

# Duxbury Integrated Preschool Family Handbook 2019-2020



# **Duxbury Public Schools/Preschool Handbook**

## **Welcome**

Welcome to Duxbury Public Schools' Integrated Preschool Program. The information contained in this handbook is designed to familiarize parents with the program's philosophy and policy. In addition, as a public school program, we adhere to all the policies and procedures approved by the Duxbury School Committee. Please review this handbook carefully. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's school experience, please feel free to ask our staff.

The Duxbury Integrated Preschool is located in the Chandler School, 93 Chandler Street. The main number to the Chandler School is 781-934-7680, where you can be directed to the Integrated Preschool Office.

For security reasons the school doors are locked while school is in session. To enter the building during this time, you must provide a license/picture ID and state your reason for entrance. This policy is in place for the safety of our students, and we appreciate your adherence to this ID procedure.

## **Program Philosophy**

We believe that preschool children learn best in a child-centered educational setting that is developmentally appropriate. Addressing each child's diverse and changing needs is best achieved using a team approach. We also believe that families are an integral part of the educational process and encourage them to be active participants.

## **Program Description**

Our classrooms are multi-aged and balanced with respect to the diversity of the community's population. Staffing is planned each year in response to the individualized needs of the children. The curriculum is planned to fulfill goals and objectives for preschool children in their social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. The Preschool Team has planned a learning environment that is:

- Safe
- Child-centered
- Success oriented
- Developmentally appropriate
- Educationally challenging
- Integrated with respect to educational needs
- Play based

The educational approach is characterized by:

- A developmental perspective which views learning and growth as a lifelong process
- An assessment of strengths and needs
- Flexible teaching and intervention approaches
- The ability to respond to the changing needs of children and families

Our collaborative team includes special educators, instructional assistants, speech and language therapist, occupational and physical therapists, and consulting school psychologist and behavior specialist. We plan for every child. Some children receive additional direct services according to their individualized education plan. Family participation is encouraged in a variety of ways. Parent involvement is critical to each child's success. Our goal is to join in a partnership with families to inform and support optimal growth for each and every child.

## **The Early Childhood Team**

**Erin Wieseahn**, Principal, Chandler School

**Susan MacNeil**, Assistant Principal, Chandler School

**Amy Holland**, Early Childhood Coordinator/ School Psychologist

**Skye Cristoforo**, Early Childhood Teacher

**Colleen Callahan-Guimares**, Early Childhood Teacher

**Lisa Sisoian**, Early Childhood Teacher

**Jessica Devine**, Speech and Language Therapist

**Deb Silk**, Physical Therapist

**Annemarie Jacobson**, Occupational Therapist

**Cristin Mitchell**, Cnty Wing Office Assistant

**Missy Magner**, Cnty Wing Office Assistant

## **What Is An Integrated Program?**

An integrated program recognizes the strengths and needs of the whole student, (physical, social and academic), giving equal consideration to each in the development of program options. Children with special needs who may require services in addition to those planned for all children are embraced as integral members of the classroom, and participate alongside children whose development has been progressing as expected.

## **Curriculum**

A variety of learning activities are planned each day for the children. Classroom routines are designed to assist children in becoming independent and competent. Each classroom follows their own schedule, based on the needs of the children enrolled. The program is structured around the Preschool Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for English Language Arts and Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, and Social Studies. Students are introduced to district wide curriculum in literacy and math. In addition, students' social and emotional development are supported using social

thinking concepts as a framework. Integrated Preschool staff work with kindergarten staff in preparing students for the next step in their education. All classrooms provide the following components:

**Circle Time:**

This group experience provides an opportunity for children to learn to function as part of a class. Children learn to take turns, to participate in group discussions, to follow and anticipate in daily routines, etc.

**Centers:**

Children select from available play/learning opportunities to explore their own interests and build their skills. Each classroom is organized into learning centers that provide a variety of focused activities. Teachers, assistants and speech therapists share in facilitating select centers.

**Snack or Lunch:**

Eating together provides a valuable social experience for preschool children, as well as a chance to work on eating skills and table manners. Staff sits alongside children and facilitates conversation.

**Gross Motor/Outdoor Time:**

Young children love to move! Outdoor play allows children to vigorously move their whole body while enjoying a range of activities, such as climbing, biking, sliding and running.

**Self-Care:**

Time is provided each day for children to develop and practice self-care skills, such as toileting and washing their hands.

**Story Time:**

Reading is vital to children's school success. Children are read to every day in the preschool classroom.

**Closing:**

Each classroom utilizes its own routine to bring closure to the day.

## **Preschool Policies**

**Class Times:**

The preschool has AM and PM sessions. The morning sessions run from 9:15-11:45 and the PM sessions from 12:45-3:15. Parents and guardians are asked to adhere to these times by having the children dropped off and picked up on time.

**Parking:**

- Please park in the drop off or visitor parking spaces, or along the fence at the athletic fields.
- Please do not block cars that are already in parking spaces.
- Bring your child to the Canty Wing doors where the staff will meet you.
- Given that there are limited spaces available, we appreciate your help in returning to your car after drop-off and pick-up, and leaving the space available for another parent to utilize.

**Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures:**

For arrival and dismissal of preschool students, parents will park in a drop-off or visitor parking spot and walk to the Canty doors. Parents and students will line up outside the building. Please wait with your child until a teacher or teaching assistant greets you at the door. Doors will open at 9:10 for AM sessions and 12:45 for PM sessions. ***Teachers will greet students at the doors at 9:10 for AM sessions and 12:45 for PM sessions, and escort them inside. Parents will remain outside the school building.***

**School Entry:**

***A Photo ID is required any time you enter the building.***

Children who arrive after the session begins must report to the Canty Wing office with an adult before proceeding to the classroom. It is important for all students to be in school at the start of each session and to be picked up on time at the end of the day.

**Tuition Policy:**

A signed enrollment agreement and deposit serve as a commitment to the school year program and tuition. If family circumstances change, the earliest possible notice assists in our filling your child's space.

**Payment Schedule:**

Parents of typically developing students pay a tuition of \$1,554 (2 day) and \$3,108 (4 day) for the 2019-2020 school year. Deposits made to hold your child's space will be applied to the September Tuition. Tuition payments will be divided into ten monthly payments due at the beginning of each month.

Paying full tuition in advance is acceptable as well. All payments should have your child's name and the word, 'Preschool' indicated in the lower left portion of the check. Please make checks out to "Duxbury Public Schools" and leave at the Preschool Office. Failure to make timely payments could jeopardize your child's placement. The Early Childhood Coordinator will make every effort to work with families to develop a payment plan, if necessary.

**Enrollment Applications**

Applications for typically developing peers are available in January for the next school

year. **Children must be three or four years old by September 1 of the entry year.** Children who are currently enrolled in the program must complete a form to indicate if they would like to continue in the program for the following school year. A limited number of spaces are available each year. If the number of applications exceeds the number of available spaces, a lottery system will be used and a waiting list will be maintained. Screenings also occur as part of this process to identify students whose development has been occurring as expected.

### **Absences**

Each time your child will be absent or late, please call the preschool where someone is typically answering phones between 8:45 to 3:15.

### **Dismissals**

For the safety and protection of all children, teachers will only release your child to those persons you list on your child's release permission form. Please be sure to write the name of each person who is authorized to pick up your child from the classroom. Additional names can be added at any time, but only in person by the parent. Please notify the teacher of any changes in usual adult pick-up. Children feel safer if they know ahead of time who will be picking them up. If you need to have your child released from school early, please send a note to your child's classroom teacher. An adult must pick up the child. No child will be allowed to leave the school grounds without an adult. When a pick-up is delayed by an emergency or urgent matter, please call if possible. Children may be brought to the office, when classroom coverage is unavailable.

### **School Closings, Early Dismissals, Delayed Opening, or Early Dismissals Due to Inclement Weather**

- ***If you have enrolled in the ConnectEd parent notification system, you will receive a phone call and email notifying you of a school cancellation or delay.***

Information about Duxbury Public School closings, delays, or dismissals will be posted on Duxbury Public School's social media and broadcast by announcements on the following TV channels: **Boston CBS (4), Boston ABC (5), & Boston NBC (7)** and Radio stations **WBZ (1030 AM), WHDH (850 AM), WATD (95.9 FM), and WPLM (1390 AM –Note: it will NOT be announced on 99.1FM)**. The radio stations will be notified as soon as the decision to close school or have a delayed opening is made. **Please note that announcements made specific to kindergarten will also apply for preschool.** For example, "no am kindergarten" means there will also be no am preschool. If there is a delayed opening, there will be no AM sessions.

### **District-Wide Professional Development Days**

On scheduled early release days, preschool PM sessions will not meet.

### **Developmental Screening:**

Children will participate in a developmental screening by a preschool teacher (either completed as part of the typically developing peer application in the prior Spring, or when they begin at the preschool in the fall). Should concerns be noted, parents will be

informed of teacher's recommendations.

**Confidentiality:**

All information regarding children, their families, their medical needs and their educational goals is kept in a professional and confidential manner. Files with personal information remain in locked cabinets with restricted access.

## **Classroom Information**

### **Lunch/Snacks**

Each class eats together during their session. The morning and afternoon classes have a light snack at mid-morning/mid-afternoon. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy foods for snack – fruit, crackers, yogurt, rice cakes, juice or milk are all good choices. Please avoid cookies, cakes, highly salted snacks and sodas. Water is always available for children to drink. Children are encouraged to NOT share their snacks. This can be extremely important in light of all the food allergies that are developing. Occasionally, due to a child's food allergy, a classroom may become a no peanut or other food zone. If your child has a food allergy, please let your child's teacher and our school nurse know immediately. **\*Due to multiple allergies, all preschool classrooms will be PEANUT/NUT FREE for the 2019-2020 school year.**

### **Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play is an important part of the daily curriculum. Each class goes outdoors for 20-30 minutes each day, except in extreme weather. Parents are reminded that children need to be dressed appropriately for the weather of the day. Hats, mittens and boots are a must during the winter. If your child seems ill, and you do not feel that outside play is appropriate, please keep your child home that day. Staff is required to be outside to facilitate play and ensure child safety.

On our playground, students are required to use helmets when riding ride-on bikes. Families may opt to leave a helmet for a student here at school, or have their child bring the helmet to school each day. Please let us know if you need a helmet for your child and we will facilitate obtaining a helmet for your child.

### **Clothing**

Preschool can be a very messy experience. Although children wear smocks for many activities, they still seem to attract paint, glue, clay and other natural substances. Clothing that can be washed easily keeps stress to a minimum. Sneakers or other rubber-soled shoes can prevent falls in the hallways and on the playground.

### **What to Bring for Your Child**

Please have your child bring a small backpack/bag with a lunch box for a snack and drink. A change of clothes may be left in classroom in the event of spills or other accidents. If your child uses diapers or pull-ups, a supply can be left at school.

### **Toilet Training**

Children are not required to be toilet trained before entering this program. If you are ready to begin training with your child, or if you want information or assistance with this topic, please ask your child's teacher. The staff is all knowledgeable and skilled in this area.

### **Holidays**

Young children are often overwhelmed by major holidays that are hyped by the media. We try to keep a perspective on Christmas, Halloween, Easter and other heavily marketed events. We also try to encourage cultural sensitivity in the children by making them aware that not all people celebrate the same holidays in the same ways. Please speak to the classroom teacher for specific information on how holidays will be observed in your child's class. If holiday celebrations conflict with your own beliefs, please discuss this with the teacher as well.

### **Parent Involvement**

Parental involvement in a child's education is critical to school success. We realize that many parents are pressed for time. Therefore, we offer a variety of opportunities for parents to tailor their participation to the needs of their own family and child.

- PTA – Preschool parents are welcome to join Chandler's Parent Teacher Association. The PTA has generously supported programs for our preschool students. Every year new volunteers are required to attend an orientation, complete a CORI form, and sign a confidentiality statement before helping in school. Returning volunteers are required to sign a confidentiality sheet each year. Parents of preschoolers are welcome to join the PTA and are also welcome to volunteer at Chandler School. Each preschool classroom needs at least one homeroom parent (2 is preferable) to organize special events and celebrations. The rewards of volunteering in the classroom are great, not only for the child, but also for the volunteer.
- Every Monday, the Chandler School Principal sends an email to parents keeping them informed of activities and upcoming events. These emails will be forwarded to all preschool families, with any additional preschool information included.
- Parent – Teacher Conferences are offered twice per year, typically in October and April, to provide a time for teachers to report on each child's progress. Parents are encouraged to speak to the teachers at any time about concerns or important events in their child's life.
- Report Cards – Report Cards (and IEP progress notes if applicable) go home to families in January and June. Our report cards provide information on how your child is progressing on our frameworks and curriculum standards. We have collaborated with Kindergarten teachers in the development of our Preschool report cards and discussed learning goals and expectations for our students.
- Parent visits are welcome. Parents are asked to arrange these visits in advance

to prevent disruption of the class by too many visitors at one time. Parents may come to observe, to present a class activity, to be a “Mystery Reader”, to describe their occupation or favorite hobby, or to share a custom or tradition from their home with the class.

- Classroom newsletters and monthly calendars help parents stay informed about what is happening in their child’s class, and in the program as a whole.
- Teacher Websites – Teachers post information on upcoming activities and themes on their websites, which are accessible via Duxbury Public Schools homepage.
- End of the Year Parent Survey- Your input is very important to us and critical to the success of our program. Please feel free to contact staff with your comments (pro or con). In addition, an electronic parent survey will be sent through email via Survey Monkey at the end of the year for your ideas and suggestions to make this a productive and effective program for you and your child.

### **Signs of Illness**

*\* Please refer to our Health Guidelines (available on our website) for more detailed health information.*

For the protection of all children and staff, and for the comfort of your own child, we ask that children be kept home if they seem ill. Signs of illness include:

- Fever over 99 F when taken by mouth
- Significant cold symptoms, such as heavy, thick runny nose, severe cough, difficulty breathing, fatigue.
- Diarrhea, vomiting or an upset stomach
- Undiagnosed rash or skin irritation
- Eyes that are red or have a discharge.

Because children often relapse after seeming to recover from an illness, we ask that children be kept home for 24 hours after they have shown any of the symptoms listed.

### **Medical Care**

A school nurse is available during school hours to anyone. **It is the parent’s responsibility to make the nurse aware of any health problems/allergies (chronic or temporary) that may interfere with the child’s performance in school.** The following items are important for all parents to know:

1. *Allergies* – If your child has an allergy, please make arrangements to meet with the Chandler School nurse to discuss the medical conditions and protocol in place in the event of a medical situation. A meeting between the school nurse and the parent must occur for any student with an EpiPen, so that doctor’s orders may be reviewed and a protocol reviewed. Parents are asked to schedule this meeting as close to the start of the school year as possible.
2. *Illness* – If your child is absent due to illness or injury for more than three days, the school nurse should be contacted. **A child must be free of a fever without medication for twenty-four hours before returning to school.**

3. *Reportable Diseases* – If your child is absent because of a communicable disease such as measles, German measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever or Fifth’s disease, you MUST get permission from you doctor or the Board of Health before your child will be re-admitted to school.
4. *Medications* – All medications should ideally be given at home. If it is necessary for medications to be given during the preschool school day, please contact the Chandler School nurse for information on the procedure for dispensing medications. (Procedure can additionally be referenced via Chandler School Handbook on Duxbury Public School website.)
5. *Immunizations* – All children must meet state regulations for immunizations. Each child’s record will be checked, and parents will be notified of a need to update. Please inquire about procedure for students with medical or religious exemptions.
6. *Head Lice* – If you find that your child has head lice, please contact the school nurse. This is kept confidential, but will enable the nurse to check the child’s class as well as siblings and their classes. Your cooperation will help protect all children including your own.
7. If your child should appear ill or be injured while at school, the school nurse will be contacted immediately. If this policy conflicts with your religious beliefs, please speak to your child’s teacher. Every effort will be made to contact you or the person you have designated as an emergency resource person. Any child with significant medical issues should have an agreed upon protocol in effect. Please call this need to our attention and we will schedule a conference to design a protocol. However, in case of an emergency, when parents cannot be reached, the school nurse or administrator in charge will decide to take appropriate action. Emergency contacts should be people who are reachable during the school day.

**School Committee Grievance Procedure Policy for Students, Parents, and Guardians who feel that a regulation has been applied inequitably or unjustly:**

The aggrieved party should attempt remediation through a conference with the teacher involved. The aggrieved party, if dissatisfied, may present his or her grievance to the Principal who after hearing the facts and after consultation with the teacher takes any action he or she thinks is indicated. If the aggrieved party feels that the solution or decision is not agreeable to him or her, he or she may appeal to the Superintendent. The Superintendent, after consultation with the Principal, takes action. (Please consult the Chandler School Handbook for more information regarding the grievance procedure.)

**Duxbury Public Schools Website**

[www.duxbury.k12.ma.us](http://www.duxbury.k12.ma.us)

Please reference the DPS website for district-wide information and Chandler School information, including updated calendar of events, communication from the Superintendent’s Office and School Committee. The Chandler School Handbook can

be accessed via the website and provides comprehensive information for preschool through grade two.

**Home Language**

School publications can be translated into other languages for families whose primary language is one other than English. Requests for translations should be made to the Early Childhood Coordinator.

**Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)**

The SEPAC is a district-wide parent organization supporting parents and guardians of students with disabilities. You can visit the Duxbury Public Schools website and follow SEPAC link for more information.

**Important Telephone Numbers**

Preschool	781-934-7680, prompt 3
Chandler School	781-934-7680
Superintendent of Schools	781-934-7600
Duxbury Special Ed. Office	781-934-7643

***Thank you for sharing your children with us and giving us the opportunity to foster their growth and development. Working together is the best way for us to offer your child a pleasant and exciting memory of his/her early school years!***