



## Parent Handbook

**Mission Statement:** Tri-Village Nursery School prepares children for kindergarten, while at the same time helping them to develop new friendships and a lifelong love of learning. We offer a variety of developmentally-appropriate experiences and programs for our students and, as a cooperative nursery school, we also provide a meaningful role for parents in the educational process. We embrace diversity and celebrate the fact that no two children are exactly alike. We strive to create an environment where each child can develop to his or her full potential. We realize that self-esteem and self-confidence are essential for growth and learning. We are committed to active, reflective, creative learning fostered by child-centered activities. We believe that an environment enriched with a supportive, nurturing, and non-threatening atmosphere maximizes a child's growth and development.

### Welcome!

We are glad that you are a part of the TVN community. We extend an open invitation to you to become involved in your child's nursery school experience and we look forward to becoming acquainted with your entire family.

When you are at TVN, we hope you will feel at home. Our goal is to provide a relaxed atmosphere where kids learn freely and adults feel comfortable. We strive to be sensitive to the individual differences, cultural patterns, and special abilities of our members. Our teachers welcome you to share your special talents, skills, or cultural heritage.

Our classrooms will have special days for families, but don't wait for an invitation. Feel free to visit us often!

### TVN Curriculum

Tri-Village Nursery School uses the **New York State Pre-K Learning Standards** as the foundation for its curriculum. The framework for our program comes from sound, well-researched practices and is supported by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We offer a **thematic curriculum**. Teachers create lessons and activities that are integrated around a specific topic, theme or question.

TVN's **developmentally appropriate** curriculum helps foster self-confidence and positive feelings toward learning. Educators use their knowledge of child development along with their knowledge of the individual child to provide students with a variety of meaningful activities and interactions throughout the school day. The child is viewed as an active participant in the learning process and the teacher as an active facilitator who is there to support learning. We strive to be responsive to our students' differences in ability and interest. We provide opportunities for children to play in small groups, whole groups, and individually.

A TVN classroom offers a variety of **interest areas**:

- Blocks and Transportation
- House/Dramatic Play
- Table Toys
- Art
- Sensory activities (such as sand and water)
- Library/Language Arts
- Music and Movement
- Mathematics and Cooking
- Physical Science/Living Things

Teachers use a combination of these interest areas while setting up their classrooms. This allows for active exploration of materials and interaction with peers. Interest areas in the physical environment are continually changing as teachers encourage learning and creativity through their thematic approach.

Educators at TVN each have their own personal style, which is reflected in their classrooms and curriculum. While each teacher may educate in a different way, the knowledge base of each class remains the same -- structured under the learning standards. Tri-Village Nursery School creates an environment for each child that is nurturing, non-threatening, and cooperative.

## **What are the Expectations of a Co-op Preschool?**

As a cooperative ("co-op") preschool, we encourage family participation. This participation creates a unique classroom experience for our students and also helps keep our tuition lower than otherwise comparable preschools in the region.

**Classroom volunteering:** If your family chooses to pay TVN's cooperative preschool tuition rate (an option that is selected by about 90% of TVN families), you will be expected to send adult volunteers to help periodically in the classroom as "helping parents." Shifts usually occur about once per month, but the exact schedule and frequency varies by class. The schedule for these volunteer shifts is created by each class's "room parent" and is typically shared in two parts, first in August (for dates through the end of December) and in December (for dates through the end of the school year). "Parent" helpers can actually be anyone your family selects. Friends, grandparents, and babysitters all make excellent classroom volunteers.

**Committee volunteering:** Families choosing to pay TVN's cooperative preschool tuition rate will be expected to serve on a volunteer committee. Sample committees include the cleaning committee, substitute teaching committee, Fall Festival committee, or room parent committee. A full list of committees is sent home in the spring before classes begin. Families have an opportunity to note their committee preferences. Assignments are made and announced over the summer, prior to the start of school.

**Garage sale volunteering:** All TVN families are expected to volunteer for one two-hour shift at the school's annual garage sale. (Garage sale committee members have additional volunteer requirements.) The garage sale typically takes place in April each year. The date is announced the preceding spring or summer and is available on the TVN website. Shifts are available on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday each year.

**A traditional (non-coop) option is available:** We recognize that some families are unable to fulfill the volunteer requirements that come with being part of a cooperative preschool. For families interested in all the benefits of Tri-Village Nursery School, without the volunteer commitment, it is possible to pay a higher tuition rate and opt out of some or all of your volunteer responsibilities. This option is selected by about 10% of TVN families.

- If you wish to opt out of either classroom volunteering OR committee volunteering, you may elect to do so for an additional 12% tuition.
- If you wish to opt out of classroom volunteering AND committee volunteering, you may elect to do so for an additional 18% tuition.
- All families are expected to volunteer at the annual garage sale, with an exception being made for families that opt out of BOTH classroom and committee work.

Families that do not appropriately fulfill their volunteer commitments will be assessed a fee comparable to these “opt out” rates. These fees are significant, so we encourage you to be in touch with the TVN board if you are concerned about your family's ability to complete volunteer work.

## **Your Place in the Classroom**

**The Helping Parent:** As a member of the TVN preschool cooperative, you will be expected to volunteer in the classroom as a helping parent. Helping parents are an integral part of the Tri-Village classroom experience. They are valued teacher helpers, role models, and friends to all students. Serving as a helping parent is a wonderful way to share in your child's preschool experience.

To ensure a positive experience for all, we ask that you abide by the following **Helping Parent Guidelines:**

1. To volunteer as a helping parent, you must first submit your name on the Helping Parent form and consent to a background check. Classroom volunteers are carefully vetted prior to the start of school.
2. Remember to bring a healthy nut-free snack. In some classes, a specific list of approved snacks may be provided. Please consult your classroom teacher for your class's guidelines. Cupcakes and other dessert snacks are fine for special occasions, but TVN seeks to support healthy eating habits. Please refer to the suggested snack list provided by your child's classroom teacher when it is your turn to bring in snack for the class.
3. Be prepared to follow a child's lead in play, games or activities.
4. Please make other childcare arrangements for younger siblings on your helping days. This should be a special morning for you and your preschooler.
5. Speak slowly, simply, and quietly. Smile freely and bend down to their eye level.
6. Be consistent, firm, and fair when setting limits. Explain rules in a cheerful, sympathetic manner and enforce them in a positive, non-personal manner.
7. When difficult situations arise:
  - a. Attempt to foresee and forestall trouble and be prepared to redirect children and activities.
  - b. Encourage all children to “use your words” to work out difficulties.
  - c. Treat toilet accidents casually and report them to a teacher.
  - d. Remain alert.

- e. Act professionally in regard to the discussion of children or classroom events. Please make appointments with your child's teacher or the education director to discuss concerns. It is inappropriate to discuss children within their hearing or with others outside of the classroom.
8. Dress for having fun. Be prepared for messier activities.
9. Relax and enjoy yourself! We appreciate your time with us!

## **Health Guidelines**

**Please keep your child home for the following reasons:**

- **Fever of 100°F or higher**  
Keep your child home until the fever is gone for 24 hours without medication.
- **Vomiting or diarrhea**  
Keep your child home until symptoms are gone for 24 hours.
- **Coughing and/or sneezing excessively**  
A constant cough and difficult-to-manage runny nose is uncomfortable for your child and is also disruptive to the class. Your child may need to be evaluated by a medical provider.
- **Strep Throat**  
Your child must be treated with antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.
- **Eye symptoms such as redness, discharge, itching, etc.**  
Your child should be evaluated by a medical professional to rule out "pink eye". If it is a confirmed case of pink eye, please keep your child home until s/he has been treated for 24 hours.
- **Unusual or draining rash, wound, or sore**  
Your child should be evaluated by a medical professional to rule out an infection.
- **Too tired or sleepy**  
Keep your child home if s/he is too tired / sleepy from an illness to profit from sitting in class all day.
- **Head lice**  
Your child should be properly treated, with both mature lice and eggs removed before s/he returns to school.
- **Any condition that you think may be serious or may be contagious to others**

**Keeping your child home when appropriate can help with your child's return to health and learning, and can help protect other students from a contagious illness.**

**If your child has a highly contagious virus or head lice, please contact the president or the Education Director as soon as possible.**

Thank you for your help!

## The Preschool Experience

- A. **Separation:** Starting school is an exciting experience for a young child, but it can also be a difficult one. Whatever the personality of the child, however eager he or she may seem to be, there will be a moment when your child will suddenly realize that you are not going to be there. This realization is a normal reaction. It is important to introduce the child to school in a way that will make this first separation from you as easy as possible.

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Talk positively to your child about school</li><li>● Make a plan for saying good-bye (i.e. agree to stay for 5 minutes, give three kisses and two hugs)</li><li>● Remind your child that you will return to pick them up</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Stay too long</li><li>● Leave without saying good-bye</li><li>● Cancel your plans</li><li>● Be late to pick up your child</li></ul>

Separation can be difficult for both children and parents alike. But, calm consistency is the best solution.

- B. **Backpacks:** Preschool children take home a variety of communications and oversized projects. Please send your child to school with a backpack that is at least eleven inches tall and eight inches wide. Please label everything your child brings to school with his/her name.
- C. **Toys from Home:** Except for toys that are needed in the opening days of school to help ease your child's transition from home to school - or for occasional show and tell - we ask that you leave toys at home or in the car. We cannot be responsible for it becoming lost or broken. Guns, war toys, or other toys of destruction are not allowed at any time in any classroom.
- D. **Clothing:** TVN classroom activities are busy and sometimes messy. Please consider your child's comfort and provide simple, washable clothing. Sneakers should be worn on days when your child has music and movement. Crocs and flip-flops are not allowed at school. Place labels on all outer garments including gloves, hats, and boots.
- E. **Potty training:** Children are expected to be toilet trained upon entering school. The child needs to be able to identify the need to use the restroom without intervention. It is expected that the child does not regularly have accidents in the classroom. If a child has a bowel movement outside of the toilet, parents will be called to change the child. It is expected that general hygiene is observed. We understand a three-year-old entering preschool may require time to transition to the above expectations or they may regress. A child may experience accidents during this transition, in which the teachers are aware, so they ask that an extra set of clothing be kept in the classroom. The child should be in underwear at the start of the school year. The child should be able to wipe themselves and be able to pull up their pants with little or no assistance

If at the beginning of the school year your child is unable to meet these requirements, please contact us; a discussion about the child's readiness for school will need to take place. Your child's enrollment in the class will be held for a determined amount of time for you to continue working on potty training. If at the end of that period, your child is still not potty trained, your child may not be able to attend at this time.

- F. **Hand washing:** All students will be required to wash their hands as soon as they come to school in the morning. This “washing” may be in the form of using anti-bacterial wipes or actually washing hands with soap and water at the sink. Other preschools have had success in reducing the number of illnesses among their students by using this policy. Although we realize that this will not eliminate all illnesses, we hope it will greatly reduce their occurrence and keep children healthier. In addition, children will use hand-washing procedures at snack time, after bathroom use, and as needed throughout the day.
- G. **Inclement weather announcements:** Listen for school closings on the local radio stations and watch for them on local network news. If Bethlehem schools are closed, TVN is closed. If Bethlehem is delayed one hour, TVN is delayed one hour. If Bethlehem is delayed two hours, TVN is closed. If TVN is closed due to inclement weather or other circumstances beyond our control, classes will not be made up and/or a tuition refund will not be given.
- H. **Field Trips:** Teachers will post announcements for any trip approximately two weeks prior to the trip date. Parents will be asked to drive and inform the teacher of seat availability. If you are a driver, please remember the following:
- Car seats are required for all children, and NO child may ride in the front passenger seat.
  - Parent drivers are encouraged to speak with their insurance carriers to ascertain if additional coverage is necessary.
  - A small group of children may be assigned to each driver. Please stay with the class unless otherwise directed. Do not leave before a final count is made and you are directed to return to school.
  - Parents must refrain from smoking in the car, and throughout the trip. Teachers and assistants bear the ultimate responsibility for the children during and excursion. However, a parent’s help in supervising their assigned group is greatly appreciated.
- I. **Arrival and Pick-up:** Please DO NOT drop your child off early. Teachers are busy preparing for school and cannot be responsible for your child at that time. Teachers will open classroom doors when they are ready to receive students. Punctuality is appreciated. If you know that your child will be significantly late to class, please make an effort to let the teacher know ahead of time. In addition, in an effort to maintain a predictable classroom environment, regular attendance is required. If your child will be out of school due to illness or any other reason, TVN must be notified. You may call us at 518-439-1455 or e-mail your child’s teacher directly.
- J. **Pick-up time:** No child will be released to a non-authorized person. Teachers require written or verbal authorization from a parent for any changes in this respect.
- K. **Parking:** Many young children are entering and exiting the building. It is important to drive slowly and safely through the parking lots. Please do not “create” a parking space where one is not designated. Though you may feel that you will only be in the building for a moment, it can create many traffic problems and safety issues. Also, do not park in any spaces designated for handicapped parking unless you have the appropriate sticker or license plate. In addition, do not block access to the dumpsters in the parking lot. Finally, though it may be tempting to allow a young child or infant to remain in the car while you pick up another child, it is very unsafe and not worth the risk. Please do not leave any child unattended in your vehicle.
- L. **Support Services:** TVN recognizes that students may require the assistance of support service providers (occupational, physical and/or speech therapists) in order to assist with or maintain age

appropriate development. These therapists are welcome to work with children in the classroom environment (or in a quiet space nearby) when it is requested and prearranged with your child's teacher.

- M. **Your Child's Progress:** TVN students are evaluated twice a year, once in the fall and again in the spring. A parent/teacher conference is offered in the fall for all classes and a written progress report will be sent home with your child twice a year. Parents can request to speak with teachers at any time and are encouraged to maintain open communication throughout the school year.
- N. **Safety drills:** Fire drills and Shelter-in-Place drills will be held several times throughout the year. Emergency routes are posted in each classroom by the door. Please refer to TVN's Rules and Regulations document for a more detailed description of our Emergency Evacuation Procedure.
- O. **Child Abuse and Maltreatment:** Teachers and school officials are required, under Social Services Law, to report any suspected case of child abuse or maltreatment of any child coming before them in their professional capacity. TVN teachers have attended training in this area and have resources available to help them in identifying possible cases of abuse. If you have any questions, or would like to view written materials on this subject, please contact the Education Director.

## TVN Behavior Management Policy

*All volunteers are asked to read the following Behavior Management Policy to be sure they understand the requirements.*

Our goal at TVN is to create a safe environment for children to learn basic principles such as sharing, personal space, following directions, and respect for others. Our behavior management policy is based on a positive behavior philosophy to guide all children during these formative years. It is important that our discipline methods help children make good choices and learn about natural consequences to their behavior. This will ensure that they are prepared to enter elementary school and positively interact with their peers.

Proper classroom behavior is discussed with the children throughout the school year. We believe that prevention begins with proper teaching and positive reinforcement. When children forget proper classroom procedures, teachers gently remind them.

In the event a parent has a concern about *their* child's behavior or any issue in the classroom, they should request time with their teacher for a conference. If additional assistance is required, parents can consult with the TVN Education Director.

When behavior management issues arise, the following actions will be taken to help your child:

1. When a child behaves in a manner that is disruptive to the classroom environment, hurts himself or herself or another child, he or she will be given a verbal warning reminding the child of his or her action and the classroom rules. The child will also be told about possible consequences to further inappropriate behavior.
2. If the child's behavior continues, the consequences to such behavior will be explained by the teacher to the child (example: time out, loss of a privilege, movement of seat, etc). When a child is placed in a time out, loses a privilege, etc., the teacher will describe the child's actions and explain why the behavior is not appropriate. Teachers are required to document continuing behavioral problems so that they may identify patterns and help to work with the child to correct the behavior. Teachers should also inform parents of the child's behavior and the resulting consequence. Parents are encouraged to speak with their child about their behavior in school.
3. If a child's behavior does not improve, a meeting will be called with the parents and classroom teacher to further discuss the child's behavior and to develop a plan for improvement. The teacher should document this meeting and share any pertinent details with the Education Director. The Education Director should inform the President of the Board of Trustees that this meeting has occurred.
4. In the event that the child's behavior continues unimproved, a meeting will be called with the parents, the classroom teacher and the Education Director. Depending on the circumstances, a parent may be asked to temporarily refrain from bringing their child to school until such a meeting has been had and a new plan for improvement is in place.
5. If a child's behavior continues to be harmful, physically or emotionally, to himself/ herself or other children in the classroom, the child may be asked to leave the school. Prior to such consequences, a meeting will be called with the Education Director and the Board of Trustees to make a final determination on the continued attendance of the child at TVN. Any partial tuition refund would be calculated from the day of dismissal, determined by the TVN Board of Trustees Treasurer.