



# Southborough Village Preschool

## Parent Handbook

We welcome you to Southborough Village Preschool. In this comprehensive Parent Handbook, we offer you the following information to help you and your family become familiar with our educational program, philosophy, policies, and procedures. If you need further clarification on any of this information, please feel free to contact us. We are happy to welcome you to our program and we look forward to many years of working together with you and your child.

### **Southborough Village Preschool**

14 East Main Street

Southborough, MA 01772

508-485-3109

[www.southboroughvillagepreschool.com](http://www.southboroughvillagepreschool.com)

### **Directors:**

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# **Table of Contents**

## **Who are we at Southborough Village Preschool?**

Mission Statement.....	4
Philosophy.....	4
Curriculum.....	5
Learning Objectives.....	6
Organizational Structure.....	7
Statement of Non-discrimination.....	7
Code of Ethics.....	7

## **Important Things to Know About Southborough Village Preschool**

Hours of Operation.....	8
Fees and Tuition Schedule.....	8
Classes/Programs We Offer.....	9
Teacher/Student Ratio.....	9
Playschool.....	10
Early Student Drop-off.....	10
Calendar.....	10
Snow Days/ No School Days.....	10
Parking.....	11
Medical Forms and Medication.....	11

## **Parent Involvement at Southborough Village Preschool**

Parent/Teacher Communication.....	12
Conferences and Assessment Tools.....	12
Confidentiality.....	13

**Your Child’s Day at Southborough Village Preschool**

Separation.....14  
Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures.....15  
What to Wear.....16  
Nutrition (snacks/lunches/birthdays).....17  
Diapering and Toileting Policy.....18  
Behavior Management Policy/Child Guidance.....19

**Health Care Policy at Southborough Village Preschool**.....21

Wellbeing of the Child Policy.....24

**Other Things To Know About Southborough Village Preschool**

Transportation Policy.....25  
Suspension/ Termination Policy.....26

**Index**.....27

# **Who Are We at Southborough Village Preschool?**

## **Our Mission**

Southborough Village Preschool is a small community preschool located in the heart of Southborough, Massachusetts. We service young children ranging in age from 21 months to 5 years old (Toddlers through Pre-Kindergarten). We are committed to providing a warm, rich, inclusive, educational environment in which our students can grow and learn as they begin their journey towards lifelong learning. Our developmental program fosters a caring and creative school environment that emphasizes the total social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of each child. We recognize each child as a unique individual and special member of our community, and we honor the integral role that their families play as their primary educators.

## **Philosophy**

At Southborough Village Preschool, we believe that the exciting preschool years are critical in helping a child to develop the skills, confidence and curiosity necessary to become an enthusiastic lifelong learner. We believe that preschool is a time to explore the world around us, to take risks, to ask questions and to feel safe and secure enough to do so within our diverse community of learners. We believe in encouraging and nurturing the growth of the whole child, including their emotional, physical, social and cognitive development. Research strongly indicates that, for young children, play is the foundation of all early learning. Play is the “work” of children, and at SVP we celebrate and honor that by creating a daily variety of valuable, open-ended play experiences through which our children can grow and develop as learners. At Southborough Village Preschool, we strive to provide a preschool experience that is hands-on, developmentally appropriate and, quite simply, great fun for our students. We place tremendous importance on guiding our students to not only feel good about themselves as learners, but to feel good about themselves as part of a community. Our teachers encourage this by developing, supporting and modeling positive, nurturing interactions with and between their students. At Southborough Village Preschool we work hard to help children see great value in treating other people well and with the respect and kindness that every person deserves. We are committed to making the environment of Southborough Village Preschool a place in which children have the freedom to make choices, the safety to take risks and the opportunity to express themselves every day. As teachers, we feel honored to be a part of this exciting process and are committed to working as partners with you as we guide your child through this early educational journey.

## Curriculum

At Southborough Village Preschool we are committed to providing an integrated, thematic, hands-on, discovery and project-based curriculum that promotes self esteem, creativity and rich social interactions amongst our students. Our teachers have a strong understanding of the developmental needs of children, as well as the knowledge that all children learn best and most joyfully when they are active and engaged in meaningful play. Our curriculum is designed to help children develop rich language, social, physical and cognitive skills in a positive, safe, hands-on setting. Our curriculum themes will vary year to year and class to class, based on student interest, but our approach to curriculum remains the same. Our skilled teachers design open-ended, process-oriented activities that allow for the exploration of many materials, textures and experiences. Our curriculum is largely project-based and exploratory in nature. We nurture all learning styles at school and encourage children to explore topics and units using a variety of methods and experiences, such as music and movement, fine and gross motor activities, dramatic play and problem solving as well as interpersonal and cooperative based activities. Our teachers have a strong background in developmentally appropriate education, and you will find that our classrooms are rich in exciting emergent literacy, number sense and science experiences. Throughout the day, our staff engages children in meaningful conversations, use open-ended questions and provide opportunities for students to develop more complex language skills through sharing, problem solving and positive peer interactions. Every day at SVP, you will find that our staff utilizes teaching strategies that ensure a positive classroom environment, engage children in learning and promote critical thinking skills. Our curriculum is developed and continuously modified as needed, always keeping in mind the needs and interests of our students. At Southborough Village Preschool, helping children to find joy in what they are learning about is our highest priority!

# Learning Objectives

Through the implementation of age-appropriate, developmental, hands-on activities, we provide a nurturing, safe environment and supportive guidance with which children will:

- Develop a positive sense of self and learn to be self confident in a variety of situations.
- Be able to function as part of a group, listen, cooperate, share, problem solve, observe, negotiate and participate.
- Learn to be independent according to their ability.
- Be able to think, reason, question and experiment.
- Develop language and communication skills which will enable them to be able to follow directions, articulate needs, express their feelings, develop negotiation skills, initiate conversation and share experiences.
- Develop emergent literacy skills including left to right progression, letter recognition, vocabulary, comprehension, phonemic awareness and meaning in print and text all around them.
- Find and explore math concepts all around them, including sequencing, categorizing, one-to-one correspondence, patterns, shapes, number sense and number recognition, through the use of manipulatives, unit blocks and everyday objects.
- Explore the world of science, through observation, prediction, exploration, investigation and experimentation.
- Experience the thrill of creativity, construction and discovery.
- Recognize that they are an important part of a classroom community.
- Feel comfortable experimenting with many types of materials and art processes.
- Become stronger and more coordinated through gross motor outdoor play, during which time they will run, swing, climb, jump, hop, bike, dig or spin!
- Develop respect and appreciation for others through cooperative play and social experiences.
- Learn to respect others' differences and recognize and celebrate their similarities.
- Be exposed to many different types of artistic expression (music, movement, drama, different art mediums, etc.).

## **Organizational Structure**

Southborough Village Preschool is owned and directed by Laura Eppen and Gretchen Hartnett. All questions, comments and concerns about the program may be addressed to the Owners/Directors. We can be reached by phone or through email at any time.

- Southborough Village Preschool (508-485-3109)
- Lauraeppen@southboroughvillagepreschool.com
- Gretchenhartnett@southboroughvillagepreschool.com

In the event that either Director is unavailable, please address questions and concerns to one of our Lead Teachers.

Southborough Village Preschool is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC). The DEEC is always available to provide information about State regulations and information concerning the licensing history of our program. The Worcester office of the DEEC can be reached at: 508-798-5181.

## **Statement of Non-discrimination**

Southborough Village Preschool is committed to the total education of all of its students. We strive to create a safe, caring learning environment that is inclusive of all children from a rich variety of backgrounds and learning styles. At SVP, we do not discriminate based on race, color, nationality or ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, family composition or disabilities. Southborough Village Preschool welcomes children in all stages of toilet training and toilet readiness.

## **Code of Ethics at Southborough Village Preschool**

- Every person has the right to have his or her feelings, ideas and property respected.
- Every person is to be treated with respect and with courtesy.
- Every child can work and play in a safe, trusting, and cooperative environment.
- Every child is encouraged and supported in resolving conflicts peacefully and without violence.
- Every person at Southborough Village Preschool is to be treated as a member of a unique and special community where differences are acknowledged, respected and celebrated.

# **Important Things to Know About Southborough Village Preschool**

## **Hours of Operation** (\*Hours of operation are subject to change.)

Southborough Village Preschool is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM until 3:30 PM.

Early Drop-off is from 8:00-9:00 AM

Morning sessions run from 9:00-12:00 NOON

Afternoon sessions run from 12:00-3:00 PM

Full Day sessions run from 9:00-3:00 PM

Playschool hours vary by the day. Please see a Director for more information.

## **Fees and Tuition Schedule**

### **Application Fee & Deposit:**

The application fee is \$100.00 non-refundable processing fee. Additionally, 10% of the tuition is required at the time of application in order to hold your child's spot in a class. Upon acceptance of your child's placement, this deposit becomes non-refundable.

### **Tuition:**

Tuition rates vary depending on the program that your child is enrolled in. Your 10% deposit will be deducted from the total tuition for the year. At the beginning of the school year, you will have an opportunity to select a payment plan for the remaining tuition balance, from the following options.

Please note: All tuition is non-refundable, regardless of the duration of your child's enrollment at Southborough Village Preschool.

### **Payment Schedule:**

We have three payment plans as follows (due on the first of the month):

- Full Year Plan: Due September
- Two Payment Plan: Due September/January
- Four Payment Plan: Due September/November/January/March

Please pick the payment plan that best suits your needs. There is a discount for families who pay the tuition in full. Initial payments for all payment plans are due at the beginning of September. There is a small handling fee for those using the four payment plan. There is a sibling discount for siblings who

attend Southborough Village Preschool during the same school year. If you have a question or a concern about the tuition payment schedule, please contact the Directors.

**Tuition Agreement Plan:** You will be required to sign a Tuition Agreement Plan in order to enroll your child at SVP. **Your signed tuition payment plan is a binding contract for the entire school year.** Should you decide to withdraw your child from Southborough Village Preschool at any point during the school year, you will still be responsible for making the remaining payments, as indicated on your tuition contract.

**\*Please also note:** Southborough Village Preschool shall not be liable or deemed to be in default for any failure in performance or interruption of service resulting, directly or indirectly, from acts of God, force majeure, civil or military action, health pandemics, natural disasters, utility disruptions, or any similar cause beyond the reasonable control of the Directors or the Company.

**Late payments** received later than two weeks after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month will be subject to a late fee equal to 5% of the payment due.

## **Classes and Programs Offered at Southborough Village Preschool**

At Southborough Village Preschool a variety of class choices are available to meet the needs of our families. The following is a sample of the classes that we may offer. Please check our website or call the office to learn about the current classes and schedule as we are constantly updating our programs to meet the needs of our current population of students.

**\*\*All class schedules, including Early Drop-off and Playschool options are subject to change.**

- Toddlers (21 months-2.9 yrs.) Tues/Thurs AM
- Young Preschooler (2.9+) Tues/Thurs AM
- Young Preschooler (2.9+) Tues/Thurs PM
- Young Preschooler (3+) Mon/Wed/Fri AM
- Older Preschooler (3's and 4's) Mon/Wed/Fri PM
- Full Day Pre-K - Mon/Wed/Fri
- Playschool (afternoons only-see below)

## **Student/Teacher Ratios (\*Class sizes and ratios are subject to change.)**

Toddler Class: 9 students/ 2 teachers

Preschool Classes (2.9+): 13 students/ 2 teachers

## **Playschool**

At Southborough Village Preschool we offer students the ability to stay longer for our Playschool Program on certain days of the week, from 12:00-3:30. Playschool is available to all children between the ages of two and five. Children can stay for 1, 2, or all 3 ½ hours! At Playschool, children will have a chance to play on our playground for a longer period of time, eat lunch with their friends, and have an opportunity to have supervised, less structured playtime with children from different classes. Parents can make this a permanent part of their child's schedule, or they may sign up on the day that they choose, on a first-come/first-served basis. The fee for Playschool can be found on our website. Billing for Playschool is done at the end of each month, through email. If your child will be attending Playschool between the hours of 12:00 and 1:00, please send him/her with a nutritious, nut-free lunch.

## **Early Drop-off**

Early drop off is available every morning beginning at 8:00 AM. It is not necessary to sign up for Early Drop-off ahead of time. Please feel free to arrive anytime between 8:00 and 8:55 AM. Please see our website for current Early Drop-off fees. Billing for Early Drop-off is done at the end of each month, through email.

**\*Please note:** Playschool/Early Drop-off bills are due upon receipt, must be paid within two weeks, and cannot be carried over to the next month. Payments received later than 2 weeks after receipt of the monthly bill will be subject to a late fee. Continued use of Playschool/Early Drop-off is contingent upon payment of the monthly bill.

## **Calendar**

Southborough Village Preschool begins the week of Labor Day with a short meeting between the child, the parent(s) and the teacher. The full class schedule begins the following week. The school year usually concludes the second week of June. We follow the Southborough Public School calendar for vacation days, professional development days and snow days throughout the school year. An up-to-date, yearly calendar, can be found on our website. [www.southboroughvillagepreschool.com](http://www.southboroughvillagepreschool.com).

## **Snow Days/No School Days**

Southborough Village Preschool's main objective during bad weather is to ensure the safety of our staff and children. If the Southborough Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather, Southborough Village Preschool will be closed as well. If there is a delay to the start of the public school opening, we will most likely open Southborough Village Preschool with a delay as well, at the discretion of the Directors. If there is a delay, all morning classes at the Preschool will be cancelled, but PM classes will most likely be held at 12:00 noon and Full Day classes will likely begin with a delay. We reserve the right of judgment to close the Preschool early due to poor weather conditions. In this case, parents and caregivers will be notified. Please call the office if you have any questions.

## **Parking**

We realize that the parking at Southborough Village Preschool is less than optimal. We ask that you work with us to try to create the safest possible parking experience for our families as well as our neighbors. Please be very careful when pulling into/out of our lot as our students are small and can be unpredictable in their movements. Parents, please be sure to keep your child close to you as you walk from the parking lot to the door in the morning, and then to your car again at the end of the day. Unfortunately, due to the tricky nature of our parking lot, students are not allowed to walk themselves to and from the front door. They must always be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Please be aware that many parents need to drop off their child at the same time, so if you need to speak with either a teacher or the Directors, please park on the street to allow others access to the parking lot. While it is fine to park behind a car in the parking lot briefly during drop-off or pick-up, please be sure to return as quickly as possible to your car so as to not block other parents in unnecessarily. Finally, we ask that all parents park on the same side of the street as the school, and take care not to block our neighbors' driveways or mailboxes. We thank you for your cooperation as we work to keep all of our students safe.

## **Required Medical Forms and Individualized Health Care Plans**

**In order to begin school, all children are required to have a current physical and immunization record (within one year) on file at the Preschool.** This is a Department of Early Education and Care regulation and no exceptions can be made to this policy. Physical forms are good for one year from the date and must be signed by a physician. Please note that your child's physical may expire during the school year (usually at or around a birthday). At this point, please remember to bring us an updated physical and immunization report.

**\*\*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 or older.

If your child has **a prescribed inhaler, EPI Pen or any type of daily medication listed on his/her health care plan, we are required** to have those medications labeled (with a pharmacy label), in their original packaging, for storage in the classroom, along with all necessary paperwork, in order to start school. You will also need to have your child's physician fill out an Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) and Medication Consent Form (one for each medication) for your child's file (These are two separate required forms). While you may feel as though your child will not ever need his/her EPI pen, inhaler or Benadryl while at school, if those medications are listed on your child's physical report, we are required by law to have them in the classroom, along with the required paperwork, before the first day of school. **No exceptions will be made to this Massachusetts State Health Care Law.**

**\*Please see a Director for more information if your child will require an Individualized Health Care Plan (IHCP) and Medication Consent Form.**

# Parent Involvement at Southborough Village Preschool

## **Parent/Teacher Communication**

Parents are encouraged to be active and involved in both formal and informal ways. They are invited to stay in close contact with the teachers through parent conferences, phone calls, brief conversations both before and after school, or scheduled meetings. Parents are invited to visit their child's class at any time. They should contact the teacher when they would like to volunteer to be in the classroom and/or participate in certain activities or curriculum themes. The Preschool will make an effort to offer parent programs on current educational and parenting topics. If a parent has a concern about the school or his/her child, the parent should first consult the classroom teacher. If the concern continues, the parent should schedule a meeting with either or both of the Directors.

**\*Please note:** Per the DEEC regulations put forth in June of 2020, regarding the reopening of schools, it may not be possible to have parents/family members visit inside the classroom, due to the new Minimum Health and Safety Requirements. We will continue to monitor the situation and thank you for your patience and understanding, as the safety of our students and teachers remain our priority.

## **How do we communicate with parents?**

- **Daily Highlight Clipboards:** Check the clipboard at the front of the school when picking up your child to see what the highlights of the day are.
- **Newsletters:** We will write a monthly newsletter, via e-mail, highlighting important information for the upcoming month.
- **Notes in the Backpack:** Important reminders may be sent home through your child's backpack. Please check the backpacks daily.
- **E-mails from the Teachers:** Teachers may need to communicate important information to parents through e-mail. Please make sure you have provided us with an e-mail address that you check regularly.
- **Phone Calls:** We may, on occasion, call a parent to discuss his or her child. Please feel free to call us if you have anything that you would like to discuss with us as well.
- **Pick-up/Drop-off:** You are always welcome to speak to us at either of these times.

## **Conferences and Child Assessment Tools**

At SVP, we use a combination of progress reports, informal assessments and observations to assess student progress and to help us plan our curriculum and daily lessons. There are two scheduled parent/teacher conferences per year (September and February), with more available at the parent's or teacher's request. Teachers will be responsible for providing parents with a written report for the child's file at this time. At Southborough Village Preschool, we believe in the value of continually assessing our student's development and progress. We work hard to keep parents informed of their children's achievements and successes as well as any concerns or suggestions that we may have.

## Confidentiality

The intention of Southborough Village Preschool's Confidentiality Policy is to protect the privacy of children, families and the Southborough Village Preschool staff. We aim to ensure that all parents, guardians, and caregivers can share information with the confidence that it will be used to enhance the welfare and education of their child. To ensure that all members of the Southborough Village Preschool community feel comfortable sharing information about themselves, their families or their children, we ask that you join us in respecting all confidentiality in the following ways;

- Parent(s) or guardian(s) have access to the records of their own children but do not have access to information about any other child.
- Southborough Village Preschool staff will only share information about a child with the child's parent(s) or guardian(s). As such, we will only discuss your child with you and not with other parents.
- If the staff has concerns relating to a child's personal safety, records are kept in a secure, confidential file and only shared with others on a need-to-know basis.
- Personal information about children, families and staff is kept in a secure, locked, confidential file.
- Issues to do with employment of staff, whether paid or unpaid, remain confidential to the Directors, who are responsible for making personnel decisions.
- Parent or guardian permission is required in order for photographs of children to be taken.
- While we appreciate your interest in recording events at Southborough Village Preschool for memory's sake, please use these recordings ONLY for your own entertainment in your home. Distributing these recordings, or publishing them in an on-line format (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc.) can put all children at risk. Please be sure to consider the wishes of other families before sharing your photos or videos in a social media setting. We would like to maintain our students' safety through your cooperation with this request.

# Your Child's Day at Southborough Village Preschool

## Separation

Separation anxiety is a normal and healthy phase that may come and go throughout the childhood years. We at Southborough Village Preschool truly feel that children (and parents) should separate at their own pace. We believe that the way to build a child's sense of trust and security is to support and encourage their progress at their own pace. The staff at Southborough Village Preschool will work on an individual basis to help guide parents and children through the separation process.

## How Parents Can Help Their Child with Separation Anxiety

- **Prepare yourself:** The first thing to do to help your child prepare for separation is to help yourself. If you have any hesitation, discomfort or doubt about leaving your child, your child may be picking up on your feelings. Make sure you are ready to leave your child at school. Try some short separations before school starts (i.e. Leaving child with a babysitter or friend while you run short errands) to make sure your child is used to the parent(s) leaving and coming back. Be sure to be honest about where you are going and what time you will return when talking to your child.
- **Visit:** Prior to starting school, take your child for a visit to the classroom to meet the teacher(s).
- **Play dates:** Talk to the Directors about making a play date with another child in the class. The Directors can help to connect parents with other parents for potential play dates.
- **Transitional objects:** You may give your child a transitional object from home (i.e. a favorite blanket or stuffed animal) to carry with them at school.
- **Reassurance:** Give lots of reassurance that "Mommy/Daddy is coming back very soon".
- **Check in with the teacher:** Most children who cry at drop-off will stop crying shortly after the preschool goodbye. Feel free to call the school to find out how your child is doing if he or she had a difficult drop-off.
- **Become an early bird:** Hungry, tired children are often ready for a separation anxiety attack. Start with healthy sleep habits, going to bed early and waking up early. This gives your well rested child time to have a slow paced morning as well as a good, nutritional breakfast.
- **Be a cheerleader for Southborough Village Preschool!** Be excited about what the day will be like and who they will see that day at preschool. Stay upbeat and positive, especially at the door. Don't let your child know that you are concerned or worried about drop-off. Instead, appear confident and excited that they will have a great day.
- **Allow us to help you at the door:** Trust us, we are really good at it!
- **Be swift at drop-off:** Give a quick hug and a kiss, and a smile and a wave. This really helps!

## **Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures at SVP**

**\*\*Please note: All Drop-off and Pick-up procedures are subject to change in accordance with MA Department of Early Education and Care's Health and Safety Regulations.**

### **Drop-off Procedure**

Drop-off will occur at the front door of the school each morning (or afternoon). There will be a Director, as well as one of your child's teachers, available to assist with this transition at the start of each day. We will happily greet your child at the door, help him/her to say goodbye to you, then we will walk him/her inside the school. At that point, we will then assist your child as he/she hangs up his/her coat and backpack. A teacher will then walk your child into the classroom. We thank you for your assistance with this routine. We find that children do amazingly well saying goodbye to parents at the door and it helps the students, as well as the teachers, to get off to a calm and productive start each day. Please see us if you have any concerns or questions regarding drop-off.

### **Pick-up Procedure**

**We take security very seriously at Southborough Village Preschool.** If you will not be picking your child up after school, it is important that you notify us ahead of time. You can notify the Director or teacher at the door during drop-off, but a quick written note is also very helpful. If you make a change in your pick-up plans during the day, you must call us to notify us as to who will be picking your child up. We cannot allow students to leave SVP with other families unless we have received previous notification from you. Please be aware that if you have someone "new" picking up your child, we will also ask him/her to show us an ID. Thank you!

**Please be prompt when picking up your child from school.** Please call the school if you find that you are running late. Out of respect for our teachers and their after work schedules, late pick-ups will be billed an additional fee. We urge you to take advantage of our Playschool if you anticipate not being able to pick up on time.

**Please do not allow your child to run around the front of the school, lawn or parking areas before or after dismissal.** We thank you for your support as we try to ensure the safety of our students before, during and after school hours.

# What should your child wear or bring from home?

## Clothes/Footwear

It is important that your child be comfortable while at school. Preschool is a time for hands-on learning (painting, exploring, etc.) and physical play. We ask that you do not send your child into school wearing clothes that you are concerned about staining. In addition to this, proper, safe footwear is essential for your child at school. Sneakers and enclosed rubber-soled shoes are requested. Please save flip-flops, dress shoes, and Crocs for home.

For the two half-day programs, we require that you **bring a complete change of clothing for us to have in the classroom for your child**, in the case of a spill or an accident. While a change of clothes is optional for the three-day programs, we still strongly suggest sending one in, as spills and accidents are common (and perfectly normal) for preschoolers.

**LABELS, LABELS, LABELS!** We try very hard here at SVP to return all of your child's clothing, coats, hats, boots, etc. to you every day. Despite our best efforts, we do always end up with items in our Lost and Found. Please label all items that you send to school with your child. It helps tremendously as we try to get our students ready to go home at the end of the day. Often times, children don't recognize the jackets, hats or mittens that you have sent in with them. Labels really do help with this. Your cooperation is very much appreciated!

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## Backpack

Every child should have a good-sized backpack (not a tiny one) to carry projects and papers home from school. Please clearly label the bag with your child's name. Be sure that your child's **lunchbox can fit inside** the backpack, as well as slippers for the winter and a rest blanket if your child is a full-day student. Remember to check it every day for information and treasures.

## Slippers

Slippers are worn in school during boot season (snow or mud). Please keep a labeled pair in your child's backpack during the winter. This helps us to keep the classroom floors clean and dry.

## Toys/Treasures from Home

Please do not send your child to school with toys or special items (unless it is a transitional object). These items are hard to keep track of during school and can become a distraction to students. Thank you for your support regarding this issue.

## **Nutrition at Southborough Village Preschool**

### **Nut Free at SVP**

Southborough Village Preschool is a **NUT-FREE school**. All snacks that are served are nut-free and we require that all lunches and other foods that are brought into school, be nut-free as well. When you consider options to send in for lunch (or parties or birthday treats), please keep in mind that, while a food may not be made with nuts, it may be manufactured in a facility that makes other products that contain nuts. Please read ingredient labels carefully when selecting food to send to school with your child so that we can ensure the safety of all students in our care.

### **Snack**

Southborough Village Preschool provides a small, nutritious, nut-free snack during each class. The snack will usually consist of some type of cracker/pretzel/whole grain snack and water. You can find a list of the snacks that we use at SVP, on the bulletin board inside the front door. We respect each family's dietary preferences and are happy to work with your family in order to accommodate the needs of your child during snack time.

### **Lunch**

If your child is staying for lunch, we ask that you provide your child with a nutritious NUT FREE lunch. Please be aware that while every classroom must be nut-free, there is always a chance that your child may be in class with a student who has a severe allergy to a different food item, and we may need to make additional classroom food restrictions in order to provide the safest environment possible for all students. We encourage all families to follow the nutritional guidelines set up by the USDA and will be happy to help you find copies of this plan. When considering lunch options for your child, kindly consider items that are easy for them to open and eat independently. While we certainly do encourage and remind children to eat a full lunch, we are unable to insist that they do so. Please keep this in mind as you are preparing lunches, and be sure not to send in too much food. This can be overwhelming for young students. **Please also avoid sending in glass containers, or foods that need to be heated up.**

### **Birthdays/Celebrations**

At Southborough Village Preschool we love to celebrate birthdays! On your child's special day, we will make a birthday crown and sing special songs for your child and you are more than welcome to come in to read a book or join us for a birthday snack. You may also bring a small, nut-free treat for the class if you wish, but please check with your child's teacher to see if there are allergies or dietary restrictions in your child's class. We do require that you share the ingredient label or a photo of the ingredient label from your birthday snack with us at least one day before your child's birthday, so that we can ensure that it is indeed nut-free and safe for all students. Note: Products containing nuts, or manufactured in a facility that uses nuts, cannot be served at SVP. Be sure to check ingredient labels for sprinkles and toppings too, as they are often times not nut-free, or may be made in a facility that makes products containing nuts.

**Please note:** All summer birthdays will be celebrated at the end of the school year.

**\*If your child has food allergies,** we ask that you provide us with a small, labeled container of treats (small cookies or cupcakes) that we can keep in the freezer for your child so that he/she may always safely enjoy a treat during classroom celebrations. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you or your child, but feel as though this policy is in the best interest of all of our students at SVP. Please be sure to let us know if you have any concerns or questions regarding this policy.

## **Diapering and Toileting Policy**

**Diapering:** Since diapering is, by nature, a one-on-one activity, the teachers at Southborough Village Preschool approach diapering time as a chance to spend individual time with each child. Children are not rushed through the diapering process. For toddlers and preschoolers, parents provide all of their child's diapering supplies, including diapers and wipes, and creams and ointments as desired.

**Our teachers follow the following procedures when diapering children:**

1. Wet or soiled diapers are changed as soon as we are aware of the need.
2. The changing table is located in the bathroom and is cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected after each use with a sanitizer solution.
3. Disposable paper is placed under each child for sanitary purposes.
4. Single-use, non-latex gloves are used for each diapering.
5. Ointments and/or creams are used only as requested by the family.
6. Soiled clothing, cloth diapers and clothes are double-sealed in a plastic bag and stored apart from other items to be sent home.
7. Teacher's and children's hands are washed after each diapering, and dried with disposable towels.

**Toileting Philosophy at SVP:** Southborough Village Preschool's philosophy supports children's individuality in all areas and recognizes that each child has a physical and emotional readiness for toilet training. Children are toilet trained in accordance with the requests of their family and in a manner that is consistent with the child's physical and emotional abilities. Toilet training is never coerced, and no child will ever be punished for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. Children will have the option to refuse sitting on the toilet during the toilet training period, and staff members will never force a child to sit on the toilet against his or her will.

**Important toilet training note:** It is our philosophy at SVP to have your child feel consistency between his/her toileting practices at home and at school, so as to create the most comfortable and secure learning environment possible. In order to help your child feel comfortable and relaxed at school, please be sure to let us know exactly where he/she is in the toileting process at home.

For example, if your child is still wearing a pull-up or diaper at home, please send him/her to school in a pull-up or diaper (not underwear). If your child is consistently wearing underwear, with minimal

accidents at home, feel free to send him/her to school in underwear. We want our students to feel relaxed and free to explore and play while at school. Toilet training is a process and takes time, it is never something to worry about! We celebrate all toileting accomplishments at SVP! Thank you for your support in this critical and exciting area of growth and development.

## **Behavior Management Policy/Child Guidance**

Southborough Village Preschool uses positive guidance methods in order to help children learn self-control without a loss of self-esteem. Discipline is based on consistency and an understanding of the developmental stages of children, as well as the needs of each individual child. Varieties of methods are used at SVP for encouraging children's cooperation and may include the following:

1. Redirection-- encouraging the child's interest in another activity.
2. Modeling problem solving techniques-- providing and modeling the language necessary to resolve conflict.
3. Positive reinforcement-- praising the child for positive behaviors and cooperative skills.
4. Offering choices between acceptable behaviors.
5. Modeling appropriate behaviors and positive attitudes. Teachers are encouraged to speak in calm and quiet voices and to speak at the child's physical level by bending down or sitting.
6. Role playing at circle time in order for the students to develop an understanding of their feelings as well as their friend's feelings, and ways to deal with these feelings.
7. Brainstorming at group time to generate appropriate, meaningful and understandable class rules.
8. Encouraging independence by allowing children to resolve conflict on their own, when appropriate.

If a child continues with a behavior that may be harmful to him/herself, or to others, then it may be advisable to remove the child to a safe, quiet place within the room for him or her to gain control. If for some reason this is not possible and the child continues to be a danger to him/herself or others, then the child may be removed from the group for a short, supervised period of time. If a behavior persists for a period of time, then a parent conference is called. Teachers must work closely with parents to determine methods that work best for each individual child. This is designed to provide a level of consistency between consequences in the home and at the school.

**Our teachers are required to always remember the following at SVP:**

1. Ways to set up the classroom and arrange furniture to encourage active learning, exploration, safety and independence.
2. To plan a daily schedule that prevents boredom, waiting and hurrying.
3. To have a routine that gives children advanced notice of transitions and also allows ample time for children to explore activities and equipment.
4. To have clear, consistent expectations that are age-appropriate, based on a solid understanding of child development.
5. To remember and respect that all children are working on different skills at different times.
6. To appreciate and understand that there is a wide range of behaviors that are considered typical/normal when it comes to early childhood development.
7. To frequently observe and document children's behaviors and interactions.
8. That teacher instruction and planning needs to be driven by frequent assessment and observation of individual students and the class as a whole.
9. To work in close partnership with parents and to keep them informed of their children's experiences, behaviors and successes.
10. Be aware of support services in the event of prolonged behavioral difficulties.

**The following are strictly prohibited at SVP:**

1. Spanking or corporal punishment.
2. Subjecting children to punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect or abusive treatment.
3. Depriving children of meals or snacks or force-feeding them.
4. Disciplining a child for wetting, soiling or not using the toilet, forcing a child to stay on a toilet, forcing a child to stay in soiled clothing or any other excessive toileting practice.
5. The use of any physical restraints.
6. 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 supervision.
7. Excessive use of time-out of the group. In the case that a time away from the group is absolutely necessary, it may never exceed one minute for each year of the child's age and must take place with an educator present.

# **Health Care Policy at Southborough Village Preschool**

**\*Please note: If and when COVID-19 policies, procedures and regulations are mandated by the State of Massachusetts and the DEEC, the COVID-19 policies will take precedence over any of the following related SVP policies (illness/isolation/discharge policies, fever guidelines, etc.). All COVID-19 information can be found in our separate COVID-19 Policy and Procedures document.**

At Southborough Village Preschool, we work hard to create the healthiest learning environment possible for our students, our faculty and our families. As part of our ongoing Healthy Habits Curriculum, we teach, model and encourage healthy choices including hand-washing, good food choices, exercise, active play and overall healthy habits. We go to great lengths to ensure the physical, emotional and developmental health and safety of our students. Our staff is certified annually in CPR as well as First Aid. We follow teeth brushing guidelines for our full day students and are exceptionally careful in the management and supervision of our students who have allergies/chronic health issues. SVP has an emergency evacuation plan in place and we practice fire drills regularly.

As careful as we are to support and encourage a healthy environment at SVP, the transmission of illness is always possible in an environment such as a preschool, where children and teachers are working so closely together. With this in mind, we are vigilant about keeping a sanitary environment to minimize the risk of spreading infection. We closely follow the recommended guidelines for controlling infection in a group childcare setting, set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. We follow these strict guidelines and procedures for sanitizing tabletops, diaper areas, toys and school materials. In addition, we require the use of disposable non-latex gloves for changing diapers and handling bodily fluids. We employ a professional cleaning company to clean the Preschool nightly, including bathrooms and sink areas, furniture, fixtures and trash receptacles. To minimize air-borne bacteria and improve the quality of the air, the duct systems and air vents are cleaned on a yearly basis.

As part of our licensing, we operate within the strict requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Health, and, as per their directives, we ask that all children who are ill remain at home. We recognize that this can put pressure on working families; however, it is the only way we can ensure the health and safety of all the children and teachers in our care.

**Please see our specific policy and guidelines on “illness” below.**

1. At Southborough Village Preschool, we are fortunate to have a registered nurse who acts as our **Health Care Consultant**. The Health Care Consultant will be available to the preschool as needed for consultation. Her responsibilities include reviewing the children’s medical forms, filling out the required state immunization records, approving the preschool’s Health Care Plan, providing first aid training and training in medicine administration.
2. **If, while at school, a student encounters an illness, injury or emergency that requires immediate medical attention, the staff will follow the following procedures.**
  - A call will be made to 911.
  - The parent, or the emergency contact as listed in the child’s records, will be contacted.

3. **The following is a list of severe symptoms that require notification of parents but not a 911 emergency call. Please keep your child home if he/she has the following symptoms.**
  - Fever
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - Undiagnosed rash
  - Cold/cough/sore throat with a fever
  - Conjunctivitis
  - Head lice
  
4. **The following is a list of mild symptoms with which ill children may remain at preschool.**
  - Cold without a fever or a persistent/disruptive cough or excessive fatigue
  - Mild illness with consent to attend school from doctor
  
5. **Please use the following guidelines if you are unsure as to whether or not to send your child to school.** In general, in order to keep everyone healthy and ready to learn, it is important that you keep your child home if they are not feeling well!

### **Not Sure If You Should Send Your Child to School?**

- **A temperature greater than 100.4F is considered a fever:** Your child should be fever free, without the use of fever reducing medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Vomiting and Diarrhea:** Your child should be symptom free, without the aid of medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Rash:** A rash is usually a sign of a viral illness. It may also be a reaction to a medication or chemical (plant, detergent). If your child has an unusual rash, or it is associated with a fever, contact your doctor. Keep your child home until you have discussed the rash with your doctor.
- **Cold, sore throat, cough:** Children average six to eight colds per year. Your child may attend school if there is no fever, he or she feels well enough to attend, if the cough is not persistent/disruptive and if your child does not show signs of fatigue. If cold and cough symptoms are associated with a fever or they do not readily improve, call your doctor.
- **Strep throat:** A sore throat in conjunction with a fever, headache or stomachache may indicate strep throat. Your child must complete 24 hours of medication and be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication before returning to school.
- **Conjunctivitis (pink eye):** The signs and symptoms of conjunctivitis are when the white part of the eye is red, eyes are itchy and produce a yellow or green crusty discharge. If suspected, contact your physician before coming to school. Your child may attend school 24 hours after treatment starts, provided he/she is responding to the medication.
- **Chicken Pox:** Please contact your doctor (and school) if your child has chicken pox.

6. **Head Lice: Head lice must be treated before your child can return to school.** We also ask that you notify us if your child has contracted a case of head lice, as this is the best way to help prevent its spread at school. We thank you for your help with this matter. Don't be embarrassed, head lice can happen to anyone!
7. **Sometimes a child will become ill while at school.** The following is our plan for caring for mildly ill children who remain in our care and are waiting to be picked up.
  - Mildly ill children who are allowed to be in school will be watched carefully and reminded to wash hands regularly and dispose of used tissues appropriately.
  - If your child becomes ill at school and is waiting to be picked up, he/she will be kept quiet, calm and comfortable and away from the other students until you or an approved guardian arrives.
8. The Directors of Southborough Village Preschool are trained annually according to the DEEC regulations for **Medication Administration Procedures**. In the case that a student requires non-topical, non-prescription medication, parents must provide written authorization by a licensed health care practitioner, and fill out the appropriate SVP paperwork.
9. **Allergies:** We at Southborough Village Preschool take our student's individual health needs very seriously. Information on students with allergies will be posted in a clear visible spot for all staff to see. All staff will be made aware of which students have allergies and will take proper steps to ensure that those students are not exposed to the allergens at any point during their time at school. This may include taking measures to notify other parents in the classroom of serious allergies, within the classroom.
10. Please be sure that we have an **Individualized Health Care Plan and Medication Consent Form** from your physician if your child has allergies or a chronic health problem (ie: asthma, allergies, etc.). **If your child has a prescription for an EPI-pen or inhaler,** we are required to have the medication, with the original pharmacy labels attached, before the first day of school, along with the necessary paperwork. **Please see a Director if your child will be requiring an IHCP, before beginning school.**
11. **Children's medical records** are very important to us at Southborough Village Preschool and are required by the DEEC. **NO CHILD CAN BEGIN SCHOOL WITHOUT PROOF OF A CURRENT PHYSICAL AND IMMUNIZATIONS.** This is a Department of Early Education and Care regulation. Physical forms are good for one year from the date and must be signed by a physician. Please note that your child's physical may expire during the school year (usually at or around a birthday). At this point, please remember to bring us an updated physical report. Current physicals are required, and must be updated annually for our records. Please be sure to keep us updated on any changes regarding your child's health.

**\*\*Note:** 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 or older.

12. **Southborough Village Preschool is a NUT-FREE school.** All snacks that are served are nut-free and we require that all lunches and other foods that are brought into school be nut-free as well. When you consider options to send in for lunch (or parties or birthday treats), please keep in mind that, while a food may not be made with nuts, it may be manufactured in a facility that makes other products that contain nuts. Please read ingredient labels carefully, when making choices, so that we can ensure the safety of all students in our care.  
  
\*Please note that there may be other food restrictions in a particular class (besides nuts), depending upon any other allergies that a child may have that year.
13. **Lunch:** If your child is staying for lunch, we ask that you provide your child with a nutritional nut-free lunch. We encourage all families to follow the nutritional guidelines set up by the USDA and will be happy to provide you with copies of this plan.
14. **Snack:** Southborough Village Preschool provides a small, nutritious, nut-free snack during each class. The snack will usually consist of some type of cracker/pretzel/whole grain snack and water. We respect each family's dietary preferences and are happy to work with your family in order to accommodate the needs of your child during snack time.
15. We will work closely with parents and health care providers to meet all requirements of a **child's specific health/dietary needs or disabilities.** Please feel free to contact us at any point if you have concerns about your child's health while he/she is in our care at SVP.
16. The DEEC requires us to remind parents to **place infants to sleep on their backs only.**
17. **Sunscreen** should be applied by parents before school. If you would like for us to reapply sunscreen later in the day, please put this request in writing and bring us a bottle of your preferred sunscreen.
18. **Rest, sleep and quiet activities:** Children who remain in our care for longer than a half day will be provided with the opportunity to rest, sleep or have quiet activities.

## **Southborough Village Preschool Wellbeing of the Child Policy:**

At Southborough Village Preschool, the wellbeing, care and safety of our students is of the utmost importance, at all times. Please note the following in regards to our Wellbeing of the Child Policy.

- Southborough Village Preschool is committed to protecting children from neglect and abuse while they are in our care. We would like to remind parents/caregivers that teachers are **mandated reporters of child abuse** and must, by law, report all suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children and Families.
- **We always reserve the right to refuse to release a child to the care of a parent/guardian/caregiver, who we suspect is under the influence of alcohol, drugs, substances, or otherwise impaired.** Should this situation occur, we will ensure that the child is transported home in a safe manner, by a parent/guardian/caregiver on the child's Emergency Contact List. In all instances, the wellbeing and safety of the child will always be our priority .

## **Southborough Village Preschool Emergency Contacts for Health Care**

- Southborough Village Preschool, 14 East Main St., Southborough, MA 01772  
Telephone (508) 485-3109
- Directors: Laura Eppen (cell: 774 245-2770) and Gretchen Hartnett (cell: 508 989-5652)
- Health Care Consultant: Sarah Drepanos (508) 460-9199  
29 East Main St., Southborough, MA 01772
- For all police, fire and ambulance emergencies, we will call 911.
- Southborough Police Department non-emergency line (508) 485-2147
- Southborough Fire Department non-emergency line (508) 485-3235
- Southborough Board of Health (508) 481-3013
- Emergency Health Care Facilities: Marlborough Hospital (508) 481-5000 or  
Metrowest Medical Center in Framingham (508) 383-1000
- Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (508)424-0100
- Southborough Youth and Family Services (508) 481-5676
- Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC): (508) 798-5181
- DCF Child-at-Risk Hotline (800) 792-5200
- Poison Control Center (800) 222-1222

## **Other Things to Know About Southborough Village Preschool**

### **Transportation Policy**

Southborough Village Preschool is not responsible for transporting its students to or from school. Parents will fill out a transportation plan and authorization form on the first day of school to inform the school of how the children will get to and from school. The only time that a child will be transported from the school is in case of an emergency. In the event of an emergency, the school will call 911 and secure police or ambulance transport.

The school will not participate in field trips that require private cars. All field trips will be walking field trips, in the neighborhood, and parents will be notified in advance of all such trips. Teachers will carry water, snacks, emergency contacts, cell phones and all emergency medications on walking field trips.

## **Suspension/Termination Policy**

**Note: The Department of Early Education and Care requires that the following information be provided to parents of children enrolled in preschool.**

Every effort will be made to have a child remain in the school program until the end of the school year, when possible. Circumstances under which a child may need to leave the program include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Parental choice: Moving out of the area or a change in work schedule.
- 2) Parent inability or unwillingness to conform to school policies and practices.
  - a) Failure to provide updated medical information.
  - b) Failure to pay tuition.
- 3) Safety of other children in the program.
- 4) SVP's inability to meet behavioral/special needs of the student.

Please note that termination and suspension are an unlikely event at Southborough Village Preschool. Suspension is used in cases where it is determined that a short-term separation from the school would be beneficial to the student and the school.

If at any time it is deemed necessary to terminate a student due to any of the above listed reasons, the parents will be notified in writing, including circumstances and documentation of reasons for termination. Referral information for other services will be made available to the parents. The school will work closely with the parents and child to prepare the child for termination and a smooth transition in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand.

Dear Parents,

Please feel free to contact us at school if you have any questions about our Parent Handbook. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with you and your child this year and thank you for all that you do to support Southborough Village Preschool! We look forward to an exciting and rewarding partnership with you and your family, for years to come.

Sincerely yours,

**Laura Eppen, Director/Owner**

**Gretchen Hartnett, Director/Owner**

Southborough Village Preschool

14 E. Main Street

Southborough, MA 01772

(508) 485-3109

## Index

Behavior Management Policy/Child Guidance.....	19
Calendar.....	10
Classes We Offer.....	9
Code of Ethics.....	7
Conferences and Assessment Tools.....	12
Confidentiality.....	13
Curriculum.....	5
Diapering and Toileting Policy.....	18
Drop-off /Pick-up Procedures.....	15
Early Student Drop-Off.....	10
Fees and Tuition Schedule.....	8
Health Care Policy.....	21
Hours of Operation.....	8
Important Things to Know at SVP.....	8
Learning Objectives.....	6
Medical Forms and Medication.....	11
Mission Statement.....	4
Nutrition (snacks/lunch/birthdays).....	17
Organization Structure.....	7
Parent Involvement at SVP.....	12
Parent/Teacher Communication.....	12
Parking.....	11
Playschool.....	10
Philosophy.....	4
Separation.....	14

Snow Days/No School Days.....10

Statement of Non-Discrimination.....7

Suspension/Termination Policy.....26

Teacher/Student Ratios.....9

Transportation Policy.....25

What to Wear.....16

Wellbeing of the Child.....24

Who are we at Southborough Village Preschool.....4

Your Child’s Day at Southborough Village Preschool.....14