

Southborough Village Preschool

October 2020 Newsletter

What an amazing few weeks we have had at SVP! We are actually having so much fun again, it was certainly worth the wait! Thank goodness for the little ones, we knew they would be the ones to get us all out playing and smiling again. We thank you for sharing them with us this Fall. We know it wasn't a decision that you made lightly, but we are grateful for the trust you put in us and the support you have offered Southborough Village Preschool this year. We are looking forward to a busy and exciting few weeks at the Preschool and want to fill you in on a few things that might be helpful for you to know. As usual, please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about anything. We are always happy to hear from you!

Registration for the 2020-2021 School Year: It's hard to believe that it's here already! It is time for us to begin the registration process for our next school year. Please note these important dates as we approach the first day of the registration process.

- **Registration will begin at 8:00 AM on Monday, November 2nd, for current students and their families, siblings and alumni families.**
- **Registration for new families will begin at 8:00 AM on Monday, November 16th.**

Please keep this date in mind, as we would like you all to have the opportunity to register for the class that you would like. You will be receiving these documents in your child's backpack in the next few weeks, and they will be available on our website as well. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions as to what might be the best class for your child for next year.

Our latest thoughts on Masks: Who would have ever thought, even six months ago, that we would have an entire section in our newsletter devoted to masks! Not us, but here we are, so let's chat! We have been amazed at how well the kids have been doing with their masks and we have you to thank for that. As a staff, we have marveled at their flexibility and comfort with masks, while many adults continue to struggle with this new found necessity. The only way we can explain it is that children truly are hardwired to seek out joy, no matter what, despite the inconveniences, hassles, and modifications that have come along with our new school year. Kids really are impressive! Fortunately, as classroom teachers, we have had the added benefit of being able to observe the kids wearing a variety of different masks throughout the day and we have a few thoughts that we wanted to share with you in hopes that it might help you going forth as you navigate the world of masks with your child.

- Many different types of masks seem to work, but we suggest you try to find a time when you can **have your child wear his/her mask for an extended period of time**, perhaps an hour or two and just try to observe how they are managing. Please have your child put his/her mask on and off by themselves several times to see how they are able to handle the process.
- **How does the mask seem to fit over the course of time and during play?** Does the mask seem to be irritating them in any way?
- **Does the mask fall below the nose frequently?** Try tightening it up on the ears, by tying a small knot.
- **Does it fall off their ears?** Sometimes it's because the mask is too tight and the ear loops are pulling too tight. See if it's pulling your child's ears forward? If so, try loosening those ear loops up.

- While some children seem to be managing getting the **ear loops** over their ears just fine, others struggle and require assistance. We've seen that many children have success with the type of mask that doesn't have ear loops. Instead, **consider a mask that has two ties or elastics around the back** (one around the back of the head and one down low, around the base of the head/neck).
- These masks with ties are great because during a mask break or snack/lunch, the mask can rest down below the child's head, and doesn't have to be taken off.
- **Hair issues!** From what we have seen, we **STRONGLY** suggest, if your child has hair on the longer side, that you secure it back for the school day. We've noticed that hair hanging around the face, and around the mask, really makes it difficult for a child to put their mask on and off easily. Try a nice high pony tail or two lower ones on the sides. Braids are also working very well for longer hair. Ponytails are also great for those masks that have ties, as you can put the higher strap up over the pony tail. And our final hair thought...headbands seem to also complicate things, too much going on to manage hair, a mask and a headband. We hope this helps!
- **Finally, the lanyards, or even just a shoestring tied around the ear loops or ties** of the mask make it very convenient for mask breaks, as it allows the child to just drop the mask without putting it down on a surface.

Projects Coming Home? As a staff, we are working hard to modify our practices and spend as much time outdoors as possible, for play and for lessons. Additionally, while indoors, we're being careful to spend less time working side by side with children, so as to be mindful of social distancing whenever possible. As such, you may notice less labor intensive projects coming home. Please remember that our instruction and dedication to learning has not changed one bit, just our approach and techniques.

School Portraits: You may already know that every Fall, we invite a photographer to come to the school to take school portraits. This year, the photographer we normally work with, reached out to let us know that she is taking a year off. We are excited though, to let you know that we will still be able to offer you an opportunity to have a safe school portrait taken this year! Madelyn Kostiw, Mrs. Kostiw's college aged daughter, who is an amazing photographer, will be coming to school later in October to take some wonderful (and socially distanced) portraits of the children. She will be taking her photos while wearing her mask, and from a considerable distance (She has a great zoom lens!). Madelyn has many years of experience as a photographer, and working with children, and we know they will find her to be completely engaging and a lot of fun. We will be sending out more information later, about this fun opportunity (portraits are optional).

Influenza Vaccines: As a reminder, the **Mass Department of Public Health** has announced that beginning in the Fall of 2020, the **influenza vaccine will be required** for all children attending preschool, who are 6 months of age or older. All students must receive an influenza vaccine before December 31, 2020, however it is recommended that children are vaccinated earlier in the Fall. Please send us documentation of your child's vaccine as soon as he/she has received it. Thank you!

COVID-19 Cleaning Fees: Just a reminder, the COVID-19 Cleaning Fee is due at this time. The fee for Th/F students is \$110.00, the fee for M/T/W students is \$150.00 and the fee for students who attend 5 days is \$220.00. Cleaning Fee payments are due by October 1st. We appreciate your understanding regarding this additional cost.

Nutritious is Delicious Snacks: As many of you know, we have a longstanding SVP tradition of parents volunteering to send in fresh, nutritious snacks, such as fruits and vegetables, for their child's classroom to enjoy. This year, we are excited to continue with this tradition, but due to the COVID-19 regulations, we have to modify our approach and rules surrounding the sharing of food from home. This year we are asking that you only send foods that either are individually packaged or not washed or handled in the home. Please don't cut or wash or repackage any food from home. We have a few ideas for you, but feel free to let us know if you think of any others. We thank you in advance for your flexibility! Nutritious and delicious snacks are always a lot of fun for our students!

- A sealed bag of carrots, or other vegetables, snap peas, popcorn, etc.
- A few apples, cucumbers, peaches or pears or even bananas. We will wash and prepare them at school.
- A container of strawberries, blueberries, etc. We will wash and serve them at school.
- Cheese sticks, yogurt sticks.

One more thought about lunches...For those of you who are sending in small prepackaged food items for your child, such as pretzels, granola bars, etc., we have a great idea for you, so as to minimize the amount of times a teacher must handle your child's food. We suggest that you put a tear in the edge of the packaging so that your child can finish tearing and opening it in the classroom. We think this will work great, and allow your child a little bit more independence during lunch. Please show your child that you will be doing this, as you pack his/her lunch, and even practice at home. We know they will love this!

***Allergens and Food Safety at SVP:** Statistically, most of us are fortunate enough to not have a child with allergies. Food allergies can be very dangerous for students, and oftentimes life threatening. At SVP we take our commitment to our student's health and safety very seriously, especially when it comes to potential allergens coming into the school through snack donations and birthday treats.

IMPORTANT: This week we will be sending out our full policy on Allergens and Food Safety and a handy guide explaining what to look for when reading packaging and ingredient labels.

Birthday Celebrations at SVP: Please keep in mind the following information regarding food safety when you select a treat to bring in for your child's birthday.

- **NEW POLICY NOTE:** This year we are instituting a new policy so as to avoid possibly having to turn away a birthday item at the front door, that may not completely meet the safety standards for food allergens. **Please send us a photo of the ingredient (and packaging) labels at least one day before your child's birthday will be celebrated at school.**
- All treats (in all classes) **MUST** be completely NUT-SAFE. Many food item labels will say "peanut free" but we need all items coming into the school to be "**peanut free AND tree nut free**" and not manufactured in a facility or on equipment that also processes nut products.
- Typically, we find that **independent bakeries cannot ensure that baked goods have not been produced on equipment that is completely nut-safe.** Grocery stores are a safer bet!
- **It doesn't always have to be a cupcake!** We love it when kids bring in "other special treats" for their birthday celebration. How about a cookie? Popsicle? Hoodsie? Pirates Booty? Favorite fruit?

Class Facebook Pages: As you probably already know, each class at SVP will have its own private Facebook page. While we will still be sending weekly classroom emails, we will use these pages to share photos and updates. Please feel free to use your child's FB page to share any fun outdoor family opportunities that you think others might enjoy.

Daily Screenings: We think things are working very well with our new modified Daily Screening process. Please do **remember that you are required though, to take a few moments to really read through all of the questions each morning, when you arrive at school, even if you feel as you already know that the answers are "NO"**. The symptoms of COVID-19 are so wide and varied that we must be careful to never let our guard down as the year advances, so as to keep our school as healthy as possible. The screening questions are available on our website, in the attached document and at the door.

Boo!! Halloween is upon us!!! We love this exciting time of the year and so do our students. Each class will be having a fun Halloween party on either Wednesday, 10/28 or Friday, 10/30. Your child's teacher will let you know what is needed if you are interested in sending in a treat or paper goods. While it is fun to have some sweets at our parties, we work hard to make sure that our small treats are balanced with some healthy fruits and vegetables.

- Note: At SVP, **we do not allow children to wear their costumes to school**. Costumes can be overwhelming for our younger students, and there is always the risk that costume pieces could become lost/misplaced. We promise to find lots of other ways to have fun during this fun holiday!

Important Dates to Note in October and November

*As a reminder, we always follow the holiday/professional development/snow cancellation schedule that Southborough Public Schools follow. Please be sure to note the following dates on your calendar.

- **Monday, October 12th:** School closed for Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day
- **Wednesday, October 28th and Friday, October 30th:** Classroom Halloween Parties
- **Monday, November 2nd:** First day of Registration for the 2021-2022 school year (8:00 AM)
- **Tuesday, November 3rd:** School closed for town wide Professional Development/Election Day
- **Wednesday, November 11th:** School closed for Veterans Day.
- **Monday, November 16th:** Registration opens for new families for the 2021-22 school year.
- **Wednesday, November 25th:** Half-day (school closes at 12:00 noon-no PM session). School will remain closed on Thursday, November 26th and Friday, November 27th for Thanksgiving break.
- **School re-opens Monday, November 30th.**

We are grateful to you all for your support on these, and all school matters. We have the best parents and families in the world, and we appreciate your attention and thoughtfulness every day! We hope that you and your families find plenty of opportunities to get out and enjoy the wonderful fresh air and beautiful colors in the coming weeks!

Sincerely,

Gretchen, Laura and the Entire Staff at Southborough Village Preschool