike a balance between child-directed and teacher-directed activities in order to ensure the best educational experience for the child.
- Teaching Staff will foster the child's growth of cooperative interactions in work and play among other children and adults.
- Teaching Staff will help children develop independent problem-solving skills.
- Teaching Staff will help the child build trusting relationships beyond the family.
- Teaching Staff will provide families with opportunities to share their own unique backgrounds, skills, and passions with the staff and all the children.
- Teaching Staff will collaborate with families, teachers, and community to meet the needs of each individual child.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

CNS will abide by all state and federal anti-discrimination laws that support equal opportunity and prohibit discrimination.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

Tolerance and understanding are fostered by positive exposure to a variety of ages, genders, lifestyles, family structures, races, cultures, religions and physical abilities. We support an environment that encourages diversity and challenges bias and discrimination.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential and is shared only with the teaching staff and administration. Information in a child's record will not be distributed or released to anyone beyond parent or guardian without the written consent of the child's parent (except in cases of abuse or neglect).

REGISTRATION

The registration process begins in February for students currently enrolled in our program. After two weeks, registration will then open to the community. Registration forms will be available at that time. *Forms must be accompanied by a \$100.00 non-refundable registration fee and a \$100.00 tuition deposit.* An open house for the children and parents is held just prior to the opening of school.

PARENT CONTRACT

Before the student joins the class, the parent or guardian shall agree to all school policies and procedures as outlined in the Parent Handbook. The parent shall provide the following signed forms:

- Registration form
- Tuition Agreement
- Current Health form, completed and signed by physician and parent and updated annually
- Permission form for Emergency and Illness procedures, naming pick-up preferences and Field Trip Permission
- An Allergy Policy form stating our food use policy and "Nut Free" Policy
- A Publication Permission form giving consent to publish names, addresses and telephone numbers of each student
- A Food Permission form that allows students to use and consume food products in the classroom
- A signature is required for each food offering for allergic students

TUITION

CNS is a not-for-profit entity supported solely by tuition fees. Tuition is an annual fee based on the age of the child and the time spent in attendance. When two

children from a family are enrolled in our program in the same school year, a 15% discount will be applied to the lower tuition. The annual tuition fee can be paid in full, quarterly or be divided into 10 equal payments. The CNS year begins in September. The first payment for the year is due September 1st. Payments are due by the 1st of each month thereafter. A late fee of \$25 will be applied for all payments received after the 15th of the month. Checks should be made payable to Circle Nursery School and placed in the collection envelope near the sign-in cabinet. Checks returned for non-sufficient funds will be assessed a \$25 charge. Two occurrences will require payments in the form of a money order or cash.

Since tuition is calculated on an annual rather than daily or hourly basis, families pay for the number of days occurring in the current school year. No refunds will be made for illnesses, vacation time taken by parents, or emergency closing. Snow day and weather-related closures may be made up at the end of the school year at the discretion of the board of directors. If CNS is closed between five and eight days due to weather, one week will be added to the end of the school year. If closed more than nine days, two weeks will be added.

In the event that CNS is forced to close due to catastrophic reasons, including but not limited to, a health crisis or pandemic, CNS will deliver a comprehensive distance plan and therefore ask that each family continue to make monthly tuition payments of at least 50% their normal fee. The CNS Director will notify families of any tuition reductions if/when long term closures occur.

CNS Distance Learning Plan

- **Zoom style circle times** equal to the number of days your child attends school
 - ~At least one circle time per week will utilize break out rooms to serve **smaller groups of children.**
- **Prerecorded videos** of staff will be emailed for your child to view at a time convenient for the family. Some examples: songs your child is familiar with at school, story times, nature walks, etc.
- **Porch pick-ups**, at least every other week, will be available for an art, science, or literacy activity.
- **Two-way communication**, through a private class Facebook page or similar platform, to support teacher/family connection.
- **Emails** from the teacher at the beginning of each week to outline the theme/focus for the coming week and to offer links for additional activities.
- Regularly scheduled **Zoom coffee hour for parents** and teachers to connect.

The intent of our distance learning plan is to offer various ways to reach all types of learners. Our focus will be to cover various domains including early literacy and numeracy, to build community and encourage social/emotional development.

Continuing to pay at least 50% of monthly tuition will enable your child to participate in distance learning, support our dedicated staff who will be working diligently to connect with your child and family, and hold a spot in the class. Exceptions are at the discretion of the Director and the CNS Board and will be considered on an individual basis. Please contact the Director if your family is experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic.

The CNS FEIN number for tax purposes is 06-6049109

LICENSING

CNS operates in compliance with building, fire, and health regulation codes for the state of Connecticut Department of Public Health. CNS is licensed by the CT Office of Early Childhood. The license is posted on the bulletin board in the vestibule at the entrance to our building.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Circle Nursery School's normal hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. to 1:00pm, Monday through Friday. We may follow the Madison Public Schools in regard to delayed openings, early dismissal and cancellations due to weather.

PROGRAMS

We offer the following programs:

CIRCLE TOTS PROGRAM This program is for 2yr. olds accompanied by a parent or caregiver from 9:15a.m. To 10:45a.m.

THREE YEAR OLD PROGRAM : Tuesday and Thursday from 9a.m. to 1:00p.m. The child must be three years old by December 31st of the admitting year and toilet trained. The children bring a snack and lunch.

FOUR YEAR OLD PROGRAM: Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9a.m. to 1:00p.m. The children bring a snack and a lunch.

FIVE YEAR OLD PROGRAM: (5 day) Monday through Friday from 9a.m. to 1:00p.m. (4 day) 9 a.m.- 1 p.m. Day off to be determined. Children in both programs bring a snack and a lunch.

SUPPLIES FROM HOME

Parents are required to bring a nutritious morning snack for their own child. All children in our program will need to bring a healthy lunch as well. Please help us teach healthy eating habits by sending only nutritious foods. We suggest an insulated lunch box with a cold pack for lunches that need to stay chilled. We will be glad to warm food up in the microwave if necessary. Please note that Circle Nursery School is a Nut Free Zone. Please do not send peanut butter sandwiches! Also, no snacks that contain peanuts or tree nuts.

The children engage in many "hands on" messy activities indoors and outdoors. Therefore, we ask that you dress your child in play clothes that may get dirty. For safety, shoes should have rubber soles. Please keep an entire extra set of **seasonally appropriate** clothing in your child's backpack. Also, please be sure to dress your child appropriately for the weather, i.e. winter coats, boots, snow pants, hats and mittens. If possible, we play outside every day.

We suggest that children leave their own personal toys at home. Children often have trouble sharing their personal items or they may get lost or broken. They may bring a favorite toy in on "Show and Share Day" Please refrain from bringing a "weapon-like" toy into our classroom such as a toy sword, gun or laser.

Birthdays are a very special day for the children and parents may choose to celebrate in the classroom. Parents who would like to bring in a food item will need to clear it with the teacher a week ahead of time and bring a copy of the ingredients in the food you wish to share. All food items will need to follow our Food Allergy Policy.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

Circle Nursery School uses the Connecticut Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS), the Preschool Assessment Frameworks, and *the NAEYC Standards & Criteria* as a framework for our curriculum planning and developmental assessments that support our philosophy and goals for children. Our head teachers have attended OEC administered training in using the ELDS.

We believe children learn best when given the time to actively explore and experiment with new and familiar materials and activities. We emphasize child-initiated play in our program and limit teacher-directed activities. Children are given choices and allowed the time to explore at their own pace. We emphasize the process and love of learning over any products or facts. We allow for

adaptations and modifications to ensure all children can participate and experience success.

Each child that comes to us is unique and at their own developmental level. Our goals are designed to support and challenge each child's growth in all developmental areas. Our teachers provide exceptional and varied learning activities that include cognitive, social/emotional, physical, literacy, creative expression, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Circle Nursery School has developed our own assessment tool to compliment the ELDS that will be distributed three times a year. Various assessment strategies such as checklists, anecdotal observations and portfolio collection aid the teachers in tailoring daily lesson plans to meet the specific needs of each child. The main purposes of assessing the children's progress are to develop a plan for each child that will support his or her learning, identify the possible need for additional outside support, and to improve the overall program at CNS.

Confidentiality of assessment information is extremely important and all of the children's records are kept in a locked cabinet. Children's portfolios are stored in the director's office. Communication with families occur verbally and written, informally and formally on a daily basis, and during scheduled conferences.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.ctoec.org/supporting-child-development/ct-elds/>

REFERRALS

If a concern is raised about a child's behavior or development, it is Circle Nursery School's policy to form a team consisting of the parents, the teaching team, and the Director. Together, the team will decide the best strategies for observation and extra support for the child. Once information has been gathered, the team will meet and agree upon a plan of action. The teachers will apply the discussed plan in the classroom and after a period of time will meet with the parents for a follow-up discussion. At this time, it may be determined that a referral is an appropriate next step. The Director and teaching team will work with the parents to organize and schedule outside observations. Referrals to outside individuals will not be made without the knowledge and written consent of the parents.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

When a child's ongoing challenging behavior must be addressed because it is inhibiting learning and development and/or is harmful to the child or others, it is Circle Nursery School's policy to form a team consisting of the parents, the

teaching team, the Director, and possibly, outside professionals. Together the team will meet and agree upon a plan of action. The plan will include positive supports strategies such as creating a predictable daily schedule and modifying the classroom environment or removing materials that may trigger challenging behaviors. The teachers will apply the discussed plan in the classroom and after a period of time will meet with the parents for a follow-up discussion.

PARENT – TEACHER CONFERENCES

Supplementing the three written progress reports that will be shared with parents, a parent-teacher conference will be held during the school year. A second conference is an option at the end of the school year; parents may make an appointment with the teacher. Parents and teachers are encouraged to exchange information daily about the child's well-being, efforts and accomplishments, as well as any observations from home about particular developmental skills. Parents are invited to visit the classroom or call the teacher if they have concerns and can request to schedule a meeting with the teacher at any time.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

We value the partnership between families and teachers so please take the time to touch base with your child's teacher each day. We invite family members into our classrooms to volunteer in a variety of ways, such as reading a story to the children, sharing a special talent, or helping out in one of our community events.

To further support the home/school connection:

- Please inform us of any address, home phone or cell phone changes.
- Parents will receive written or verbal communications about their child.
- For families that speak a language other than English, CNS will make every attempt to provide an interpreter when necessary.
- Confidentiality is important; we will not disclose any information about the children in our program without the written consent of the parent.
- We will coordinate services with outside agencies only with the written permission of the parent.
- A conference may be requested with the teacher or director at any time.

- Parents are encouraged to provide their input about the program at any time, in addition a Parent Survey is sent home each year.
- Parents will be informed about any special events going on at CNS through notes and newsletters via email.

CELEBRATIONS AND MULTICULTURALISM

Occasionally, we have children attending CNS whose native language is not English. We encourage families to share their language and cultures with us to help us become more culturally diverse in the classroom. We like to celebrate the children's birthdays, as many holidays as possible, and we make up some of our own fun days as well, such as: Hat Day, Pajama Day and Backwards Day! Please let us know if we should be aware of any ethical or religious considerations. Also, we would love to have you share your family traditions and holidays with your child's class.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

NOTE

This handbook is designed as a broad tool for sharing our policies and procedures. Nothing in this handbook should limit or misrepresent the intent of our policies or procedures.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY

The Staff at Circle Nursery School takes seriously its role as mandated reporters of actual or suspected child abuse.

Child Abuse is defined in the Connecticut General Statutes as: a child who has had non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him/her. The injuries are at variance with the history given of them. The child is in a condition which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment. Child Abuse includes any non-accidental physical or mental injury (i.e. shaking, beating, burning), any form of sexual abuse (i.e. sexual exploitation), neglect (i.e. failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care or appropriate supervision), emotional abuse (i.e. excessive belittling, berating or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth) and at risk behavior (i.e. placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect).

Child Neglect is defined as a child who has been abandoned, denied proper care and attention physically, medically, educationally, emotionally or morally. A neglected child is one who would be allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his wellbeing.

Staff is required twice a year to attend meetings to discuss the role of being a mandated reporter. The focus is to learn and/or review the required steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect.

Our policy is to report any suspected abuse/neglect as required by the State of CT. We are not required, nor will we, notify the family that a report has been made against them. If a report of abuse/neglect is made, the investigation is led by Department of Children and Families, not the CNS staff.

Should an allegation of abuse/neglect be brought against any staff member, management will implement immediate action (investigation, reassignment of job duties or suspension, etc.). In all cases, while investigations and due process are taking place, confidentiality will be maintained.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The definition of "discipline" is to guide. The goal of discipline is to provide a situation that facilitates the growth of a child's ability to develop self-control and become an interactive member of a group.

When considering disciplinary measures, the teachers will implement developmentally appropriate expectations for their particular age group of children. Teachers will design a program and set up the physical environment with the goal of reducing conflict in the classroom. During structured portions of the day, teachers use positive methods to "teach" and model expected behaviors, thereby setting clear limits. Children will be continually guided to make good choices and will be supported by their teachers when conflicts arise. When clear limits are in place and a safe environment is established, children feel comfortable making good decisions for themselves.

With this in mind, Circle Nursery School seeks to guide children to independence through the following positive methods:

- Establish classroom rules in the beginning of the year and consistently verbalize these rules to the children.
- Discussion-The teacher will ask the children to talk about a problem, listen to all parties involved, and then ask the children for suggestions on how they could solve the problem themselves.
- Acknowledge the child's feelings before trying to resolve conflict.
- Encourage the child to express their feelings and be empathetic towards their classmates' feelings.

- Children are encouraged to “use your words” instead of using their hands.
- Children are encouraged to take turns and share.

In addition, there are many strategies that teachers may use when a child exhibits a pattern of unacceptable behavior:

- change the space, schedule or pace of the day
- reinforce positive behaviors
- intervene before conflict erupts
- re-direction -the child is encouraged to choose a new activity
- pursuing a quiet, solitary activity such as painting, coloring, or puzzles
- participating in a “one-on-one” activity with the teacher
- the child is given a “time-out” on a chair or pillow just long enough to think about how to regain self-control.

If the child is unable to regain self-control (screaming, uncontrollably crying, unable to sit down etc.) he/she will spend some time in the office with the director. The director will discuss the unacceptable behavior with the child and encourage understanding. The child will learn to identify the unacceptable behavior and take ownership of the behavior by telling us what needs to be done in order to solve the problem. The child will be encouraged to re-join his/her classmates as soon as possible. If at this point the child is still unable to be redirected or unable to regain self-control, the parents will be contacted.

All methods of discipline will in no way harm the child or his/her self-esteem.

Unacceptable discipline includes but is not limited to:

- Physical abuse: shaking, hitting, spanking, pulling, grabbing, kicking and biting of the children, requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.
- Psychological abuse: shaming, humiliation, negative and demeaning language, sarcasm, loud and abusive language and yelling, frightening a child, withholding affection.
- Coercion: rough handling, forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child, or others from harm, physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).

- Failure to provide proper supervision; leaving the classroom unattended.
- Sexual contact
- Withholding food

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION POLICY

Circle Nursery School does not believe that suspension and expulsion are appropriate measures at the preschool level and therefore will not exclude a child for any reason.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL/SECURITY POLICY

To ensure proper staff ratios, you are asked to follow the schedule for the class in which your child is enrolled. Please arrive no more than five minutes before the scheduled beginning of class or after the scheduled end of class. The door will be unlocked at 8:55a.m.

- If you have a special situation that requires that you drop your child early or pick them up late, please call the Director to make arrangements.
- For security purposes, all doors are locked with the exception of the outer door at our main entrance. That door is unlocked during school hours and we have placed a key pad on the inner door within the vestibule. Codes will be given out only to parents and caregivers at the beginning of the school year. Please ring the doorbell or call the school to gain admittance.
- You should enter the school through the side door which is our main entrance and enter the admitting code on the key pad.
- Upon entering the classroom, be sure to sign your child in and out every day using your initials and the time of day.
- We encourage parents/caregivers to take this time to touch base with your child's teacher.
- Please take the time to read parent notices and check your child's cubby for projects and papers to take home.
- Your child will only be released to you or to those people who are listed on your Pick Up form. Please be aware that a Photo I.D. must be presented by whoever picks up your child, if we have not met them before.
- Please drive slowly through the parking lot and be sure to accompany your child into the school. Remember that it is against the law to leave unattended children in a car.

- Please refrain from idling your car in our parking lot unless necessary due to extreme hot or cold weather.
- In the event the parent/caregiver who is picking up or dropping off is unable to leave their car for any reason, please call CNS and a staff member will meet your car in the parking lot and escort your child into/or out of the building.

In the event that a child is not picked up at the closing of the center, the remaining staff members will follow these guidelines:

- **Attempt to reach both parents/guardians at home, work, and cell phone**
- **Attempt to reach emergency contact at all numbers provided**
- **Contact Director**
- **Contact Madison Police if unable to reach parents and all emergency contacts**

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Circle Nursery School encourages parents and guardians to visit our school at any time during our hours of operation. Please announce yourself to the Director upon arrival.

LATE CHARGE FEE

The Late Charge Policy at CNS is one of mutual respect. While we will respect the fact that there are extenuating factors that can cause you to be late, our staff use this time for preparation and planning and to attend to personal needs. Chronic tardiness can result in a late fees and possible dismissal from the program.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

At CNS we strive to offer early education of the highest quality for all of our families. We believe that the best way to accomplish this goal is to function as a community of learners where all stakeholders, such as parents, teachers and Board members, can openly communicate about every aspect of our program. We understand that conflicts can arise from time to time and to minimize the negative impact that conflicts can have on our program, we have established a conflict resolution policy.

Please address problems as soon as they become evident. We ask that all parties carry out all actions, conversations, and decisions in a manner that is respectful and productive. Also, all conversations stemming from conflict should be carried out in private.

The resolution process should be followed in this order:

- Try to resolve the problem by directly addressing the other party
- If this doesn't work, please contact the Program Director in person, by phone or email. She will set up a meeting with all parties involved
- Lastly, if this attempt at resolving the issue does not work, contact an executive member of our Board of Directors for assistance.

Please be aware that the Board member that is contacted cannot act as an individual in solving the problem. The issue must be brought before the full Board for discussion. Therefore, we require that all issues that come before the Board be submitted in writing. The Board will determine whether their involvement is warranted by referencing all pertinent policies, handbooks and child care regulations. If further action is needed, the Board will set up a conference between the parties involved. Any decision that the Board makes is a final and binding decision. Confidentiality in these matters is of the utmost importance to us; however, we do keep a record of all complaints to proactively address problems in the future. This record is kept in a locked file cabinet in the director's office.

DISMISSAL POLICY

While CNS will strive to find mutually agreeable solutions, sometimes it is not possible for the program to meet a particular child's or parent's individual needs. In these cases, CNS reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child. Any refunds of tuition are at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

EMERGENCY WEATHER PROCEDURES

If the MADISON PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM is closed for weather related reasons, CNS will be closed as well. Please check Channel 19, the Madison School Access Station for closure information. If there is a delayed opening, regardless of the length of any MADISON PUBLIC SCHOOL delay, **CNS** will always open at **10:00 A.M.** Should MADISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS dismiss early, CNS may also dismiss

our classes early. Parents will be notified by phone and will also be expected to come and pick up their child.

CIRCLE NURSERY SCHOOL is equipped with battery powered emergency lighting should electricity be lost. If the power is out for more than an hour, parents will be notified and the children will be sent home. If strong winds occur, we will locate to the inner classroom where no windows exist. The teachers will remain with children until parents arrive. If any further emergencies arise the staff will call 911 for appropriate action.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES POLICY

- Fire drills will occur on a monthly basis. During the drills, teachers need to line up their class and quickly and safely direct them to the nearest exit and proceed to the designated meeting area. Teachers must then take attendance, report the results to the Director or person in charge and then return the children to their class in an orderly fashion.
- In the event of a fire, the alarm will be pulled, 911 will be called, and the children will be immediately evacuated in a calm and orderly manner. Everyone will assemble at the designated meeting area—the cement play slab next to the white shed just above the playground. Teachers will bring the Emergency Binder, containing all children’s contact information with them upon evacuation and their cell phones. Parents will be notified of the emergency and instructed to pick up their child.
- Should a major injury occur, we will call 911 and contact the parent. Children will be transported via Madison ambulance to the closest hospital. In the event the parent cannot make it here in time, a CNS staff member will accompany the child in the ambulance. Health insurance information and consent forms are located in the director’s office for quick reference. For a minor injury, we will administer First Aid and report the incident to the parents at pick up time or via an incident/accident form. First Aid supplies are located in each classroom and all teaching staff has training in First Aid and Child CPR.
- If notified by Madison Police, CT State Police or Madison Fire Department of a security threat in the area, CNS will go into “lockdown”. We will verify that all our outside doors are locked and if warranted, all children will be moved into windowless, interior classrooms. Parents will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so, via email or group text. No one will be allowed in or out of the building until it is determined safe enough to do so.

- In the case of a missing child, all available staff will search for the child while remaining staff will stay with children to maintain adequate ratios. Police will be called in as necessary and the parents will be called.
- If a child becomes ill while at school, he/she will be placed in a comfortable, quite space and kept under close supervision. Parents will be notified and arrangements will be made to have the child picked up within one hour.
- In any emergency situation, if the director is unavailable, the head teacher is in charge

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE POLICY

- North Madison Congregational Church is a designated regional emergency evacuation site. In the event of a need for the building to be used as such, remaining nursery school children will stay with a teacher in a location separate from the public.
- Should an emergency occur which requires the children to be removed from the building for an extended period of time; they will be relocated to the North Madison Fire Station to the South of the Church as the emergency shelter.
- The children, with the assistance of the teachers, the staff members of the Church and the fire department personnel, will be walked to the fire station from their classrooms.
- The Director will have with her the emergency binder which will be used to call parents and notify them that they need to pick up their children at the above location.

Pandemic Emergency Response Plan

Pandemic

1. *(of a disease) prevalent over a whole country or world*
2. *An outbreak of a pandemic disease*

CNS will implement the Pandemic Crisis Management Plan under the guidance of the CDC, federal and local governments, Madison Department of Public Health, and the CT Office of Early Childhood.

To ensure the safety of children, families and staff the center will monitor the situation and take into account the guidance and suggestions from the authorities on the situation. Decisions made by the center will consider the safety of children, families and staff. Decisions may include:

- Closure of CNS – length of closure to be determined by CNS Board of Directors, North Madison Congregational Church, federal and local governments, Madison Department of Public Health, and the CT Office of Early Childhood.
- Adjusted hours of service
- Daily health checks of children and staff
- Limited entry to the building

CNS will communicate these plans through email and Facebook.

HEALTH/ILLNESS POLICY

Children must be well enough to take part fully in the program's daily schedule, including indoor and outdoor play. If a child becomes ill while at school, he/she will be immediately placed in a quiet area and be made comfortable. Parents will be notified and arrangements will be made to have the child picked up within an hour

The following are symptoms requiring your child to remain at home or be removed from the classroom:

- **FEVER:** Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100°F or higher. Children may return to school if fever free for the last 24 hours without the aid of medication and if other symptoms have subsided.
- **DIARRHEA:** Runny, watery or bloody stools within the last 24 hours.
- **VOMITING:** Within the last 24 hours.
- **BODY RASH:** If the rash is accompanied by a fever, the child should remain at home until the rash is diagnosed or resolved

- **SORE THROAT:** If your child is diagnosed with Strep Throat, the child **MUST** be on an antibiotic for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school.
- **EYE DISCHARGE:** Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, or "Pink Eye".
- **GENERAL MALAISE:** Child is irritable, continuously crying or requires more attention than the teacher can give without impacting the health and safety of other children in the classroom.
- **RUNNY NOSES:** Children experience runny noses frequently during the winter/spring months. However, if your child has a thick yellow or green discharge, or requires frequent wiping of the discharge, the child should remain at home.
- **HEAD LICE:** When a case of head lice is identified, the student will be sent home where he or she **MUST** be treated and have all of the nits removed. CNS has adopted a "No Nits Policy". This means that the child can return to class only once **ALL** nits have been removed from hair. Please note that our policy states that a student must be treated **AGAIN** in seven days, even after all nits have been removed. When a case of head lice is verified, a letter will go home to all parents. We mandate all cases to be reported to the director to stop the spread. Confidentiality is respected in all cases.

CNS COVID Policy

CDC's updated guidance recommends that people who test positive for COVID-19 should isolate — staying home and away from others. How long depends on their symptoms. Your child may return to school when they are:

- Fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications (e.g. ibuprofen, acetaminophen) **and**
- Other symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours

Because some people are still contagious beyond the "stay-at-home" period. Taking extra precautions can lower the chance of spreading respiratory viruses to others. Upon return to school, your child should take added precaution of wearing a mask over the next 5 days.

Masks

CNS will continue with a Mask Optional policy for students and staff. CNS staff will respect the decisions of all families. Those who would like their children to continue to wear a mask indoors need to communicate this clearly to your child and also with our staff. We will do our best to support your decision by giving gentle reminders and encouragement to your child during the school day.

HEALTH ASSESSMENT AND IMMUNIZATIONS FORMS

State Licensing regulations require that a completely filled out Health Assessment Form with current immunizations be on file at CNS for each child upon the start of the school year. These forms are to be filled out by the pediatrician and must be kept up to date. If a child is under-immunized due to medical reasons, the parent or guardian must submit the state issued exemption form signed by the pediatrician and this form will be kept in the child's file. In the event that a vaccine-preventable disease is identified in the program, the under-immunized child will not be allowed to attend the program. The health consultant will help the director to determine when that child can safely return to school.

ADMINISTRATION OF SUNSCREEN

Parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen before bringing their child to our program. However, reapplication of sunscreen or sunblock with SPF 15 or higher may be necessary during the course of the day. Sunscreen will only be applied with written consent of the child's parent/legal guardian. The parent needs to provide the sunscreen for his or her child. The sunscreen will be labeled with that child's name and used only for that child.

TOILET TRAINING POLICY

CNS is not licensed for infants and toddlers and does not have changing facilities that meet state requirements for diapering. Therefore, children must be toilet trained to attend CNS. Specifically, they must be able to recognize independently when they need to go to the bathroom and be able to sit on the toilet without help.

CNS realizes that toilet training can be a difficult developmental issue and will be as supportive as possible. Parents will provide a complete change of clothes in preparation for an occasional accident. If a child has an accident while at school, the teachers will help the child clean up and change clothes. In the event that

accidents continue to occur on a frequent basis, additional protocols may be implemented such as: calling the parent to come in and change the child, or temporary removal of the child from the program.

GENERAL SNACK AND MEALTIME POLICY

CNS does not provide food for students. All the children's food is provided from home. Snack and lunch are served at regularly established times, not less than 2 hours apart but not more than 3 hours apart. Parents are urged to provide healthy snack and meal choices for their children. Children should bring their food to school in labeled, insulated lunch boxes with cold packs if food needs to be kept cold. Teachers are able to use classroom microwaves for any food that needs to be warmed. Staff is instructed to never use plastic or polystyrene (Styrofoam) containers, plates, bags, or wraps when heating in the microwave. Liquids and foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach.

For children younger than 4 years, parents are asked not to send in popcorn, hard pretzels or raw peas. Also, food such as hot dogs, raw carrots, and grapes need to be cut into small, bite-sized pieces.

Clean, sanitary drinking water is available to the children throughout the day. Simple snacks, such as Goldfish, and juice boxes are kept on hand to supplement food from home, if necessary. Expiration dates are checked before serving and staff is advised to throw away expired foods. If whole fruits, such as apples during Apple themed weeks, are provided for tasting, staff is instructed to thoroughly wash them before cutting and serving.

If a child is enrolled who has specific feeding needs, the director and teaching staff will partner with the family and follow the individual care plan provided by the child's doctor. If required, staff will provide the family with any information or documentation needed about the daily food that child consumes.

Families are provided with the center's food allergy policy and required to sign that they have read and understand it. Staff members are required to enforce and adhere to the centers Food/Allergy Policy which will be reviewed annually.

HAND WASHING POLICY

In an effort to stop the spread of germs, CNS asks that all children and staff wash their hands as soon as they enter the building. Hand washing will also occur

but is not limited to: after toileting, after blowing/wiping of nose, before snacks and meals, after communal water play and after playing in the sand box. Staff will work with the children to establish proper hand washing technique and routines.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

If a child needs to receive medication while at CNS, the parent must follow the guidelines established on the "Authorization for Administration of Medication" state form. This form is available upon request and requires written permission from the child's doctor and the parent/ guardian. No medication will be given without a doctor's authorization.

If a child may require the use of rescue medication, such as an Epi-pen or Inhaler, the parents will provide these medications, the Authorization for Administration of Medication form, and a doctor approved Care Plan. The information and medication will be kept in a box marked with the child's name and photo in a secure location within the child's classroom.

The staff maintains current certification of authorization to administer medication and injectable medications.

POLICY FOR USING FOOD AND ADDRESSING FOOD ALLERGIES IN THE CLASSROOM EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2011

- Set up a team including the school nurse (or doctor) consultant, the director, and the teaching staff to work with parents to implement an individual Health Care Plan for the children with food allergies enrolled at Circle Nursery School.
- Parents must provide Circle Nursery School with written medical documentation (i.e. Health Care Form), any special health care issues and an *individual* health care plan (if needed) for every student enrolled.
- Review all Student Health Records submitted by parents and physicians and develop a customized health care plan for *each individual* food-allergic student. Make changes to the plan as necessary.
- Educate all staff members in food allergy management including recognizing food allergy reactions and symptoms. Review and practice each individual *emergency health care plan for food-allergic students*.

- Obtain written permission from parent/guardian to display child's name and picture on outside of box containing his/her medications. This is to facilitate the immediate dispersal of medication should a child require care.
- Designate and train appropriate staff in the administration of medications in accordance with the State Nursing and Good Samaritan Laws governing the administration of emergency medications.
- Communicate this Policy to all parents at the beginning of the school year.
- Advise parents, in advance, of any food items to be used in the classroom for art and craft projects or for any special celebrations via a posted flyer.
- Work with all parents to encourage all children to avoid trading or sharing food brought from home for snacks, lunch or special celebrations.
- CIRCLE NURSERY SCHOOL will follow the Policy of North Madison Congregational Church in enforcing a **NUT FREE ZONE.** This means that **no peanut or nut products of any kind** will knowingly be brought in or served at any snack, lunch or special celebration.
- CIRCLE NURSERY SCHOOL STAFF & BOARD OF DIRECTORS cannot guarantee an allergy-free environment but seeks to collaborate with parents and students to minimize risks for food-allergic children. In consideration of children with food allergies, we suggest that parents bring snacks that are safe for consumption by all of the children. The staff will provide all families with a list of safe snacks at the beginning of each year. The Director will contact the parent of each child one week before his/her birthday as a reminder of our policy. (ANY FOOD THAT IS TO BE SERVED AT *CIRCLE NURSERY SCHOOL* MUST HAVE A LIST OF INGREDIENTS AND MUST BE CLEARED BY THE DIRECTOR & STAFF BEFORE IT CAN BE SERVED).

FIELD TRIPS

All field trips are "in house" field trips and will take place on the North Madison Congregational Church Property.

CONSULTANTS

As required by the State of Connecticut General Statutes, CNS has four professional consultants available to staff and parents.

- Educational Consultant: will advise us on the educational content of our program. She will visit any time we need her input on our curriculum or on the development of a child in our program. She also will provide in-service training for the staff.
- Social Service Consultant: will support the staff and parents in determining appropriate social and emotional development of our children. She will also provide in-service training for parents and staff.
- Health Consultant: will be a registered nurse (or doctor). She will oversee the general health and safety of the children as well as the overall health education program. She visits often to check the well-being of the children and the accuracy of our health files.
- Dental Consultant: will advise us on the dental health and safety of the children as well as the dental health of the children. She is available by phone as needed.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The children's personal files need to be continuously updated and we will be sending out reminders quarterly. If there are any revisions after the initial application, please share the information with the Director(s). The preschool would appreciate being informed about the following situations:

- Change in residence/work addresses.
- Change in home or work or cell telephone numbers.
- Special dietary restrictions
- Allergies
- Any special information about your child in order to provide the most sensitive and understanding care possible. (For example: New Baby, Divorce, Illness, Death in the Family, etc.)
- Updated physical forms

Family Resources

The following is intended to help provide extra assistance to our families. This is not a complete listing of local family resources, just a sampling of what is available. Our staff is available to provide assistance locating additional resources if needed.

Pediatric Practices:

Pro Health (Shoreline Pediatrics) 203-421-3600

Guilford Pediatrics 203-453-5235
Branford Pediatrics 203-664-1818

Youth and Family Services:

Madison 203-245-5645
Guilford 203-453-8047
Clinton 860-669-1103
Killingworth/Haddam 860-345-7498

Special Ed for Preschool Age:

Madison Town Campus Learning Center, Elizabeth Battaglia, Director of Spec. Ed
206-245-6340
Guilford Public Schools Pupil Services 203-458-0001 x262
Killingworth Pupil Services 860-345-4244

Birth to Three 866-888-4188 Early intervention for Infants, Toddlers, and families

Other Services:

Shoreline Speech Therapy, Madison 203-350-9311
Sensation Station, Guilford 203-458-1000. OT, PT, Speech, and educational evaluation services
After The Hatch, Professional Parent Coach, Rosie Price MA, RN, Midwife 203-804-6604, www.afterthehatch.com
Pathways Center for Learning and Behavioral Health, Essex 860-767-1277
www.kidsmentalhealthinfo.com
Hygeia Foundation for Perinatal Loss and Bereavement, Dr. Michael Berman 800-893-9198

CNS Consultants:

Dental: Dr. Kate Glazer 203-533-5050
Health: Sara Gesner, RN 203-458-3931
Social Services: Patricia Logan Richard, LCSW, 203-645-1827
Educational: Donna Perry

Child Abuse Hotline: 800-842-2288

Revised August 2024