

Tamalpais Preschool Parent Handbook 2019-20

Information to ensure the safety of our children
and the smooth operation of the school.



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HELPFUL HINTS

HELPING YOUR CHILD ADJUST TO PRESCHOOL

*** Plan enough time for your child to dress and have breakfast. Try to avoid a “last minute rush” by having lunches prepared, sweaters ready, car keys in place, etc. It is best for your child to arrive at school feeling relaxed.

*** Dress your child appropriately for school. Growing and learning are a messy business, and dressy, restrictive clothes interfere with a child's freedom to explore new things.

*** Bring your child to school between 9:00 and 9:15AM. It may be difficult for a child (who is just learning social skills) to come into the program after everyone else is busy at work.

*** Our Early Morning Child Care from 8:00 to 9:00AM is often a quieter, more relaxed time for a reticent child to begin school. At this time, parents may stay for a short while and help their child get involved in activities before the “big day” begins. Please note there is an additional charge of \$10.00 for Morning Care. Morning care happens in the playground and you must sign in there as well.

*** Arrive on time to pick up your child from school. It may be upsetting for a child to be the last one at school when everyone else has gone home or when your expected time of arrival has passed. (A child may feel abandoned and afraid, and may refuse to come to school for a while after such an experience.)

*** Please be considerate of everyone by keeping your child home when he or she is not feeling well. A child with a cold, cough, or intestinal upset does not have fun at school, and it is unfair to risk infecting other children.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Monthly **TAMAGRAMS** will tell you important dates, special events as well as curriculum themes and projects. The Tamagram is accompanied by a monthly Pre-k and Preschool calendar of morning activities and a calendar for Afternoon Enrichment activities.

TEACHER EMAILS inform parents of some of their child's activities during the school day, and are compiled from teacher observations. Please remember your child's teacher is focused on caring for your child during the day.

A CLASS LIST with telephone numbers, e-mail information and addresses will be available in September to help with carpools, birthdays and play dates.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS are best addressed by telephoning the Director before (8:00-9:00AM) or after (1:20-3:00PM) the school session, as there is not much "quiet" time to have any "adult" discussion during the busy morning. In addition, email is a welcomed way to connect or schedule a time to meet.

CONFERENCES: Parent conferences with the group teacher occur in the fall and spring. Sign-up sheets will be available a few weeks before the scheduled conference weeks. Additional conferences can be arranged as requested.

VISITS AND VOLUNTEERS: Parents are welcome to visit our school to see "what's happening at school". Please check with your child's group teacher to arrange a visit. Volunteers are greatly appreciated too! Sign up on the Volunteer Calendar located in the front hall of the Preschool and Pre-K classrooms. Also, check out our volunteer opportunities in the front hallway and monthly newsletter. Volunteers need to meet California state vaccination requirements.

PRESCHOOL INFORMATION

CURRICULUM

Our Thematic Approach includes a wide range of topics, which appeal to children and encourages them to participate in the daily activities. Science, art, music, and movement activities help the children experience “hands-on” learning and develop classroom and pre-academic skills. Check out the newsletter each month to find out about the theme.

NUTRITIOUS SNACKS

Daily snacks are provided in the morning and in the afternoon. Snacks may include crackers, cereal, vegetables or fruits and water. Organic foods are provided whenever possible.

BIRTHDAY TREATS

We love to celebrate birthdays at school, but we aim for healthy treats. Parents may bring muffins, bagels, fruit slices or fruit breads as treats for the class. Please check with us before bringing a treat to avoid duplication of celebrations and to ensure the appropriate number of servings. After you talk to a teacher, look for the birthday sign-up sheet in the front hall of the school and write down your child's name on the day you wish to celebrate, as well as the snack foods you will bring for the celebration.

LUNCHES

Children bring their own lunches to school, usually in a lunch box. We recommend inserting an ice pack to keep food cold and encourage families to use reusable containers. We strive to have “waste free lunches”. Foods cannot be microwaved at school.

Nutritious lunches give children energy and begin a lifetime habit of healthy eating. Pediatricians advise parents to avoid foods which may cause a child to choke. Please avoid popcorn, nuts of all types, uncooked celery and carrots, hot dogs (ok if cut in smaller pieces) and hard candy.

NUT-FREE SCHOOL

Due to a few severe peanut allergies among our students, we are a nut-free school. **We need your help** – please avoid peanut butter, peanut oil or any food containing nuts in lunches or treats brought to school for any occasion. Acceptable alternatives to peanut butter may include sunflower butter or soy butter.

HEALTH POLICIES

PHONING SCHOOL

Our main telephone number is 415-388-4286. We have an answering machine on for those times when all of the teachers are occupied with children. We check messages throughout the day. The answering machine is also turned on after regular school hours so that you may leave a message at any hour of the evening or weekend.

ILLNESS

If your child is sick, please keep him or her at home. Illness includes a cold, cough, intestinal upset, fever or contagious disease. We will call you or authorized persons to take your child home if he or she becomes sick at school. A child may not return to school within 24 hours of an abnormal temperature. Your child should return feeling well and completely non-contagious. We want to maintain a healthy school setting for all.

EXPOSURE TO ILLNESS

You will be notified of exposure to contagious diseases or conditions. Notices will be sent via email.

TOILET TRAINING

Children who attend Tamalpais Preschool can work on toilet training at school. Toilet accidents happen, especially when children are adjusting to the school setting. We are happy to work with families with the toilet training process in partnership with work at home to fully accomplish toilet training together. Talk with the Director or your child's teacher about their potty routine and training progress or needs.

HEAD LICE

Children who have indications of head lice infestation will be sent home from school and may not be re-admitted until treatment is complete and child is lice and nit-free. The Director, or an assigned staff member, will check children's hair in the morning before they are re-admitted back to school. Lice checks will be done every month.

SIGN-IN POLICY & PARKING

SIGNING IN AND OUT

As required by State Licensing Codes, the adult bringing or picking up a child from school must sign their name (the adult's name) using their first initial and entire last name.

AUTHORIZED PICK-UPS

We will only release your child to persons authorized by you on the emergency information cards and by a written message prior to pick-up. In an emergency, a phone message concerning a change in pick-up plans may be acceptable. However, in such a situation, we will ask for identification of persons previously unknown to the school's staff. Children can only be released to individuals over 18 years of age, unless parents or guardians sign a form indicating otherwise.

Parking:

Parking is permitted in the designated Preschool spots ONLY.

DRIVE-UP SYSTEM – WE WILL NOT BE UTILIZING A DRIVE UP SYSTEM THIS YEAR

DROP OFF GUIDELINES

Parents need to drive to the parking lots via the Sycamore Avenue driveway. Do not enter the Camino Alto driveway – it is an "EXIT ONLY/ONE WAY" street. Please drive passed the front door very slowly (3-5 mph), as families are walking by to enter the school. DO NOT enter the school while leaving your car blocking the driveway.

Parents are required to park their cars in the designated School spots and escort their children to the front door of the classroom. A teacher will greet each child at the door. Parents must sign the child in as indicated above on the sign-in sheet near the door.

Our drop off in the mornings is from 9:00-9:15am and the afternoon pick-up is from 1:00-1:1pm. We appreciate your patience during these busy times, please consider safety and be considerate of others.

PICK-UP GUIDELINES

Please note: At the end of the day, children need to be picked up at 5:00 pm SHARP, as school is closed at that time. Late charges apply for children picked up after closing. Families can lose Aftercare privileges if they are continually late for the 5:00pm pick-up.

At pick-up time, please wait by the front door for a teacher to bring your child and his/her belongings to the door after you sign him/her out. We ask that parents move away from the front pick-up area after they have received their child, so that we may safely continue the pick-up procedure for other children. Children who are scheduled to attend Aftercare will be walked to that area at 1:10pm. If you are running late to pick up your child, please call to inform the staff. All children, including those who are picked up late, will be walked to the Aftercare program at 1:10pm. They will be marked into childcare and charged for the 1:00-3:00 pm block (\$20).

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

LABEL BELONGINGS

We love to see labels on clothes, lunch boxes, thermos bottles and tops, books, blankets, and any other items brought from home.

CLOTHING

We strongly recommend comfortable and carefree clothes for children. We encourage children to wear smocks in the art room, but be prepared for messy clothing anyway. Paint just has a way of creeping under smocks and onto shoes and sleeves. Also, please pack an extra set of clothes in a Ziploc bag for pee-pee accidents or heavy water play.

SHOES

Our first concern at Tamalpais Preschool is your child's safety. Always dress your child in appropriate shoes for climbing, running and riding. Children need to wear shoes that have rubber-soles and that tie or Velcro securely. Please avoid: Cowboy boots, rain boots, Uggs, Jellies, Crocs, moccasins, party shoes, clogs and flip flops. Sturdy sandals with rubber-soles that have straps with buckles or Velcro are fine. Boots of any kind prevent children from climbing safely.

Sometimes your child may insist on wearing their special shoes to school (such as rain boots on rainy days). Wearing them to school is fine, but please bring a change of shoes for play. We will help them change into safe shoes before their play begins. Also, please do not bring umbrellas to school. They are not safe.

TOYS

Toys from "home" work against your child's overall adjustment. Toys get lost, taken by others, and distract your child from the wonderful learning equipment at school. Please leave toys at home, especially if they are a one of a kind favorite stuffed toy.

ARTWORK

We emphasize the creative process, not necessarily a finished project. Children choose which art projects they wish to experience and may not bring home an art project each day. Some children do not like to do a "product" oriented piece of artwork, their project "may not be dry yet", or we are saving it for display or for individual portfolios given out at the end of the year.

PRESCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

PRESCHOOL GOALS

We strive to provide your child with enriching, stimulating and enjoyable experiences in all areas of child development involving social, emotional, behavioral, physical, sensory-motor, cognitive, and creative growth. Enhancement of your child's self-esteem is our primary goal. We hope each day will be wonderful, fun and fulfilling for your child in the following areas:

- Independence (self-help, transitions, perseverance, confidence building, making constructive choices)
- Social interactions (cooperation, conflict resolution, empathy and respect for others)
- Classroom skills (taking turns, following directions, time management, taking risks, physical skills, increasing attention)
- Pre-Academic skills (pre-math and science, pre-reading and writing, learning through active play)

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

Preschool is a time to develop social skills of sharing, taking turns, expressing feelings sensitively, listening to friends and teachers, and following directions and routines. Misunderstandings, conflicts, and a certain amount of misbehavior is normal and expected. Our teachers use a positive approach to discipline, explaining and modeling appropriate behavior.

Occasionally, a child's behavior at school may endanger his/her or another child's safety. If this occurs, the parents will be called and the situation will be discussed. If the situation warrants, the child may be asked to leave for the remainder of the day. If the misbehavior continues, please refer to the Director for detailed steps that will be taken.

UPSET AND UNHAPPY CHILDREN

If a child becomes upset at school and cannot be calmed by a teacher, parents will be telephoned and requested to come to school to help their child feel better. A teacher will always be close by to comfort a distressed child, but there are times when only a mom or dad will do!

RESPECT FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

We expect parents to be respectful of others in our school community by avoiding gossip and being respectful of diverse parenting styles and children's personalities.

PRESCHOOL EVENTS

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Our Parent Board of Trustees welcomes comments, suggestions, questions, and volunteers! Parents may attend the monthly Board meetings. The dates are available in the Preschool office.

EQUIPMENT AND ENRICHMENT FEE

There is an annual Enrichment & Equipment Fee which helps pay for special guests, visitors to the classroom, fund new play equipment and special projects materials. You will receive an invoice in September for this fee. It is \$150 for T/Th program, \$200 for MWF program and \$250 for M-F/pre-k program.

FUNDRAISING

We encourage parents to purchase Amazon items through our website/AmazonSmiles which contributes a portion of sales directly to our school. Additional donations & company matches are also welcome! We are a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation. Please contact our COO, Rose Lofrano for more information.

PRESCHOOL EVENTS

Tamalpais Preschool hosts several events for families throughout the year. Parents are notified of these occasions in the newsletters and special flyers.

BABYSITTING

To maintain a professional student/teacher relationship, and for insurance liability requirements, teachers and staff of Strawberry-Tamalpais Preschools are **prohibited** from working for families currently enrolled at the preschools in a capacity in which the teacher is solely responsible for the enrolled child (i.e. babysitting, chauffeuring, etc.).

CALENDAR

Tamalpais Preschool runs from late Aug - early June, and also offers a summer program. We try to follow the local public school calendar as much as possible with respect to holidays and staff in-service days.

CHURCH & EVENTS

Please note that we lease our space from the Mt. Tamalpais United Methodist Church, which hosts prayer groups and events for parishioners and the surrounding community. We ask that you be respectful and kind to our neighbors, which includes respecting designated parking.

TUITION & BILLING PROCEDURES

BILLING QUESTIONS

Any questions about billing should be addressed to Rose Lofrano, our Chief Operating Officer. Her telephone number is 415-246-4941 and you can email her at rosesp1@yahoo.com. School staff and teachers cannot answer billing questions.

TUITION

Tuition fees are based on our "September through June" calendar and are divided into ten equal monthly payments for your convenience. Full fees are due for the months in which holidays occur. The operating expenses of the school must be met each month from tuition fees. No refund is given for days missed, including absence for illness, vacation or unexpected circumstances.

Bills are emailed at the beginning of each month through our online payment system. Tuition is paid in advance and Child Care charges are billed in arrears. Payment is due by the 25th of the month; a \$15 late fee will be charged for tuition not received by the 25th. In addition, there will be a charge at an annual interest rate of 18% (1.5% per month) on any unpaid balance over 30 days. There will be a \$10 fee charged for all returned checks.

AFTERCARE ENRICHMENT

Questions regarding Afternoon Enrichment hours should be addressed to the Preschool Director or the Afternoon Enrichment Staff.

Late pick-up from Extended Hours results in additional fees. When lateness for the 1:00 and 3:00PM blocks occurs, the charge incurred is the amount of an additional Child Care Block (\$20/block). When the first lateness for the 5:00PM block occurs, a \$5 fine is charged for any part of each 15 minute segment of time. Subsequent 5:00PM lateness incidents result in a \$25 fine for any part of each 15 minute segment of time. Abuse of pick-up promptness may result in loss of Extended Hour privileges.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE WITHDRAWAL

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

When parents have a concern or complaint, the following steps should be taken:

Step 1: Parents are encouraged to attempt to resolve concerns directly with the child's teacher, Director of the school and Chief Operating Officer. Often problems are reconciled at this level.

Step 2: If the problem is not resolved to the parents' satisfaction, a phone call should be placed to the President of the Board of Trustees. The President will then schedule a meeting with all parties involved, and attempt to reconcile the issue.

Step 3: If the issue is still not resolved to the parents' satisfaction, they may address the Board of Trustees directly. This is done by contacting the President and setting an appointment to attend the next scheduled monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Step 4: The Board of Trustees will then respond in writing to all parties involved. The Board's decision will be final and without provision for appeal.

WITHDRAWAL

During the September-January semester, withdrawal may be made in any month provided 30 days notice is given before the beginning of the next month or full fee for that month must be paid. However, withdrawal from the February-June semester must be made by notification prior to January 20th, or full tuition will be charged for the February through June semester. Due notice of withdrawal is notification by mail or telephone to the Director.

The school reserves the right to exclude children from enrollment or attendance if parents do not abide by Corporation Policies; if a child does not abide by standards of conduct as determined by the staff; or if a child appears ill, over-fatigued, or immature for the daily program.

HOURS OF OPERATION FOR PRESCHOOL

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Morning Block
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Daily Program
1:00 PM – 3:00* PM	Aftercare/Block 1
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Aftercare/Block 2

*There is a 45 minute rest time between 1:00 and 3:00PM as required by California State Law.

Tamalpais Preschool Mailing Address
PO Box 1012
Mill Valley, California 94942