

THE CHILDREN'S WAY

Parent Handbook

2016-2017



The Children's Way Parent handbook contains important information regarding school policies pertaining to The Program, Health Care, Schedules and Tuition & Fees.

THE CHILDREN'S WAY

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TCW PARENT HANDBOOK

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The Children's Way
MISSION STATEMENT

The Children's Way educates young children and encourages them to explore and realize their personal potentials.

Our skilled and dedicated staff creates a dynamic play-based curriculum that addresses developmental needs and diverse learning styles.

We value and respect every family within our community.
Collectively authored by TCW Staff, 2006

FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Welcome! We are pleased that you have chosen The Children's Way and look forward to welcoming your family as new members of our community or, as you return for another year. This handbook is designed to be a resource for you throughout the year. It provides an overview of our educational program and includes important information about school policies and procedures. Please keep it handy, and of course, if questions should arise, don't hesitate to let us know.

The Children's Way provides a safe, nurturing and engaging environment that encourages children to develop and explore at their own pace and in their own style. Our highly skilled staff of early childhood professionals guides children to build on their individual strengths and successes, and support them to explore, create and grow with increasing confidence.

Each child's uniqueness is respected and celebrated for the diversity and richness it brings to the classroom and to our school community.

We urge you as parents or guardians to feel a part of The Children's Way. We encourage your participation and interest in your child's school experience and welcome it as an invaluable contribution to our program. Parent involvement is integral to the culture of The Children's Way and is one of the unique qualities that distinguish it among early childhood programs.

Through open and supportive communication, we hope to form a partnership with you that will enable us to understand and address the needs of your child and family. We invite you to ask questions and to share your insights, observations and suggestions. We look forward to sharing an exciting year of growth and discovery with you.

Katy Merrell, MEd
Director

THE CHILDREN'S WAY PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of The Children's Way is to provide a nurturing and stimulating inclusive environment where children can pursue their individual interests through developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

Our curriculum is play-based with open ended process-oriented activities that value self-expression and enhance self esteem. We respect children by valuing play, exploration, discovery and choice. A major focus of the program is community building which fosters both a sense of self, as well as developing values of cooperation and caring in the group.

We are committed to meeting the needs of the whole child, the family and the community at large.

Collectively authored by TCW Staff, 1993

PROGRAM

We pride ourselves in offering a developmentally appropriate curriculum, which means that we acknowledge and appreciate the developmental level and learning style of each child and then provide appropriate opportunities for discovery and growth. Close attention is paid to the process of play in which children make sense of their world and build on their learning and experience. Through play and planned activities the children are able to develop skills, express their creativity, and gain confidence and independence.

Our curriculum and practice reflects the Massachusetts Board of Education *Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences* that is based on the standards for PreK-K of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*. These guidelines structure learning through play and meaningful activities in a developmental sequence. They are intended to provide continuity of curriculum from preschool into kindergarten and to ensure that children are provided with

“experiences that build broad and balanced foundations for learning in all content areas” including English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering, History and Social Science, Health Education and the Arts.

We have five classrooms in which children are grouped in age ranges varying between twelve to eighteen months. Our program serves children ages 2 years to 5 years. Classrooms are staffed at a maximum teacher/student ratio of 1:5 or 1:6. These excellent ratios ensure that teachers, all experienced and highly- trained early childhood professionals, are able to provide the individual attention needed to foster each child's development.

Planning and scheduling are essential elements of creating a program where children feel safe, involved and valued. The daily routine at The Children's Way recognizes young children's need for consistency and predictability, while offering opportunities for spontaneity and flexibility. Within this well-defined, safe and nurturing setting, children increasingly develop the skills and confidence to interact with their peers, make independent choices, explore, create and develop a love of learning.

In these early years, young children are working hard to acquire the complex social skills that are so critical to their development. Teachers support children in this crucial area through an engaging social skills curriculum, modeling language and interactions, and establishing clearly-defined and age- appropriate expectations. Children learn by interacting with their peers as teachers skillfully guide them to problem solve, use their words, self-regulate and communicate their needs and ideas while working with them to build a respectful and caring community within the classroom.

Teachers skillfully assess the needs and learning style of each student and employ a variety of teaching techniques in order to support that child's growth and development. Adaptations are made to activities and methods are modified dependent upon the learning needs and strengths of each individual child. Teachers assess the classroom environment on an on-going basis to ensure that we are creating a positive environment for young children.

Please note: *We do not allow toy weapons of any kind in school.*

The Children's Way, a program of the Wayland Schools Community Programs (WSCP), is a fee-based program under the auspices of the Wayland Public Schools. TCW does not discriminate in providing services to children and

their families, based on religion, cultural heritage, sexual orientation, political beliefs, gender, age or marital status. Our enrollment procedures are consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

INCLUSION

The Children's Way is a program for ALL children where each child is recognized and celebrated as a unique individual. Typically- developing children and children with special needs are integrated in all classrooms. The classroom environment, activities, materials, and teaching methods accommodate children within a wide range of development, learning styles, temperaments and needs. The Inclusion Coordinator along with classroom teachers and specialists in Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy, are part of the educational team. They work with children individually, as well as in small group and classroom settings, and consult with each other on an ongoing basis. This inclusive setting allows for the coordination of services that ensures the consistency necessary to meeting children's needs. Often, typically developing children will accompany children receiving services to a therapy session as a “friend”, thus normalizing the experience as a natural part of their preschool day. Through their experiences at The Children's Way children learn to respect and value the differences among people.

ASSESSING CHILDREN'S GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Assessment of children is on-going and happens daily at The Children's Way.

The Children's Way uses an authentic assessment approach to assessing children's growth and development. Authentic assessment is the practice of evaluating children's progress by using performance- based, realistic and instructionally appropriate indicators. At The Children's Way we use a combination of anecdotal observations, small group record keeping, social observations, teacher created checklists and inventories, children's journals, photographic documentation, work samplings and weekly team discussions called “Kid Talk” for identifying, questioning, evaluating and planning for children's development and progress. Many classrooms also use portfolio assessments as another record of a child's progress of learning. Individual portfolios may include, but are not limited to: drawings, art experiences, dictations, writing samples, answers to questions, multi-step projects,

photographs of group and individual work and experiences, motor skill observations, and work sampling that is reflected of individual, small group and large group experiences.

Results of the daily assessment directly affect curriculum planning: large group, small group and individual as well as teaching methodology and content. Results of assessment equally affect the goals set for individual children. The curriculum planning and goal setting are an integral part of each classroom team's weekly or bi-weekly planning meeting.

Parents are invited to informally communicate with the teachers daily regarding their child's growth and development and are asked to formally share their observations and concerns three times each year; prior to the start of the year in the Student Information Questionnaire, and again in the questionnaires that go to each family at the November and May conference time. Parents are assured that all information regarding their child is strictly confidential. If The Children's Way/Wayland Public Schools is to release/obtain any information regarding a student, parents must provide authorization by signing a *Permission for Wayland Schools to Release/Obtain Information Form*.

The authentic assessment approach used by The Children's Way involves children, families, teachers and therapists, when applicable, in recording and assessing children's growth and development. It allows teachers to evaluate each child individually, accurately and with the lens of looking at the whole child. It encourages an intimate and hands on relationship between the child and teacher. This form of assessment produces an assessment of child growth and development that is a record of how a child learns, thinks, synthesizes information and interacts intellectually, emotionally and socially with others.

ENROLLMENT OPTIONS

The Children's Way offers both half and full day programming. Children may enroll for three, four or five days.

Half Day

The age requirement for the Half Day program is two years nine months by September 1. The hours of the Half-Day program are 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Lunch Bunch

A Lunch Bunch option (11:30 a.m. to 1:00 pm) may be added to a Half Day student's schedule. A student may attend Lunch Bunch for any number of the days that he or she is enrolled in the program. Enrollment in Lunch Bunch is contracted for the school year. Parents provide lunch; a microwave and refrigerator is available in each classroom.

Full Day

The age requirement for the Full Day program is three years by September 1. The minimum hours of the Full Day program are 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. All children enrolled in the Full Day program bring lunch from home.

Extended Day Option for Full Day Students

Extended hours until 4:00 p.m., 5:30p.m. are available. A student may enroll for extended hours on any number of the days that he or she is enrolled in the program.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

1. The Children's Way is open to Wayland residents only with the exception of School Department employees.
2. Returning families, siblings and alumni of our program are guaranteed preference in enrollment for the upcoming year, provided that their application is on file on or before December 1st of the year prior to the Fall of the enrollment year.
3. If a family moves out of Wayland while their child is enrolled, that child may finish out their years at TCW. However, siblings are not awarded an alumnae spot.
4. All families must submit an application AND visit our program before their child can be enrolled in TCW. Applications may be filed before a visit to the program is scheduled.
5. We begin accepting applications for a given year approximately 20 months *prior to* the start of that school year.
6. Applications are dated and placed on a waiting list in the order in which they are received in our office.

7. If you are offered a space and you decline for that year, you may remain on the wait list for the following year, but the date of your application will be changed from the date the application was originally submitted to the date on which the space was declined.
8. If a family withdraws from the program at any time and then wants to re-enroll in TCW, they may go on the wait list but do not retain priority placement as an alumni family.
9. Those families who we are not able to accommodate initially will be notified, and will be asked to indicate their interest in remaining on the waiting list. Throughout the late winter and spring, as enrollment changes, families are contacted from the waiting list to fill vacancies. Applications can be kept active on our waiting list for the following school year and will retain the original submission date.

ENROLLMENT CHANGES

All requests for changes in enrollment should be made to the TCW office directly, not to the classroom teacher. If the Director approves a change, parents will then receive an amended enrollment contract and revised tuition invoice.

Increase in Hours

An increase in hours (i.e. number of days attending, lunch bunch or extended day for full day children) must be contracted for the school year and is available only on a space available basis. *TCW does not offer additional hours or days on an as-needed basis, except in the case of an emergency.*

Reduction in Hours/Withdrawal

*Notification of withdrawal from the program or reduction in enrollment must be submitted in writing no later than **May 1, 2016**. At this point in the enrollment process many classes are full, so a reduction in hours from 1:00 to 11:30 can be easily accommodated but a reduction in hours that would move a child from a Full Day to Half Day schedule may not be possible. After **May 1, 2016**, each TCW parent is obligated under all circumstances to remit the **first tuition payment, due by June 1, 2016**, for the hours specified in his or her contract. After June 1, 2016, written*

*notification of withdrawal or reduced enrollment will be **processed only three times** during the 2016-2017 school year. Written notification must be received in the office no later than the following deadlines: 8/1 for the September and subsequent payments, 10/1 for the November and February payments, 1/1 for the February payment. It is understood that written notification received by these deadline dates will result in an adjustment for the remaining quarterly payments only. An additional fee of \$20.00 per family will be charged for each contract change that involves decreased hours.*

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Both arrival and departure times are critical transition times for children, parents and staff. The adult who drops off and picks up each child must initial "Sign in/ Sign out" sheets twice daily.

Cell Phone Free Zone



**THE CHILDREN'S WAY IS A
CELL PHONE FREE ZONE
CELL PHONES MUST BE TURNED OFF
BEFORE ENTERING THE BUILDING**

Drop-off and pick-up are crucial transition times in your child's day when he/she requires your full attention and support and when there's an opportunity to build ongoing communication between home and school. This policy effectively eliminates the distractions commonly caused by cell phones and helps create a calm and focused atmosphere during daily drop-off and pick-up times. Children, parents and staff each benefit from a smooth transition routine and increased opportunities for shared communication.

Arrival

Please arrive close to your scheduled arrival time each morning.

Arriving on time is an important factor in making your child feel comfortable and secure. Late arrival makes it difficult for your child to enter the group once the morning routine has begun. Frequent late arrivals affect the quality of your child's experience in the program and interrupt curriculum experiences for other children. Timely arrival enables you to talk briefly with staff members, to pass on information about your child and to build a friendly and positive relationship with your child's teachers.

Transition from Home to School

You are encouraged to help your child transition. It is important to figure out what best meets your child's needs. Teachers will gladly work with you to establish a regular drop off routine, which will facilitate an easy transition for your child (and you!).

Some children do best if drop off is short and matter of fact. They transition most easily when they can say goodbye and then get involved on their own, either by observing or participating in what's going on. For some children, having their parent participate in a transition ritual (i.e. reading one story, building one tower, drawing one picture, etc.) enables them to mark their transition from home to school in a very concrete way. It is their way of separating and easing into their day. Many of these children enjoy choosing an activity on their way to school and gain confidence from having a plan in place when they arrive. The key to the effectiveness of this type of transition routine is your adherence to the agreed upon plan. Your child will take comfort in knowing what to expect and will gain confidence from your clarity and consistency. Teachers will assist you in resisting any pleas for "just one more" and will help your child say goodbye, get involved in classroom activities and transition into the morning.

Whatever routine works best for your child, it is important to remember that he/ she is looking to you for the message that you think this is a safe and happy place to be. If you seem sad or ambivalent, either by lingering too long or running in and sneaking out quickly, your child will figure it out and will take the cue from you. If you want to be assured that your child has settled in before leaving the building, you are welcome to wait a few moments in The Children's Way office and a staff member will be happy to check on your child in the classroom. Also, please feel free to call school at any time during the day to hear how your child is doing. Please be assured that if your child's teacher feels concerned about your child, he or she will call to let you know.

Departure

It is essential that children be picked up at their regularly scheduled time. Children are often tired at the end of their day and need your support to say good-bye, gather their belongings and leave for home. Establishing a clear, predictable routine at pick up time helps both parents and children experience a smooth transition from school to home. Teachers are always available to assist parents in creating a successful plan. Lingering in the classroom or on the playground creates confusion for a child who has

been anticipating your arrival and is awaiting closure to his/her school day. Be sure to let the teacher know that you are taking your child, initial the sign-out sheet and check your child's cubby and your parent mailbox for messages.

Late Pick-Up Fees:

TCW Late Fee Policy is as follows: After the first late arrival, staff will verbally relay the late fee policy to a child's parent/guardian. After the second late arrival parents/guardians will receive a copy of the Late Fee Form. After that, for all subsequent late arrivals, parent/guardians will be charged late fees for each time their child is picked up past their regularly scheduled pick-up time. **\$10.00 fine for the first 15 minutes or part thereof past the child's regularly scheduled pick-up time, and \$1.00 per minute beyond this time.**

Parental Authorization for Pick Up

PLEASE NOTE: Teachers will release your child only to you or to those adults whom you have specifically authorized, even if the teacher is well acquainted with the individual.

Parents may designate adults to pick up their child in the following ways: preferably, by a note or Alternative Pick Up Form; verbally, over the phone, via email or in person; or by listing individuals on a child's Emergency Information Card. Parents should notify staff of any changes in daily pick-up arrangements so that they are aware of any change in your child's regular routine. Alternative Pick-Up Forms are available from your child's teacher or the office, and must be filled out when any person, other than the known parents or guardians, picks up a child. Picture ID will be requested when the identity of the person picking up is unknown to the staff.

Absences

If your child will be absent from school, please call the school at 508-358-7072 before 8:30 A.M. A message may be left on the voice mail 24 hours a day. We appreciate notification of absences.

SAFETY

Security System

Access to The Children's Way is limited by a security system that includes strategic placement of security cameras, computer programed locked doors, monitor screens and a key card system for staff. Similar to other school buildings in the Wayland Public Schools, parents have access to the building for a half an hour at key drop-

off and pick-up times throughout the day. At all other times, anyone wanting access to the program either by the elevator or stairs, must press a buzzer to request entry. At that point, staff can see the person via the monitor and also speak to him/her. Staff then decide whether to “buzz” the person in, or refuse entry.

Parking Lot Safety

Ensuring the safety of our children is our foremost concern. We focus much attention on establishing and enforcing consistent safety procedures and require that all parents abide by the rules for safety. As adults, we are responsible for modeling for our children the importance of following safety procedures. We must continually reinforce appropriate behavior and ensure that children are aware of the serious need for caution.

Along with The Children's Way, the Town Building houses several Town offices, the School Department, the Senior Center and often hosts various meetings and events. Consequently, there are times during the day when the traffic in the parking lot increases and there are many people coming to and from the building.

It is essential that parents are constantly vigilant and adhere to the following safety procedures:

- Let your child know that it is the adult's job to keep children safe and, therefore, you are going to help him/her follow the safety rules.
- Review the safety rules with your child and practice following them.
- A child may never walk in the parking lot unaccompanied by an adult. Hold your child's hand, or have them hold onto or sit in a stroller whenever you are walking in the parking lot
- Always walk within the designated crosswalks and walkways.
- Be sure to instruct children to stay within your sight and to keep a hand on your car, while you are helping another child into his/her seat.
- Always STOP at the STOP signs when driving in and out of the parking lot. When crossing, do not assume that a car is going to stop at the sign. It is common to see cars driving right through the STOP sign.

- Be aware and follow the directional arrows that are painted at the start of each row.
- Always expect the unexpected! Be alert to the possibility of a child running out from between cars.
- REMEMBER: **Handicap parking spaces** are reserved for cars with handicap stickers/plates *at all times*. There is never a time when this regulation is not in effect.
- Parking in the **fire lane**, to the left of the playground, is prohibited.

Elevator Use

The elevator is available primarily for use by parents with strollers and those children & adults needing assistance.

It is TCW policy that only adults may press the elevator button. Please be aware that there is a "**Push to Call**" button directly at child level, which summons the Wayland Police immediately whenever it is pressed.

****It is the responsibility of parents to monitor their children at all times to prevent police from being called unnecessarily****

Playground Rules

The playground is designated for use by The Children's Way. For the safety of all children, it is closed to the public whenever it is occupied by TCW students and staff.

Once a child is signed-out by an adult, that adult is solely responsible for monitoring the behavior and safety of that child. **TCW staff who remain on the playground are responsible only for those children who are assigned to their care.**

Thank you for reinforcing the following rules when you are on the playground with your child:

1. Children may swing sitting or on their stomach. No standing or twisting.
2. Children must go down slides feet first, either on their bottoms, stomachs or backs.

3. Children's hands must be free of toys or other objects when climbing, running or using equipment.
4. Chasing games are allowed only if the children who are being chased want to be chased and understand what happens when they are caught.
5. Sticks and rocks must stay on the ground and may not be thrown or held in a child's hand when running.
6. No child may tell another child that he or she cannot play on any piece of equipment.
7. Every child is responsible for helping to clean up the playground when asked to do so by a teacher.
8. One child may use the overhead ladder at a time.
9. No more than four children may play on the seesaw and must be seated at all times.
10. Only adults are allowed in the shed.

sweater or sweatshirt, skirt or pants, socks, underwear, tee shirt, etc. (extra, if in process of potty training)

- An additional pair of underwear and socks
- A pair of sneakers or rubber soled shoes for large motor activities.
- A package of diapers and wipes (if needed)

To Leave in the Rest Box

- Naptime blanket
- 2 labeled crib sheets (*We send a sheet home each Friday to be washed and returned.*)
- Quiet nap toys

Lunch

- Lunch may be brought in a lunch box, paper bag, or plastic container. A refrigerator and microwave are available as needed, in each classroom.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

Lunch suggestions:

Fresh fruit, raw vegetables, yogurt, cheese, sandwiches, soup, milk, leftovers, fruit juice boxes, crackers or pretzels.

Packing multiple choices in your child's lunchbox can end up being overwhelming for him or her and often can result in "grazing" rather than eating a meal. We recommend that you only pack the quantity of food that you realistically anticipate your child will eat.

If you choose to include sweets in your child's lunch, please limit it to only one item. Teachers will encourage children to eat their "healthy food" first.

Snack

Healthy snacks are provided daily by the program and include fresh fruits and vegetables, cheese, yogurt, hummus and whole grain carbohydrates. All students receive a morning snack; full-day students, 8-3:00, have an afternoon snack; extended day students, 8-4:00 and 8-5:30 are offered snack after 4:00 p.m.

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

PLEASE LABEL ALL BELONGINGS WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.

To Be Brought Daily

- Appropriate seasonal outdoor wear is required, i.e. raincoats, rain boots, sweater, snow pants, boots, hats, mittens and jackets, etc.

We go outside EVERY day, barring exceptional weather. Even in very rainy weather, we may walk outside.

- Large bag or backpack that can accommodate artwork, hats, mittens, lunch box, etc.
- Rubber soled shoes must be worn daily or be available. NO sandals, clogs, jellies, moccasins or shoes that slip off the feet easily may be worn on the playground.

To Leave in the Cubby

- One complete change of clothing, i.e. seasonal shirt,

TOYS FROM HOME

For some children, bringing a toy from home is a comforting way to ease the transition from home to school. Teachers recognize this need and help each child find a successful way to enter into classroom activities and interact with peers. Gradually, as children adjust to the classroom and gain confidence, the need for transition objects lessens. Teachers are attuned to this and employ strategies that support the student but avoid the object becoming a focal point that actually interferes with a child's experience. Often, toys from home begin to dominate play and create conflict and issues around sharing. When necessary, teachers will establish clear guidelines for toys from home in the classroom. Parents' support of these guidelines is crucial to the success of the transition routines that each classroom puts in place. *In general, if your child requests to bring a toy from home to school, we ask that you limit it to one toy of reasonable size i.e. that a child can easily carry him/herself.*

REST TIME

Massachusetts State Law mandates that rest time be provided for children who attend an early childhood program for more than four hours per day. Therefore, for those children enrolled in our full day program (i.e. minimum of 8:00-3:00), rest time is an integral part of our schedule.

The program provides a rest mat for each child. All children rest on their mat for the required forty-five minutes to one hour. This ensures that children have the stamina they need to actively participate in the remainder of their day's activities.

Children who nap may sleep until they awaken on their own, or will be awakened by teachers at the end of rest time. After forty to forty-five minutes, children who do not nap are offered quiet activities determined by the teacher. Parents should provide two crib sized sheets and a small blanket for their child. Sheets will be sent home weekly for laundering. Rest mats are sanitized weekly by classroom staff.

FIELD TRIPS

Walking field trips to the Police and Fire Departments, Library, Post Office and local businesses are scheduled by classrooms to coincide with curriculum themes. Teachers

extend children's learning by exploring the natural settings that surround us. The school will let parents know in advance and obtain specific written permission for each field trip.

Teachers depend on parent chaperones to help ensure the safety and enjoyment of the children. Volunteers are counted on to be available to all the children as needed, and therefore, we must require that *babies and other siblings not accompany parent chaperones on field trips*. If a child does not regularly attend school on the day of a field trip, he or she is welcome to participate if accompanied by an adult.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Essential to the philosophy of TCW is establishing an open, mutually supportive relationship between parents and staff. As we have learned, effective communication between parents and teachers is essential to providing an optimum environment for children to learn and grow.

We work closely together sharing insights and information, problem solving and setting goals to assist us in understanding and addressing the needs of each child. Teachers encourage you to let them know if there is anything going on at home that might affect your child's experience at school [i.e. parent(s) traveling, family illness, death, a change in routine, house guests, etc.]. This information helps them be sensitive to your child's needs and to interpret possible changes in your child's behavior or demeanor.

Please don't hesitate to contact a teacher at any time, if you have any questions or concerns. Feel free to call or write a note, and your child's teacher will gladly get back to you. Twice yearly conferences, fall and spring, will be scheduled at your convenience to discuss your child's school experiences.

You will receive regular newsletters from your child's teachers informing you about classroom news, and a weekly TCW newsletter will provide a calendar and update on program news.

Please check the classroom parent board and the information boards in the hallways for additional information about the program and community.

As with all the Wayland Public Schools, up to date breaking news can be found on the school website tcw.wayland.k12.ma.us. You can also find the TCW Calendar, the Director's Page, information on the Parent Organization, the TCW Library, Classroom Newsletters, and a Parent's Page full of handy information.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement is a key component of our program. Parents are invited and encouraged to visit at any time. Activities such as sharing a special interest or reading a story to the children will enrich your visit and our classrooms. Teachers are happy to talk to you about your visit and plan a time for you to come in. Please know that you are welcome!!

Volunteering

As stated in the Enrollment Contract, each family agrees to contribute a minimum of two hours of volunteer activity per year. The Parent Participation Form sent to parents in the spring, describes varied opportunities for involvement that are geared to accommodate parents' individual interests and schedules. You may choose to volunteer your time in many different ways. The following is a list of some of the possibilities available for parents to become involved:

- **Room Parent** Help create a sense of community among classroom families, maintain ongoing communication with teachers, and coordinate parent support/volunteers for classroom needs. A Room Parent is asked to attend the Parent Organization meeting every month (alternating with Co-Room Parent).
- **Staff Appreciation Events** Help organize, set up, clean up or bake/purchase refreshments for the fall breakfast; mid-winter surprise & spring luncheon/dinner.
- **Library Support** Assist in keeping up with our lending library, logging and shelving returned books.
- **Fundraising Committee** Help execute the fall mums sale, annual party, and other fun events to help support The Fertig Fund for staff development, TCW scholarships, program improvements, etc.

- **Online Support** Learn and use the TPO online communication system – MySchoolAnywhere. Maintain our parent database, send out communications and trouble-shoot, etc.
- **Movie Night** Help set up, clean up, pick up pizza, water and popcorn for one/some of our 4 movie nights throughout the year. Really fun event for the family!
- **TCW Book Swap** Help collect, sort, and display the books donated and purchased in our ongoing TPO book swap
- **Treasurer** Help oversee our bank accounts, communicate with the board regarding budgets and funds available, manage paypal.
- **Event Publicity** Create flyers, posters and emails to alert the community of all our events, including annual fundraising party.
- **Parent Enrichment** Help organize 4 parent enrichment evenings. Work with director and specialists to choose interesting and meaningful topics.
- **TPO Board Member** We hold meetings once a month, alternating between mornings and evenings. You don't have to be at every meeting but regular attendance is helpful. The more participation we get, the stronger our community is!

Do you ... sing or play an instrument, know a lot about bugs, know how to juggle, drive a backhoe, etc? Are you.... a fire fighter, doctor, carpenter, artist, etc? We'd love to know if you have a particular interest, occupation or skill that you'd be willing to share.

Parent Organization

The Children's Way Parent Organization meets monthly and welcomes your participation. This is a unique opportunity for you to become involved in your child's school experience and to meet other parents. Ideas for family events, fund raising, staff support and other school-wide issues are discussed. Everyone is invited.

The Parent Organization is organized by specific positions described below:

Co-Chairs: Set monthly meeting agendas; facilitate Parent Organization meetings, assist Director in creating TCW calendar of events; act as a liaison between parents and TCW staff; oversee various chairpersons and room parents; attend and help with events. The chairs serve a broad range of roles throughout the year and facilitate assignment of board members for the following year.

Fundraising Coordinator Work with parents to set fundraising goals and organize events as determined. Coordinate all aspects of the events and oversee volunteers.

Staff Appreciation Coordinator Oversee the planning for a casual staff breakfast in the fall, a mid-winter surprise for staff, and the end of the year Staff Appreciation Luncheon or Dinner.

Library Coordinator Coordinate weekly volunteers to maintain the TCW library and report overdue books to the Administrative Assistant.

Room Parents The Room Parents work to create a sense of community within individual classrooms. They begin the year by organizing a back-to-school class play date at the TCW playground immediately before school starts or during the first week. Additionally, the room parents coordinate a relaxed family event for their class, early in the school year. This event allows parents the opportunity to get to know each other and begin to connect faces with the names on the class list. A parent-only event is also organized later in the year. Room Parents coordinate parent support and solicit volunteers for classroom-specific needs and school wide events, organize an emergency telephone chain for the class. One Room Parent per class is requested to attend monthly PARENT ORGANIZATION meetings

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS AT TCW

Our goal throughout the year is to provide a calm and consistent environment for the children by maintaining "life as usual" at TCW. We try to avoid the frenzy that often accompanies holidays by continuing our regular daily routines and varied curricular activities that reflect and engage children's interests. While we do not make holidays the focus of our curriculum, we do acknowledge that holidays are a large part of children's lives and therefore, encourage ways to celebrate the rich differences among us. Children and families are always welcome to share their traditions and customs with the class. Teachers

plan curriculum activities that include something related to a holiday such as painting with evergreen branches, talking about and exploring light and dark, cooking foods from different cultures, etc.

Gift Disclosure Policy

As per the policy of the Wayland Public Schools, parents are discouraged from giving personal gifts to TCW teachers.

The Wayland School Committee has revised its policy on "School Gifts" in accordance with the State's *Conflict of Interest Law*. As such, staff members cannot accept a personal gift from an individual family or group of families whose value exceeds \$50.00. State law provides that all gifts in excess of \$50.00 per year to a public employee are improper and must be reported to the State Ethics Commission. In addition, staff is now required to record all gifts with an estimated value and submit this information to his/her supervisor. Gifts of \$200.00 or more to either individual schools or classrooms must be presented to the School Committee for approval and acceptance.

Birthdays

Birthdays in general can very often be overwhelming for young children. Therefore, at school, children's birthdays are acknowledged with simple activities such as decorating a paper crown, singing *Happy Birthday* and taking a birthday photo. Parents are welcome to provide a birthday snack for their child's class, if they choose; we ask that they consult with the classroom teachers when planning to do so.

Birthday parties can be very sensitive issues for children and sometimes, also for parents. Therefore, we request that parents **PLEASE DO NOT DISTRIBUTE PARTY INVITATIONS AT SCHOOL.**

HEALTH CARE POLICY

The only way that we can control the spread of disease in this group setting is if each of us takes responsibility for limiting the possibility of exposure. It is imperative that each parent assume this responsibility and understand the critical role he or she plays in ensuring that we maintain a healthy and safe environment for children and adults.

A sick child is better off in the care of parents and in the comfort of his or her own home. If your child is sick at home the evening before or the morning of school, your child should be kept at home.

Please Note: If your child becomes ill at school, you will be contacted immediately and asked to pick up your child. If parents or guardians cannot be reached, we will call individuals listed on the Emergency Information Card. Your child will rest quietly in the Director's Office until someone arrives. **IT IS VITAL THAT CHILDREN WHO ARE ILL BE PICKED UP AS PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE.**

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH SPECIFIC SYMPTOMS AND DISEASES

It is important to remember that your child's day at school requires a tremendous amount of physical and emotional energy. A child who is exhausted from an illness and is still not quite himself does not have the stamina to return to school.

Colds

Keep child home during first stage of severe cold symptoms. These include yellow or green nasal discharge, runny eyes, lethargy, headache, fever or persistent cough.

Fever

Any child with a fever of 100 or higher must not attend school and must not return until **free of fever for 24 hours** and exhibits ability to **maintain normal level of activity**. This means **your child must remain at home for the full day following a day with a fever.**

Sore Throat

A child with a continuous sore throat should be checked for strep infection. Symptoms of strep throat are red, sore throat, fever, severe headache, and/or rashes. *Strep infection* can be present without evidence of fever. Children with strep may return to the program **24 hours after beginning antibiotic medication** and if they can **maintain their usual level of activity**. This means **your child must remain at home a full day after receiving medication.** Parents should notify school immediately so others can be informed of the exposure.

Conjunctivitis

Very contagious eye irritation. Symptoms are redness of eye lining, swelling and pus in eyes. **Antibiotic must be**

administered for 24 hours before child can return to program. This means **your child must remain at home for a full day after receiving medication.** Parents should notify school immediately so others can be informed of the exposure.

Vomiting/ Intestinal Flu

Children with intestinal flu or active vomiting, for any reason, must remain at home until the **vomiting has stopped for 24 hours; the child resumes normal eating habits and is able to maintain normal level of activity.** This means **your child must remain at home for the full day following a day with any vomiting.** Parents should notify the school immediately so that families can be notified.

Diarrhea/ Intestinal Infection

Child should be kept at home **until stool returns to normal for 24 hours.** This means **your child must remain at home for the full day following a day with diarrhea.** Diarrhea is a sign of intestinal infection and it is contagious.

Impetigo

This is a highly contagious skin infection characterized by crusted sores and a red rash. It often appears on the face. Treatment is usually a topical antibiotic and child may return to school after **24 hours on medication.** This means **your child must remain at home for the full day after receiving medication.**

Pediculosis (Head Lice)

Lice are small insects about the size of a sesame seed, which are highly communicable among children. As they move quickly and shy away from light, diagnosis is most often made on the basis of finding nits (eggs). Nits are tiny yellowish-white, opaque oval specks attached to hair shafts, which do not blow away.

Help us limit the spread of lice. Please notify the Director immediately if your child or a sibling has lice. Children in your child's class will be checked and their parents notified.

If a child is checked at school and signs of infestation are found:

1. Parent will be called and encouraged to take the child home for treatment by shampoo (prescribed by physician or pharmacist) and nit comb.
2. When treatments are complete, the child should be checked for any remaining nits. These should be removed BEFORE he/she returns to school. Re-entry will be handled by the Director on a

case by case basis. For detailed information about head lice go to the following website www.cdc.gov/lice/head/factsheet.html

Rashes

Non-specific rashes on any part of a child's body should be **checked by a physician to determine potential for contagion.** If it is determined that the rash is evidence of a communicable disease such as Fifth's Disease, parents should notify the school immediately so that families can be notified.

Chicken Pox

This is very contagious and usually appears first as small, red dots on the front and back of torso or behind the ears. **A child must be kept home for one week from the initial outbreak and for 24 hours from when last pox (yellow blister) has scabbed over.** This means **your child must remain at home for the full day after the last yellow blister has turned into a scab.** Parents should notify school immediately so that others can be informed of the exposure.

Ticks

Parents will be called if a tick is attached to a child's skin. If a parent cannot be located, the pediatrician will be called for further instructions.

ALLERGIES

Parents must provide detailed information regarding a child's signs of allergic reaction on the **Emergency Health Care Information form.** This form, with a photo of the child, will be posted on the classroom refrigerator, and all staff will be notified of the information.

Teachers will work closely with parents to make the classroom safe for each child. All parents in a classroom will be notified of any food allergies that exist so that they can be aware of this if providing any snacks for the class.

Peanut Butter Policy

The Children's Way does not provide peanut butter or products containing nuts as a snack in any of its classrooms. Children are allowed, however, to bring peanut butter in their lunches. In the case that a child in the class is allergic to peanut butter, a separate "peanut free" table will be set up at lunchtime and Teachers will closely monitor hand washing and cleaning of all surfaces.

Visiting Pet Policy

Due to common allergies, dogs and cats may not be brought into the school building or onto the playground. If your child requests to bring any other pet to school, it must be cleared by the Classroom Teacher and the Children's Way Director.

BROKEN BONES

Parents must provide written doctor's orders specifying any required restrictions or accommodations for a child to participate in the TCW program and include the time period for which they apply. Parents should contact the Director before a child returns to school.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Parents will be informed if their child has been exposed to others with a contagious disease. Children are encouraged to wash their hands after toileting and before snack and lunchtime. Tables and surfaces are disinfected throughout the day. Priority attention is given to keeping toys, play areas, food and sink areas clean and sanitized.

It is crucial for children to wear comfortable closed shoes in order to run, climb and explore the environment freely and safely. Clogs, open back shoes, flip flops and sandals do not provide appropriate support and protection and are uncomfortable and problematic, especially when children play on the wood fiber on our playground. ***Please be sure that your child always has a pair of sneakers or shoes at school.***

Staff members are trained in CPR, First Aid, and EPIPEN administration. If a child needs care beyond First Aid, 911 will be called and the child will be transported to the hospital with the emergency personnel. Parents or guardians will be called immediately.

Emergency numbers and fire drill routes are posted in each room.

The Wayland Fire Department routinely calls fire drills. Children are told what the procedures will be when this occurs and have the opportunity to practice the routine.

Staff members are legally mandated reporters of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Social Service. This information is documented and kept on file. The Director will speak to the family about the procedure but is not

obligated to do so.

MEDICATION PROCEDURES

*All medications must be given directly to a classroom teacher by an adult. **No medication should be placed in a child's lunch box or school bag.***

Prescription Medication

The following procedures must be adhered to should a child require prescription medication during school hours:

- The medication must come in the original prescription container labeled with the child's name and dosage. This serves as a physician's authorization.
- A parent must sign The Children's Way Medication Authorization Form for each episode of illness, before any staff member can administer medication to his or her child.
- Staff members will document the dosage and time medicine was administered. *Note:* Medicine may be refrigerated if necessary.

Non-Prescription Medication

Parents and staff must follow the steps outlined below when administering non-prescription medication to students enrolled at TCW:

- Medication must be in the original container.
- Non-prescription medication will be administered only when accompanied by Medication Authorization Forms signed by the parent and physician for each episode of illness
- Staff will document the dosage and time medication is administered.

Note: Medicine may be refrigerated if necessary. Medication Authorization Forms are available in the TCW office.

Epipens

Epipens must be provided in the original prescription container along with a Parent/ Guardian consent form for Medication Administration. **We request that the teacher be given 2 Epipens.** One will be kept clearly marked on top of the classroom refrigerator, and one will be kept in the First Aid bag that goes outdoors daily with each classroom.

PLEASE NOTE THE EXPIRATION DATE on the Epipen and be sure that TCW always has a current set of Epipens for your child.

APPLICATION OF SUNSCREEN AND INSECT REPELLENT

Parents should apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent to their child before they arrive at The Children's Way. TCW staff will apply sunscreen or insect repellent only when a child has been in school for hours exceeding the recommended number of hours for reapplication. A parent must sign a TCW "Sunscreen/Insect Repellent Release Form", available from teachers, before any staff member may apply the product to a child.

All products must arrive in their original containers.

SCHEDULES

SCHOOL CALENDAR

TCW follows the calendar of the Wayland Public Schools with the addition of one closing for a staff professional day in January.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

TCW will be closed whenever the Wayland Public Schools are closed because of inclement weather or an emergency.

For snow days or emergency closings, please listen to your local radio and television stations.

If the Wayland Public Schools have a delayed opening, TCW will also have a delayed opening. **The delayed opening time will be calculated based on an 8:00 a.m. start for ALL classes! A 90 minute delay = a 9:30 a.m. start. A 2 hour delay = a 10:00 a.m.**

If it is determined during the day that there is a need for school to be closed early, parents will be called. This decision is made only when it is a matter of children and staff safety and it is expected that parents will respond as quickly as possible to arrange for their child to be picked up.

*****In the case of severe weather, please allow additional commuting time for the pick-up of your child.***

TUITION & FEES

DEPOSIT

A **NONREFUNDABLE** \$450.00 deposit must be submitted with a signed enrollment contract to secure a space in the program. The total amount of \$450.00 is **nonrefundable under all circumstances**. \$400 of this deposit is applied toward the last tuition payment. Families with more than one child pay only one \$50.00 registration fee.

TUITION PAYMENT

Tuition charges are due in four payments on **June 1, September 1, November 1 and February 1**. *Please note: you will only receive a statement in April/May and will not be billed for each payment.*

All tuitions are due and payable regardless of holidays, snow days or children's absences.

Checks should be made payable to: WSCP with TCW noted in the memo section.

Checks may be brought to TCW office or mailed to TCW, 41 Cochituate Road, Wayland, MA 01778.

Pay online: tcw.wayland.k12.ma.us

TUITION LATE FEES

A Warning Notice will be sent to parents by the Account Coordinator after the first late payment. Subsequently, a late fee of \$5.00/day will be assessed for tuition payments that are 5 days overdue.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Parent Organization has established a scholarship fund to provide financial assistance to Children's Way families. Parents should contact the Director regarding criteria and the application process. The Director solely reviews applications and awards scholarships. Strict confidentiality is maintained. Parents interested in more information should contact the Director.