

**Rockville Presbyterian Cooperative  
Nursery School (RPCNS)**

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# **Parent Handbook**

School Year 2025-26

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## Who We Are

### History:

The Rockville Presbyterian Church, along with interested parents, began our cooperative program in 1963. In 1969, the State of Maryland Department of Education granted full accredited status, signified with a Certificate of Approval, to our school as a non-public nursery school. Currently, we are licensed and inspected by the Maryland State Department of Education's Office of Child Care. We separately incorporated from the Rockville Presbyterian Church as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in 1985. Since that time, we have been a non-religious nursery school that welcomes children of all faiths, nationalities and races.

### Purpose, Philosophy and Program:

RPCNS is committed to providing a high-quality early childhood education program through a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the child's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. We believe that a child, given the opportunity to be challenged and stimulated in a classroom with respect, encouragement, and guidance, will respond by learning to trust her/himself, those around him/her, and the world.

Our philosophy begins with the child and emphasizes two goals: to foster independence by helping each child develop the skills needed to begin to function in the wider community; and to support a young child's innate curiosity by instilling a foundation for and love of learning. Using a combination of free play and teacher guided activities, we encourage, motivate and support the child through different experiences and new discoveries while respecting individual needs, choices, and readiness. Each child is given the opportunity to develop a sense of mastery through his/her own accomplishments, thereby allowing the child to build his/her self-esteem and feelings of self-worth.

The immediate world of a preschooler is his/her family. Nursery school is often the first introduction to the outside world with regard to how things outside their home are structured, learning to share with non-family members, developing rudimentary conflict resolution skills, and to respect others' different needs. This is a time of transition: children progress from relationships with only family members to those that include classmates, from individual awareness to effective social and group interactions. Being a co-operative school, we welcome and are organized for our member families to be directly involved in their child's first school experience. The cooperative model also allows for parents to carry through learning from school to home and vice versa. Children who are given the safety of a secure, supportive environment with both familiar parents and new people, learn to master this transition smoothly. We see development as an ongoing process made richer by having all of the child's significant people in life involved, working together.

Our school's curriculum provides many opportunities for creative experiences, cognitive engagement, small and large muscle activities, music, cultural enrichment presentations from our membership, nature and science activities, and field trips chosen to enhance and support what is being taught in the classroom. The children are exposed to many interesting activities, each child is encouraged to participate at his/her own level with no pressure to perform.

### **Organizational Structure:**

The school is organized and run by a Board of Directors, comprised of current parent members in good standing. This Board is headed by a Chairperson (or two Co-Chairs). The Board of Directors hires well-qualified teachers, and a Director who develops and provides an age-appropriate curriculum for our students. Board of Directors meetings are currently held monthly and any parent member is welcome to attend. The agenda for each meeting will be posted approximately one week before the meeting. Meeting minutes will be circulated to all member families. The other governing documents for our school are our *Constitution and By-laws* and our *Policy Manual*.

### **Getting Ready for School**

In order for a child to be admitted to the school, there are forms which must be completed and returned to the Admissions Coordinator via the Jovial portal, prior to the start of school, keeping RPCNS in compliance with COMAR regulations. If your child has allergies or asthma there is an additional required form which can be obtained from our Admissions Coordinator to accompany your child's epi-pen or other medication. If you have a younger child who will be using our sibling nursery while you co-op, we have forms for that, too. RPCNS' Board of Directors may add additional requirements, such as those pertaining to our COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies, which will be clearly conveyed to membership.

#### **Required Forms for an enrolled student:**

- Application and fee
- Maryland Immunization Certificate
- Maryland Health Inventory Form (OCC 1215)
- Emergency Information Form (OCC 1214)
- RPCNS "All About My Child"
- RPCNS Photo Release Form

#### **Required Forms for each Co-oper:**

- *Membership Agreement* form, signed
- *Employee Medical Report* (OCC 1204) - is required for all persons co-oping in the classroom.
- *Release of Information* (OCC 1260) – *Child Care Facilities* is required for all persons co-oping in the classroom. If more than one person in a family is planning to co-op then we need to have both forms for each adult on file. If RPCNS is missing just one of these forms the school can be closed. This form must be notarized.
- *Fingerprinting Receipt* (provided by AIS) is required for all persons co-oping in the classroom
- *Agency Privacy Requirement Statement* form
- *RPCNS Classroom Set-up & Workday* form
- *RPCNS Job Preference* form
- *RPCNS Co-op Schedule* form
- *Auto Insurance Declaration Page*
- *Basic Health & Safety Training Completion Certificate*
- Copy of your *Driver's License*

**Student Orientation:**

On the first day of school your child's teacher will orient her students to the classroom and the structure of the day, and our Co-Chair(s) host a gathering for the parent members which provides an opportunity to get to know each other and address any questions or concerns. Our two year-old students have a phased in schedule for the first couple of weeks of school; each successive week is an additional half hour longer, until the class duration is a full 2.5 hours. In January the class day will be lengthened to 3.25 hours, the same class length as the Threes and Fours.

Our goal is to foster emotionally independent and well-adjusted students. Those parent members who are not co-oping may make arrangements to spend time in your child's class with your child's teacher. If separation issues arise we will work very closely with you, the parent, and your child.

**Student Clothing:**

The children should wear comfortable, play clothes suitable for painting, working with play dough, playing with classmates, climbing on the playground, etc., and which allow for independent use of the bathroom. However, the child should be appropriately dressed at all times (i.e. wearing undergarments and seasonally appropriate attire; for example: tights/leggings in cold weather if wearing a dress). Sneakers or shoes with rubber soles are preferred.

The children will play outdoors whenever possible. Unless it is raining or snowing heavily, extremely cold or hot, assume that the children will have outdoor playtime and dress your child accordingly (e.g., in the winter have your child wear long sleeves, sweater, coat, hat, gloves or mittens, tights or leggings for girls if wearing a dresses). When the weather appears questionably wet or there's snow on the ground, always bring your child's boots to school. Any outer clothing which the child will take off when inside (i.e., coats, mittens, sweater, jackets, etc.), should be labeled clearly with their name.

**Student Backpack:**

All children should bring a backpack containing a change of clothes and shoes which are seasonally appropriate and the child's current size. If your child is using diapers then please keep a supply of them in your child's emergency backpack, as well as wipes and a changing pad. We recommend checking your child's backpack frequently, to make sure everything in it is as intend, and that it still fits your child. If your child has soiled their clothing and has been changed, their soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag on your child's coat hook. Also, refer to the information provided to you from our Admissions Coordinator in the Enrollment Packet regarding what you should keep in your child's backpack from the perspective of an extended emergency.

**Parental Responsibilities****Financial Responsibilities:**

Once your child has been accepted, you've signed and returned your Membership Agreement and paid your Tuition Installment, you are obligated to pay the remainder of your child's Tuition, and their Activity Fee. Tuition payments are due the first of the month. If tuition is not paid by noon of the 7th day, a late fee will be levied, per week. (When the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the month falls on a Saturday, Sunday, holiday or during a school break then tuition is due by the first your child's class meets when school resumes.) Checks returned for non-sufficient funds will be

fined. Any fines related to the incompleteness of the Parent Work Days will be levied at the conclusion of each Parent Work Days session. See the *Membership Agreement, Constitution & Bylaws* and *Policy Manual* for further details.

**Classroom Responsibilities for Co-oping Members:**

Please refer to the write-up sent to you in your Enrollment Packet titled *Co-oper Information* for further explanations and discussions on co-oping in your child's classroom.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic our goal is to provide as safe an environment as possible for all involved. Towards that end where your child's class checks-in and dismisses from will be communicated to you. When your child is not with his/her teacher then you are responsible for your child's supervision.

*Morning Arrival...*PROMPTNESS IS IMPERATIVE! We encourage all parents to arrive 5 to 10 minutes prior to the start of school, which is 9:45 a.m. Co-oping parents must arrive fifteen minutes before the beginning of class. The "A" parent works with the teacher to set up for the class. The "B" parent looks after not only their own child but also the "A" co-oper's child, and greets children as they arrive. (All parents are expected to remain with their children until the teacher takes them into the classroom.) The "Stand-by" parent is to check with the Co-Chair to make sure that all the "A" and "B" co-ops have arrived for all the classes scheduled to meet that day, before leaving the school.

*Afternoon Dismissal...*Parents are to wait in the area designated by your child's teacher (please do not wait right outside your child's classroom door) until dismissal. Children will be dismissed to their parent (or designated person), officially transferring responsibility for the child from the teacher to the parent. If your child will be attending After Care or is enrolled in an Extended Day Program, your child's teacher will make sure your child gets to where your child should be going next, and you pick up your child when that program has concluded.

*Co-oping...*As a member of RPCNS you have committed to working in your child's classroom, functioning as the teacher's assistant on a regularly scheduled basis. The Master Co-oping Schedule is generated approximately once a month, and posted a week or two prior to the next month. A copy of the schedule is posted outside each classroom door, posted on the main information bulletin board in the Hallway across from the water fountains, and distributed to each member family via email as part of the monthly Parent Connection. You may request to receive this information in paper form.

If there is a day you know of, in advance, which prohibits you from co-oping, please notify the Co-op Scheduler as soon as possible. If something comes up after the schedule has been distributed, requiring you to switch with another parent in your child's class, notify the co-chairs, make sure the change is written on the Master Co-oping Schedule, the schedule posted outside your child's classroom, and that you've notified your child's teacher. You **MUST** find a substitute co-oper. If your child (or you) become ill the morning you are scheduled to co-op, you must arrange for a substitute co-oper as soon as possible. We provide you with a school directory with contact information to facilitate this situation. If no one in your child's class is available to co-op for you, then you are to call the parents in another class. You are **NOT** to use the Stand-by person

unless a substitute can be found for the Stand-by co-oper. Please be sure to make-up the co-oping time you owe your substitute. Also remember to consider the Sibling Nursery users (indicated on the Master Co-oping Schedule with asterisks after their name). The adult:child ratio in the nursery is 1 adult:3 children. If another child must be added to the Sibling Nursery, please make sure you have made the appropriate arrangements with the Parent Services Coordinator.

*Can my infant be in the classroom with me when I co-op?* It is against OCC regulations to have your infant in the classroom when you are co-oping in your older child's class. We have a nursery in our school for younger siblings staffed by fellow parent members. You are welcome and encouraged to use our nursery, or if you prefer, make your own infant care arrangements while you are co-oping. Confer with the co-op scheduler as to the best way to manage a maternity leave and your co-oping obligations.

*Who can co-op?* Any adult from a member family (for example parent, grandparent, au pair or nanny) is welcome to co-op in our classrooms provided s/he is age 18 or older, can physically meet the requirements, and has a working knowledge of English. There are regulatory requirements that must also be met: each person co-oping in our school must have submitted an Employee Medical (OCC 1204), proof of age (driver's license), taken the Orientation Tour, been finger printed, submitted a notarized Release of Information-Child Care Facilities form and successfully completed the Basic Health & Safety Training course prior to co-oping.

*Co-oper's Attire...*Co-oping parents should dress in appropriate, washable clothing that will not hamper your ability to move or perform required tasks. We encourage you to wear clothing that can be accidentally stained (from paint, cleaning product, etc.). We recommend you to wear our school t-shirt when co-oping (and your child can wear his/her's, too).

*Socializing while co-oping...*We very much want you to socialize and get to know the other parents at our school. However, when you are supervising the children, please remember not to engage in excessive chatting with the teacher or other parents, which can not only compromise the safety of the children, but also be disruptive, or distracting. Your attention needs to remain on the children and the tasks you are required to do.

*Co-oper's purse...*The OCC requires that all purses, which are considered hazardous, be stored out of reach of children. Each room has a place to store your purse, check with your child's teacher where it is in her room.

*Cell phone use while co-oping...*Co-ops are expected to refrain from using their cell phone in any capacity while co-oping. The safety of the children and the smooth running of the classroom are dependent on the co-ops' undivided attention and focus.

### **Older Siblings of Enrolled Students:**

Former students are always welcome back for a visit, but they must be accompanied by an adult. OCC regulations prohibit children who are not currently enrolled in RPCNS, or registered with the school's sibling nursery, to spend any portion of the school day at RPCNS if their parent/guardian/care-giver is co-oping or working as the Stand-by. (For example, if you are



scheduled to co-op on a day when your Kindergartener doesn't have school due to Kindergarten Orientation, then you need to switch your co-oping shift.)

**Smoking, Alcohol & Drugs:**

Smoking is not permitted anywhere inside or outside of RPCNS, or anywhere on the RPC campus (in 2016 RPC's session banned smoking on the entire RPC campus) at any time. Alcohol and illicit drugs are not to be consumed during school hours or on an off-site school activity. See COMAR 13A.16.11.05 & 06.

**Classroom Rules****Inside:**

Please refer to Addendum 1: General Strategies for Working with Children for a variety of positive strategies, as well as your child's teacher. The following is a list of behaviors the children should be guided to avoid, for safety reasons:

- running inside the building, unless under the supervision of a teacher or scheduled co-oper;
- injuring or hurting another child – physically, verbally or emotionally;
- playing with toy guns or swords (these toys should NOT be brought to school);
- climbing on tables, chairs or shelving units.

Parent members are responsible for supervising their child(ren) who are in the school or on the playground before or after their class time. If your child has played with toys in the common areas then please help your child(ren) put away toys with which they are no longer playing, and to clean up after themselves when they move on to the next "thing."

**Outside:**

There must be at least two (2) adults on the playground when a class is outside. The "A" parent is to go out with the teacher when the children go outside, the "B" parent should go outside as soon as s/he has finished cleaning up. During the cold weather months, all the co-ops are to work with the teacher to get jackets on the children. For safety reasons we are requiring both co-ops in a Twos class to be outside with the teacher when a Twos class is outside.

- Your primary responsibility is to watch the children. (Tempting as it may be, please avoid getting too involved in chatting with the other adults.)
- Check to make sure the gate at either end of the playground are locked.
- Our playground is "L" shaped, and one of the adults should be in a position to supervise the sandbox area. This adult is to
  - monitor the children in the toys cars and on tricycles, helping them to avoid crashing/bumping into each other.
  - monitor the children in the sand box, making sure they don't throw sand, and encourage them to keep the sand in the sand box.
- Closely monitor children playing with sticks, help them to do so in an appropriate manner.
- There is a limit of 3 children on the tire swing at one time.

**Bathroom:**

Our Two and Three year olds must be accompanied to the bathroom by an approved co-oper or teacher. When a four year old has to go to the bathroom, s/he is allowed to go by him/herself, but must tell an adult s/he is leaving the room to do so. If a child is using diapers, the co-oper may change the child's diaper in either bathroom or the nursery. If a child has an "accident," approach this situation as matter of fact, and proceed to clean up and change the child's clothes using clothing from the child's backpack. Put the soiled clothing in a plastic bag on the child's coat hool, and tell the teacher, so the child's parent will be made aware.

**Changing Diapers:**

Two and Three year old students at RPCNS are not required to be toilet trained. If a child needs a diaper change during class the following procedure applies:

- Diapers and wipes provided by the child's parent and kept in the child's backpack are to be used on the child.
- The child has to be changed at one of the three changing areas set-up in the school, (either in the nursery, or one of the wall mounted changing stations in either bathroom).
- Each changing area has paper towels, plastic bags and latex gloves available. Check that you have these items before you proceed to change a diaper.
- Get the child's clean diaper and wipes out of the child's backpack.
- Place the child on the changing pad. Place 2 sheets of paper towel on top of the changing pad, to facilitate clean-up and sanitation.
- Wear the disposable latex gloves and change the diaper.
- Throw the soiled diaper, wipes, paper towels and gloves into the plastic bag. Please turn the gloves inside out as you remove them.
- Wash the child's hands and yours. (Review the posted Hand Washing sign as to proper procedure)
- Wash off the changing pad and mat with disinfectant spray and dry with paper towels.
- Escort the child back to his/her class.
- Dispose of the loaded plastic bag, outside, placing it directly in the dumpster.
- Inform the child's teacher and parent that their child's diaper was changed.

**Classroom Duties:**

As a co-oping adult in the classroom you function as the teacher's assistant. You are to help facilitate the teacher's lesson plan for that day. When you are not directly working with the teacher your attention and focus must be on the children in the classroom. Whenever possible you are to help facilitate a child's age appropriate engagement in play, keeping in mind that all children this age are new to social interactions and interactive play. The children need the adults in their life to model how to constructively engage and interact. (For additional information and guidance in this area, please see Addendum #1, "General Suggestions for Working with Children" located at the back of this Handbook.)

Each day that you co-op please sign the "Sign-In" Sheet posted in your child's classroom as required by COMAR 13A.16.08.03A.

Our classes are usually staffed with one teacher and two co-ops. However, sometimes a class' enrollment requires a deviation from this usual staffing norm.

In addition to working with and supervising the children, co-oper duties are broken down as follows:

**A Co-oper Duties:**

You are Primarily the “set-up” person.

- Help the teacher set up the classroom activities before the school day starts. This may involve getting children in Before Care to their Classroom teacher before the start of the school day.
- Set up for snack and lunch at the appropriate time.
- Go outside with the teacher and the children.
- Assist “B” parent whenever possible.

**B Co-oper Duties:**

You are primarily the “clean-up” person.

- Supervise the “A” co-oper’s child while s/he’s working with the teacher before class starts.
- Clean up after the project &/or activities (washing brushes, paint cups, etc.).
- If the tables are soiled from an activity or project clean them first with dishwashing detergent and then with a disinfecting wipe. If the floors need sweeping or vacuuming please also do this.
- Clean bathroom surfaces if needed (wipe off paint, etc. from sinks, faucets, soap bottles) to maintain cleanliness.\*
- Resupply/refill bathroom toilet tissue (single ply), soap dispensers and paper towel holders, as necessary (it is advisable to do this before class begins!).\*
- Bag and take out trash from assigned rooms to the dumpster; or recycle bin.
- If cleaning while your child’s class is outside, make every effort to join your child’s class outside as soon as possible.

\*This duty is shared by “B” parents in all classes.

**C Co-oper Duties:**

This additional co-oping position has been added due to the size of your child’s class and/or the needs of the children in that class.

- Before class starts this co-oper is to watch the RPCNS teacher’s child who is enrolled in your child’s class and/or the Co-chair’s child;
- Share the “B” co-oper duties through-out the morning, ensuring adequate supervision and support.
- There may be additional duties discerned and agreed to by the teacher and the class co-ops anytime a “C” co-op is employed.

**Single Co-oper Duties:**

If a class has only one co-oper, then that co-oper will be responsible for performing both the “A” and “B” duties. Keep in mind, if this is the case, then that means there are less students enrolled so the work load will be proportional. Whenever possible the teacher will undoubtedly assist this co-oper.

**Stand-By Duties:**

Please understand that RPCNS meets or exceeds its adult to child ratio requirements specified in COMAR 13A.16.08.03C and enforced by the Office of Child Care each day of operation with all the co-oping parents scheduled for each classroom. To make sure we are never understaffed we created the position of Stand-by: one stand-by for the regular classrooms and one for the nursery. These positions are indicated on the Master Co-oping Schedule listed under the class co-ops.

It is imperative that we have enough co-ops, in addition to our teachers, each day. Unfortunately, sometimes a co-op encounters a situation on the way to school which makes it impossible for them to actually co-op that day. Therefore, it is the Stand-by's responsibility to be available to stay all morning, if need be, in any of our classes or the nursery. The Classroom Stand-by is to check with the Co-Chair who has checked in all the co-ops scheduled for that day, before leaving the school. The Nursery Stand-by is to stay long enough to help the little ones settle in before leaving the school.

Before the school starts the Classroom Stand-by is to assist the co-chair with check-in. This includes answering the phone and operating our security buzzer if check-in is being done inside. The Nursery Stand-by is to report to the Nursery from 9:20 to 10:00 to ensure the smooth start to the sitter's day. The Classroom Stand-by is also to cover the security buzzer at dismissal time, being mindful of the different dismissal times over the course of the school year. As with all shifts on the Co-op schedule, it is the scheduled Stand-by's responsibility to find coverage for a shift that you can't work, to be prepared to work the morning you're scheduled to be Stand-by, and to have arranged for coverage of your younger child if not already covered on the nursery schedule. The co-Chairs and your class representative will be happy to help you with this.

**Beyond the Classroom Requirements for Parent Members:**

- to complete all the pre-service requirements covered during your Compliance Day;
- to actually do the school job your family has been assigned;
- to attend the required membership meetings - Parent Orientation and Co-op Check-in , both scheduled at the start of the school year, (if you are a non-co-oping parent member you are not required to attend Co-op Check-in);
- to work one *Set-up Day* before the start of the school year, one Saturday *Clean-up Day* per school year, and one *Pack-up Day* at the end of the school year.

Each is described in more detail below:

**Compliance Day Requirements:**

Each co-oping adult is considered an employee by the office of Child Care (OCC), and must complete tasks in the regulations. Besides getting an Employee Medical done, the approved co-op must also have their fingerprints taken, their Release of Information form notarized, and take the Orientation Tour when s/he is a new parent member in our school, as required by COMAR 13A.16.06.02. Once the new co-op has taken the Orientation Tour they sign a receipt indicating that the tour has been taken and when. This receipt is kept on file along with all your other required information. A new co-op must take the Orientation Tour with either the Admissions Coordinator, the Director or other qualified parent members before his/her first co-oping shift.

The information given in this tour is not only given verbally but is also available in written form and posted, easily accessible to all our parent members. Returning parent members are welcome to retake this tour.

**Parent Member Jobs:**

Each member family will be assigned a job (honoring personal preference if at all possible). A few of the jobs are board positions, and come with the privilege of a vote on the Board of Directors, as well as the responsibility of both managing the performance of jobs listed under their board position on our organizational chart and maintaining a current jobs folder/binder. Most jobs, however, are managed by a member of the Board of Directors. Each parent member will be given a current job description and will meet with the board officer to whom s/he reports.

A description of these positions is provided in the Enrollment Packet. If any component of the job description needs amending in order to keep the description current and accurate please consult with the Chairperson(s). All our parent member jobs are designed to be done outside of the time you co-op in your child's classroom. (This is for safety reasons; when you are co-oping we need you to be focused on the children.) If your job is presenting a challenge, please speak with the board officer to whom you report or to the co-chairs.

**Parent Orientation and Co-oper Check-in:**

Prior to and shortly after the school year begins, we have scheduled two required parent member meetings. In an effort to not present too much information at one time, some of the information we need to convey is done at the Teacher Meet and Greet, some at Parent Orientation and the rest at Co-oper Check-in. Both the Teacher Meet & Greet and Parent Orientation are always scheduled before the first day of class. The purpose of the Teacher Meet & Greet is for both the child and parent to not only meet their child's teacher, but spend time becoming familiar with their classroom, and have an opportunity to meet the others (kids and parents) in your child's class. At Parent Orientation the parent member learns about the school's organizational structure, meets the board members, learns how to read the co-op schedule, and meets with their child's teacher to learn about what is planned for the year (curriculum), what the basic school day schedule is for that class and where things are in the classroom. At Co-oper Check-in, which is scheduled a couple of weeks after the school year has begun, the primarily focused is on how to co-op effectively with emphasis placed on age appropriate conflict resolution skills reviewed.

Attendance at both Parent Orientation and Co-oper Check-in is mandatory (as stipulated in our Constitution & By-laws). Attendance at the Teacher Meet & Greet is strongly encouraged. Each of these events serves a different purpose, and we've spread them out in an effort to provide you, the parent member, ample time to digest the information presented and give you the opportunity to ask questions. We very much appreciate that if you're new to co-oping that there is a significant learning curve.

**Parent Work Days - Set-up, Clean-up and Pack-up Days:**

Prior to the school opening, the classrooms must be thoroughly cleaned, carpets shampooed, the furniture arranged, any maintenance work done, the toys cleaned, etc. Each teacher is in charge of how her classroom will be arranged and decorated in accordance with Office of Child Care guidelines. *Set-up Days* are scheduled to get all this work done. At three points

during the school year we have scheduled a *Clean-up Day* on a Saturday morning. It's during one of these work days that the carpets are again shampooed, the toys are thoroughly cleaned, and any other projects are tackled. At the conclusion of the school year all the contents of each classroom not being used for summer camp either moved and stored or relocated for use over the summer. *Pack-up Days* are scheduled to get this work done. All of these tasks are organized and managed by our Facilities Coordinator in consultation with the Director. Due to the nature of the work involved, and in consideration of the safety of the children, children are not to attend these work days. Please make babysitting arrangements.

Participation in three (3) Parent Work Days (1 Set Up, 1 Clean Up and 1 Pack Up day) is mandatory as per the *Membership Agreement*, throughout the school year. A fine will be levied for each unfulfilled Work Day. Multiple opportunities to participate in each work day will be provided (3 set up days, 3 clean up days, and 2 pack up days to choose from) and if none are suitable to your schedule, we will work with the families to find alternate activities, within reason.

## Health and Safety

### **Parking Lot:**

Please park your cars along the school building or in the spaces closer to Harrison Street in the parking lot. The parking spaces closest to the church office (on the east side or Administration building side of the arched breezeway) are reserved for RPC's employees, our parent members are NOT to park in them. Please teach your child(ren) to only cross the parking lot when accompanied by an adult. Use EXTREME caution when backing out of a parking space, be prepared to break for darting children at any moment. Also, you are NOT to leave a young child or baby alone in your car. Get another parent member or staff member to help you.

### **When to Keep a Child at Home:**

Any child who is listless or uncomfortable enough to prevent their participation in classroom activities should be kept at home. If you have given your child an over-the-counter medication to relieve symptoms of a cold or flu, do NOT send your child to school; even if your child acts like s/he now feels better, s/he may be contagious. A child may return to school when s/he is fever-free for 24 hours. Please consult your physician if you have any doubts about whether your child should go to school. If you want your child to remain indoors due to illness, please keep them at home. Please review our Sick Child Policy. Finally, trust your instincts; you know your child better than anyone else, let your own good judgment be your guide when deciding whether your child should attend school that day.

If your child is going to be absent, for any reason, we request that you contact the school and notify your child's teacher. This courtesy is very much appreciated. If your child is absent for more than three days we are required by the regulations to have a note from your doctor when your child returns to school.

### **Preventing The Spread of Respiratory Viruses (as per OCC guidelines):**

Using precautions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses when you are sick is a core prevention strategy to lower risk from respiratory viruses. Updated CDC guidance when people may have a respiratory virus is as follows:

- Stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick) if you have respiratory virus symptoms that aren't better explained by another cause.
- You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:
  1. Your symptoms are getting better overall, and
  2. You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).
- When you go back to your normal activities, take added precaution over the next 5 days, such as taking additional steps for cleaner air, hygiene, masks, physical distancing, and/or testing when you will be around other people indoors. These additional precautions are especially important to protect people with factors that increase their risk of severe illness from respiratory viruses.

### **When a Child Becomes Ill During School:**

If a teacher realizes that a child has become ill and shouldn't stay at school, the parent will be contacted to come and take the child home. Therefore, make sure your child's teacher has the phone number where you can be reached while your child is at school or instructions on how to reach you, or someone who can take care of your child, preferably written down given to your child's teacher.

The cooperation of parents in helping to prevent the spread of communicable disease is necessary. If your child contracts a contagious disease, and may possibly have exposed other children, please inform your child's teacher and the other families in your child's class as soon as possible. Your class representative can be an additional resource in this situation.

### **Protocol for Dealing with a Viral Outbreak:**

- All play dough that has been used in the classroom is to be thrown out immediately.
- Play dough is not to be used for a week after the last known child has become ill.
- All play food, play kitchen and housekeeping toys and all play dough toys are to be washed in a dishwasher, on the top rack, in a mesh bag, on the "sani" cycle if appropriate or cleaned with a disinfectant (such as bleach).
- The frequency with which children's hands are to be washed will increase to the following: Prior to the start of class; after any art project; prior to eating snack; after eating snack; after children come in from the playground.
- The duration of time that children spend actively washing their hands with soap should be for a full 20 seconds to be fully effective. Refer to the how to graphics posted by each sink.
- Turn on and off the sink faucets with a paper towel.
- In addition to the table tops, wipe off the back of chairs, door knobs and other surfaces that are frequently touched with a disinfectant.
- Gather information about the particular virus affecting the children and how to handle it from the Center for Disease Control's website, and share that information with those who need to know.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, in addition to the steps listed above, additional steps will be taken to increase ventilation and air purification, thereby reducing the viral load inside the school. *Refer to the most recent version of RPCNS' COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies.*

### **Information Pertaining to a Child's Mood or Behavior:**

Please inform your child's teacher when there is a problem which does not prevent your child from attending school, but which might affect your child's behavior, (i.e., allergies, cut on the child's foot, parents out of town, problems at home, etc.).

### **Head Lice:**

We have a *no nits* policy, which means that no one is allowed to attend school, or school related functions, with head lice at any stage. Please contact us if you or your child has head lice and we will take appropriate action dealing with the part of the school affected and notifying our membership.

### **Protocol for Dealing with a Head Lice Outbreak:**

- As soon as anyone affiliated with RPCNS learns that a child or adult member has head lice, this information is to be passed on to the Director. The Director will confirm this information if it has been heard from a second hand source. If there is a confirmed case of head lice then the following is to take place:
  - **Communication:**
    - The entire school community (parent members, all staff) is to be contacted via email by the Director, as well as the Property Manager of the Rockville Presbyterian Church. If the outbreak occurs during summer camp then the summer camp coordinator, in consultation with the Director, will handle communication.
    - The email should contain the following information:
      - Which class(es) is(are) directly affected;
      - Current information from the CDC on how to treat head lice;
      - Name of person who will remove nits, if available.
  - The Director will contact the teacher, whose class is affected, the Class Rep. for that class and the Health Assistant. (The Health Assistant can advise further if she has any further suggestions about what else should be done or cleaned.)
    - If it is the nursery that is the primary room affected, then instead of the teacher it is the Parent Services Coordinator that the Director will contact.
    - If the head lice is discovered on the head of one of the children enrolled in summer camp, or a sibling of a child enrolled in our summer camp, then the summer camp coordinator will notify the director as well as the summer camp instructors affected.
  - The teacher will send out additional information on what is being done specifically in her classroom to prevent the any further outbreak to the parents of her students.
    - If the primary focus is the nursery, then it will be the Parent Services Coordinator who will contact all the nursery workers and parents of the little ones who've recently been in the nursery.
    - If this event happens during summer camp, and the director is not available, then the summer camp coordinator will disperse the additional information.



- The Class Rep. is to organize volunteers (2 or 3 parent members) to carry out the Remediation Plan and report completion to the Director, teacher, and Health Assistant. The Director will send out a follow-up email notifying membership on what was done.
  - If it is the nursery that is the primary concern then it will be the Parent Services Coordinator who will organize the volunteers to carry out the Remediation Plan, which is to include washing all the crib and changing table linens.
  - If this event happens during summer camp and the director is not available, then it is the summer camp coordinator who will organize volunteers to implement the Remediation Plan.
- **Remediation Plan:**
  - Either wash or seal in a bag for a couple of weeks the following:
    - dress-ups (including any hats, scarves, dresses, jackets, vests, etc.);
    - any pillows and blankets;
    - any stuffed animals.
  - The location of the sealed items will be decided by the director in consultation with the teacher.
    - If the nursery is affected, then the location of the sealed items will be decided by the director in consultation with the Parent Services Coordinator.
    - If this head lice event takes place during summer camp, then the summer camp coordinator in consultation with the director, will decide where the bagged items are to be stored and for how long.
  - Vacuum the carpets affected, then shampoo the carpet(s) in the affected rooms.

### **Food Allergies:**

- *Procedure for informing RPCNS of an allergic child:* Regardless whether a student's allergies are either life threatening or not, the parent of the student with allergies is to notify the Admissions Coordinator (who will in turn notify the Director and appropriate staff members) of the child's allergy(ies), in writing, prior to the start of the school year. If it is possible for the child to have an anaphylactic reaction at school, then a meeting with the child's parents, the Director and the Admissions Coordinator needs to take place prior to enrollment. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the severity of the child's allergy(ies); and to determine if RPCNS is the appropriate placement for the child. If an understanding is reached, it will be documented and signed. If the child develops allergies during the school year we request that the parent notify the child's teacher as soon as possible, in writing. In this later scenario, the teacher will then notify the Director and the Class Representative, in order to disseminate the information and complete the appropriate paper work.
- *Procedure for handling an epi-pen:* If a child requires an epi-pen the parent must complete a **Allergy and Anaphylaxis Medication Administration Authorization Plan**, and convene a meeting with their child's teacher to discuss its usage, and any other relevant information pertaining to keeping their child safe and healthy. This meeting may be expanded to include the Director, the Chairperson(s) and/or other classroom parents. If the child's parent is not available to administer the epi-pen, then a staff member who has had the Medications Administration training will administer the epi-pen to the child. If a trained staff member is

not available, then one of the co-oping parents will administer the epi-pen. The storage of the epi-pen falls under COMAR 13A.16.11.04.E. “an operator shall store all medications safely and properly in a manner that ensures that they are inaccessible to children and labeled with the child’s name, the drug dosage, and the expiration date.” Each classroom has a designated container for this purpose.

- *Procedure for handling snack for the child with food allergies if snack is served and shared:* The parent of the child with food allergies is to check all the shared snack food to be served before s/he leaves the building for the morning and sign-off that s/he has checked it. The parent of the child with food allergies is to also provide a supply of safe foods for his/her child to be kept on the premises. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide an alternative snack to ensure the safety of his/her child when the child’s physiological response to an allergen is life threatening or life altering. The parent of the child with food allergies is to be present at our school-wide or holiday parties taking responsibility for the foods his/her child ingests.
- ***We request that peanuts or any type of tree nut NOT be brought in to our school along with any foods processed at a facility which may have processed peanuts or any other type of nut.***

### **Injured Child Procedure:**

#### *The teacher’s role:*

When injury occurs, the teacher will take primary care of the injured child (i.e. isolate child, determine if child is to be moved, initiate first aid measures).

#### *The “A” co-oping parent’s role:*

- Call 911 if injury is judged by the teacher to warrant this level of support;
- Retrieve first aid kit and supplies from Housekeeping Room (#105);
- Call parent or emergency contact from emergency phone list (which can be found inside the Sign-in/Sign-out clip board, or by the phone in the coat room (#109));
- Notify another staff member of emergency and possible need to help with class;
- Return to assist teacher and injured child.

#### *The “B” co-oping parent’s role:*

- Remove other children from situation as appropriate;
- Continue to supervise the rest of the students in that class.

If the parent or other contact person of the injured child has not arrived when the child is ready to be transported by emergency medical unit, an available parent (“A”, “B”, or other parent with whom child is comfortable) will accompany child to the medical facility and keep both the staff at RPCNS and the injured child’s parents informed.

If a child is injured while on a field trip, the procedures listed above will be followed. (A teacher on a field trip brings a first aid kit, cell phone and emergency cards with her.)

### **Emergency Drills:**

- All information about procedures are located in each classroom, in the Co-oper Manual in each classroom and in the Addendum of this handbook.

- **Fire Drills** will be held 10 times per school year. They are scheduled on different weekdays and at different times during our school day. At the beginning of the year, teachers will review the fire drill procedures for their classroom. The goal is to empty the entire school in 60 seconds or less. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with both the “A” and the “B” co-oper responsibilities for your child’s classroom.
- **Evacuation Drill** is held once during the school year for the three and four year old classes. The goal of this drill is to go through all the steps needed to evacuate all personnel from the school and move to an alternative site.
- **Shelter-in-Place Drill** is conducted a couple of times over the course of the school year. The goal is to move into interior spaces away from windows as quickly as possible.

## Communications:

### Parent Mailboxes:

Each parent member will have a mailbox slot with your name on it, and your child’s name. The names are grouped together by class and color coded. Board members have a larger mail slot located on top shelf of this wall unit. Notices from various Board members (Chairs, Treasurer, Class Rep., etc.), teachers and fellow parents are placed in your mailbox slot. Please check your mailbox slot every time (morning drop-off and pick-up) you are in our school so that you stay informed. If someone else is picking up your child we recommend that you have that person also bring home your school mail.

### Parent Connection:

It is an important monthly communication, which not only has an article from both the Co-chairs and the Director, but also includes the following attachments: the next month’s co-op schedule, nursery users’ schedule and most recent board meeting minutes. Please make sure to read it.

### Notes from your child’s Teacher:

Each teacher communicates with the parents of her students on a regular basis, about what has happened in her class, what is planned, along with any specific reminders and mention of upcoming events. This information is also usually posted outside your child’s classroom for your convenience.

### Posted Notifications:

We use bulletin boards around RPCNS to provide additional relevant information to parent members. Outside each classroom is a smaller bulletin board where a copy of the co-op schedule is posted and highlighted for your child’s class, along with any notices from your child’s teacher or your Class Representative. There are informational bulletin boards located in the Coat Room (#109), in the hall outside the Office and on the bulletin boards in the hallway. The current Master Co-oping Schedule, photos of parent members with their name and job, and the organizational chart are posted on the “Parent Jobs” bulletin board, located across from the water fountains.

Notices may also be posted on the doors to the coatrooms and stairwells. Please check these bulletin boards and doors for notices, announcements and the monthly Board of Directors meeting agenda.

**Telephone:**

There is a telephone in the Coat Room and three in our Office. Should you hear the phone ring and it doesn't sound like someone is answering it, please to answer it. We also have an answering machine on which messages may be left. Please refrain from using the telephone for non-school business, so that we can keep the line open for school and emergency use. There are phone message books located by each telephone to facilitate message taking. Place the message in the person's mailbox if you are not able to deliver it him/her directly. The Stand-by is to assist with answering the phones at arrival and dismissal.

**Board of Directors Meetings:**

Board of Directors meetings are held monthly, and the dates are listed on the school calendar sent out in the Enrollment Packet. The Board of Directors is structured, organized and conducts business in accordance with our *Constitution and By-laws*. All parent members are welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings especially if you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors in the future. Draft minutes from the most recent board meeting are circulated prior to the next meeting via the *Parent Connection* email. In addition, meeting notes relevant to your child's class are disseminated by your Class Rep. shortly after the meeting.

**Class Meetings and Emails:**

Your class representative is responsible for facilitating communication between the Board of Directors, the teacher and parent members of her/his child's class. Towards this end your class rep. will communicate information (usually via email) to parent members from board meetings, and represent the interests/concerns of the parent members and/or the teacher to the board. Each Class Rep. is expected to check-in with parent members of their child's class in preparation for monthly board meetings, via individual conversations, email or by class meeting. Additionally, class meetings may be convened at the request of any parent, the teacher, Director, or Chairperson(s). When a class meeting is convened, the teacher, co-chairs and/or the Director are to be notified in advance that it's taking place, and may attend.

**From Teachers:**

We encourage communication between our parent members and our professional staff. The most common time to meet with your child's teacher on an informal basis is after class has been dismissed. During Parent Orientation your child's teacher will discuss her preferred modes of communication and times for meeting. You may also schedule a conference at a mutually agreeable time. In addition, Parent/Teacher conferences are conducted twice during the school year - in the late fall and late spring.

## **Additional Services:**

### **Sibling Nursery:**

The purpose of our Sibling Nursery is to make it possible for parent members with younger children to co-op in our school. It is open from 20 minutes before the start of the school day until 15 minutes after dismissal, enabling co-ops to drop-off their little one before and pick-up after attending to their co-oping duties for the morning. The Sibling Nursery is organized as a cooperative, which means that all the parent members who use it are expected to share the babysitting duties. Those members who choose to use the Sibling Nursery must submit the required Office of Child Care medical forms completed by their child's pediatrician prior to their child's first use of the nursery.

The Sibling Nursery is administered by the Parent Services Coordinator, who works with the Co-op Scheduler in generating both the Master Co-op Schedule and the Sibling Nursery Co-op Schedule, which are correlated. What this means is that when a parent member, who has submitted the required forms, is scheduled to co-op, there will be a space reserved in our Sibling Nursery for her child. Please be aware that there are a limited number of spaces (6) in the nursery available each school day, and that we staff the nursery using the COMAR ratio of 1 adult to 3 children. In filling these spaces first priority is given to our professional staff with young children, then to the parents who are co-oping that day. If, for any reason, you will not be using your reserved space, you will need to notify the Parent Services Coordinator and the Sibling Nursery Worker for that day at least 24 hours in advance. If you fail to give notification in a timely fashion, you will be required to pay the fee for the morning to the scheduled sitter.

The parent of a child in the Sibling Nursery must remain on the school's grounds, no exceptions.

Further information on what items should be in your little one's diaper bag, their snack and the containers it is packed in, and the fee for the morning sitter are provided to those parent members who enroll their child in our nursery.

### **Field Trips:**

Field trips and in-house programs are scheduled for all three grades. Parent members are required to sign a permission slip for each off-site trip. Parents will be notified in advance about each field trip by your Class Representative and your child's teacher. Transportation is provided by our parent members. ALL CHILDREN MUST RIDE IN CAR SEATS ACCORDING TO STATE LAW. Parents are encouraged to attend field trips, and to carpool. Depending on the location of the trip, it may be possible for a member parent to bring a younger sibling.

### **School Library:**

The school library is located in our Coat Room. RPCNS owns at least a thousand books, and we strongly encourage our parent members to check them out. Our Library is managed and maintained by a parent volunteer Librarian(s). Instructions for use of our Library may be found in the ringed notebook located there. Please refer to the *Policy Manual* for further information about our Library.

**Options Outside of Class for enrolled students:**

- ***Stay & Play Before and After Care:***

**Before Care** is offered from 9:00 – 9:45 a.m., before school. It is a non-co-oping option for our enrolled students, your child is in the care of a staff member for an additional fee. This option is available everyday we have classes scheduled here at RPCNS.

**After Care** is offered from 12:30 (for Twos in the fall) and from 1:00 p.m. for the older children until 3:00 p.m. This program is also a non-co-op option, for a fee. It is also possible to have your child enrolled in an Extended Day program and then finish out the remainder of the afternoon with the *Stay & Play* program. As with the Extended Day programs, sign-up sheets will be posted on a bulletin board so labeled, and enrollment is limited.

- **Extended Day Programs:**

RPCNS offers a variety of Extended Day 45 minute enrichment programs after dismissal. These programs are subject specific (e.g. soccer, art, yoga), developmentally appropriate, offered one afternoon a week for several weeks. The instructor is either one of our teachers or a qualified outside contractor, with additional support provided by our co-ops. A co-op schedule is generated for each individual program, with the parent members of the children enrolled sharing the co-oping obligation. These programs are also an option for non-co-oping member families. There is a staff person who is First Aid and CPR certified assigned to each program. As with *Stay & Play Before and After Care*, sign-up sheets will be posted on a bulletin board so labeled. Program offerings will be announced. The fee for each Extended Day program is determined by several factors, so it varies slightly from program to program. Parent members are to pay in full for the entire session of each program by the first class. If a program class is canceled due to weather, instructor unavailability, etc., it will be rescheduled.

Your child's classroom teacher will make sure your child gets to either After Care or the Extended Day program.

## Addendum 1 General Suggestions for Working with Children

All parents question their own ability to work with other people's children in a new environment. Your child's teacher will model the desired behavior to use. We use the social-emotional skills taught by CSEFEL as a guide. Here are a few things to keep in mind when coping in the classroom.

- Keep your speaking voice low, if at all possible, don't yell.
- Physically lower your body so that you are on eye level when talking with the children. Listen attentively to the children and learn from them. Talk with them, not *at* them.
- State suggestions in a positive manner ("Let's take a walk" or "We are going to paint on paper"). With this approach, you are less likely to encounter resistance. Use a positive tone of voice when choice is not an option ("Come on now"). When there is a choice, phrase it as such ("Would you like to play with the blocks or the trucks?").
- Negative approach should be used for important or dangerous situations ("You may not throw sand!"). To a child who is tempted to do something that could hurt another or break something, such as throwing a rock, provide the child with a suggestion of what the child can do along with telling the child what he mustn't do, such as "Balls are for throwing, not rocks."
- Encourage children to use their own resources and imagination.
- Foster self-help, and do not refuse aid if it is requested. If there is a dispute over a toy help the children to explain the situation, their desires, and to guide them in figuring out a solution, such as how to share the toy or take turns using it. Refer to the CSEFEL *Conflict Resolution Tool Kit* graphics displayed in your child's classroom.
- Do not disturb a child unnecessarily. If appropriate ask the child about what she is doing, and take a genuine interest in her answer.
- When a child is looking for approval, use generalities, not comparisons ("What a fine building!" or "What bright colors!"), ask the child to tell you about their painting or structure.
- When a group of children are playing their play or game can unravel quickly. Pay attention, try to anticipate the deterioration of their play. The right suggestion at the right moment can help the children navigate a difficult situation and facilitate their continued play. If at all possible, facilitate the children finding their own solutions. Give sincere approval when a child encounters and solves a difficult situation ("Good idea!")
- Assist with an approaching transition, by helping a child deep in play to realize that in a few moments s/he will need to stop and do something else. If there's a day in which the schedule has been changed, realize there may be at least one child who is confused by the change and s/he may need additional support.
- Validate a child's physical pain and emotions. If a child has been physically injured provide the medical attention needed, as well as addressing the emotions the child is also feeling, and help the child regain his/her composure.
- Be careful not to discuss any child in presence of any of the other children.

Your child's teacher is responsible for all the children in her class, and when you co-op you are assisting her. If you are at all unsure how to handle a situation, please defer to your child's teacher.

In addition to situational problems, co-oping parents often have questions about how to deal with repeated misbehaviors. The following are some guidelines to consider:

**Apparent Aggression:** Please keep in mind that children this age are just learning how to socially interact, and they're not good at it yet. In addition, they are new to speaking with other children and adults beyond those in their immediate "world." So, for example, if there is a problem with sharing, grabbing, pushing, shoving, etc., when you intervene first separate the children, and either describe for them what you observed and make recommendations, or if they are a bit older, get the children involved to explain to you what has just transpired and what they think should be done to handle the situation. If their recommendations are not sound or viable, make appropriate recommendations. Remember to get down on their level and acknowledge their anger/frustration/sadness. If appropriate, find a second toy of equal value for the other one to use or put the toy away if a shared arrangement can't be agreed to. The children would love to have you play with them, on the floor. And while you're playing with them you can then model the desired behavior you want them to use. We encourage you to actually get down on the floor and play with the children. You are then in a position to facilitate their play and model appropriate behavior instead of just watching.

**Group Disruption:** If a child is distracting, taking attention away from a book being read or the task at hand, many times just going and sitting next to the disruptive child will refocus his or her attention. If this fails, take the child aside to prevent further disruption and discuss how to be a good listener or participant. You may have to ask the child to wait in another part of the room until the child is ready to rejoin the group. You do not want to reward inappropriate behavior with attention. If all efforts fail, enlist the aid of the teacher.

**The Shy Child or Loner:** Respect this child's feelings and let them observe for a little while. Observe the child to make sure s/he is not ill, frightened, angry, etc. If possible, take the child by the hand and introduce him/her to the craft, bring him/her near or next to busy children and coach the child with suggested phrases to help him/her enter their play, or choose a toy together with which to play. Stay around the child so s/he knows s/he can trust you. Don't push him/her if s/he is not comfortable getting involved. Respect the child's feelings. Don't make a big deal about his/her behavior in front of the other children. You may also enlist the aid of the teacher.

**How to Deal with Your Own Child When You are Co-oping:** At the beginning of the school year your child will most likely be confused about how to interact with you when you are co-oping, s/he may be puzzled about how to share you with the other students. Help your child understand, before you co-op, that when you are co-oping in the classroom you are there to work with all the children, not just him/her. Your child may feel that it is difficult to compete with so many peers for your attention and engage in attention getting behaviors. Remind your child your role is as the teacher's "helper," and that when you are not co-oping then s/he can have your attention. Explain how important your role is to the teacher and to the other children. If your child wants to help you set up something, that is fine. If your child worries when you leave the room, tell him/her where



you will be, that you'll be back soon, and to stay in the classroom. If your child's behavior needs redirection and the teacher is not available, be patient, fair and consistent in dealing with him/her.

**Separation Anxiety:** If a child, including your own, is experiencing separation problems, be very positive about school. Talk about the fun s/he will have and reassure the child that you, the parent, will return to pick him/her up at dismissal. When you are co-oping, get down on the child's level and reassure him/her that you are there to be a helper and a hugger, if necessary. Tell the child s/he can stay with you, then follow up by doing a craft or activity together. Reward him/her verbally when s/he finds something to do on his/her own.

It's entirely possible that a child experiencing separation anxiety will try to follow their parent out of the room. As the co-oper, bring the child back into the room, shut the door, and try to engage the child in an activity or with a toy. Most children who experience separation anxiety are younger, and when awash in emotion (sadness, frequently anger or frustration) commonly express their feelings by crying, due to their inexperience in articulating their feelings. When comforting this child, acknowledge the emotion s/he is feeling, that it's O.K. to feel that way. Parents, you can help your child at the start of class by saying "Good-bye" in a happy, cheerful manner, thus conveying your confidence in the teacher and the good experience your child is about to enjoy that day.

As a co-oping parent you need to feel comfortable in your role. Remember the purpose of our school: to help children develop and feel good about themselves and their abilities. You are there to help everyone have a good and playful time!

Every child is very unique and yet there are similarities, such as the stages children progress through on their maturation journey. Every parent has wondered or worried if their child is "normal." When you join a cooperative nursery school you, the parent, get to know the other children in your child's class, and their parents. And you'll notice that the children in your child's class all behave differently. Other children play and react differently from your child and that is okay! There is a lot to see and observe as a parent in our classrooms. Part of your co-oping responsibility is to be present in the moment, attentive, engaged, keeping your eyes on the children, playing with them, and making the teacher aware of any behavioral problems that arise.

There are reference books that are very informative in helping all of us understand our children's behaviors. The Rockville Public Library has a section devoted exclusively to these types of books. And of course, the internet is a treasure trove of information, which can be completely overwhelming. Our director is also another resource, and can make recommendations.

### **Death of a family member:**

There have been times when a member family experiences the death of a loved one. If that family is interested in books that can help their young child understand what has happened, please consult the director, who has a collection of books dealing with this life event.

## Addendum 2: Snack Suggestions and Procedures

The following food list may be helpful when picking out a snack to bring:

- Fresh fruits (apples, oranges, bananas, grapes)
- Dried fruits (raisins, craisins)
- Raw vegetables (carrot &/or celery sticks, edamame) and dip
- Sunflower butter
- Cheese (such as cream, string, Cheddar, Monterey Jack)
- Pure juices (100% juice) or milk, although we usually serve water
- Crackers (Ritz Crackers, Wheat Thins, etc.) or pretzels (prefer them without high fructose corn syrup)
- Microwave popcorn
- Mini-muffins or Granola bars (make sure there are no nuts or peanuts)
- ***No nuts of any type, no peanut butter, no prepared foods that may have been processed at a plant that processes foods with nuts***

Please keep in mind the following when picking out a snack *for a shared classroom snack*:

- We ask parents to inform us of any allergies to particular foods so that this information is taken into consideration when the “A” co-oper is choosing his/her snack for your child’s class.
- A snack must be representative of at least 2 food groups out of these three: grains, dairy, fruits & vegetables. Examples: milk, pretzels and fruit; or fruit juice, crackers and cheese.
- PLEASE AVOID PROCESSED SUGAR IN YOUR SNACK!!!
- Food preparation (washing, chopping, assembling, etc.) MUST BE DONE AT THE SCHOOL. If your snack requires extensive preparation, it must be done at school before you meet with your child’s teacher 15 minutes before class.
- All dairy products must be stored in the refrigerator until they’re served.
- Snack foods are recorded each day and kept on file in accordance with Office of Child Care regulations (COMAR 07.04.05), when provided as a group snack.
- Remember you are providing just a snack, not a meal. Bring plenty but keep pieces (fruit, cheese, etc.) small. Serve small portions on the plate. We will gladly serve seconds but we don’t want to waste food. The older children serve themselves, and are learning portion control.
- There will always be an emergency supply of drink and crackers at the school. If you use these emergency supplies it is your responsibility (or the person you are working for if you are stand-by) to replace them as soon as possible, preferably by the next school day.
- If you wish to bring a special birthday treat for your child, please let the teacher know in advance. If you chose to bring in a baked good, it needs to be store bought.

## Addendum 3: Fire Drill Procedures

*The goal is to vacate and close up the school as quickly as possible. The fire drills are timed!*

### Evacuation Routes:

**Rooms 101, 102, 103 and 112 exit out the breezeway door to the far side of the parking lot.**

**Rooms 104, 105, 107/108 and 110/111 exit through Room 109 (coat room) to the far corner of the parking lot, beyond the dumpster.**

### Who does what when the fire alarm rings:

#### When in the classroom:

- The **teacher** is responsible for evacuating all the students in her class as safely, orderly and quickly as possible. Therefore, the teacher leads her students outside to the designated meeting area, on the far side of the parking lot (away from the building, next to the fence). Attendance is taken.
- The **“A” co-oper** follows the students outside, making sure no child is left behind.
- The classroom must be made as fire retardant as possible, as quickly as possible. Therefore, the **“B” co-oper** in each class must shut all open windows and close the classroom door(s). Because the entire school must be closed up, each class’ **“B” co-oper** has additional duties to perform on the way out of the school before joining his/her class.
  - **Additional duties of the “B” co-oper:** To be done after the classroom is secured! If you are the **“B” co-oper** from:
    - Classroom 102/104** you are to go to Room 101 (Office) to
      - close the windows,
      - shut the door, and
      - close the stairwell window if it is open.
    - Classroom 107/108** you are to
      - close the hallway window (overlooking the playground) if it is open,
      - close the door to the playground if it is open, & the door to the stairwell,
      - check each bathroom stall (both boys and girls) for any children,
      - close the door for each bathroom,
      - proceed to Housekeeping (#105), immediately evacuate any adults & close the door,
      - proceed to the Coat Room (#109), closing the fire door to hallway behind you,
      - exit via the outside door to the parking lot, and rejoin your child’s class.
      - (The teacher will take the school set of emergency cards from under the phone in the Coat Room #109).
    - Classroom 110/111** you are to
      - go to Room 103 (Sibling Nursery) via Room 102 or 104 closing the door,
      - assist the sitter(s) evacuating the children, making sure the door is closed.
    - Classroom 112** you are to
      - go to Room 103 (Sibling Nursery) to determine if your help is needed,
      - assist the sitter(s) evacuating the children, making sure the door is closed.

*If your class has a single co-oper then that co-oper follows the instructions for the “B” co-oper, making sure that all windows and doors are shut as she leaves each space.*

*If your class has a “C” co-oper, that co-oper is to go to Room 103 (Sibling Nursery) and assist the sitter in evacuation of the smaller children.*

**When in Music Class:**

- The **music teacher** will lead the children outside via the exterior door from the Coat Room,
- the **“A” co-oper** will make sure all the children exit the building with their class,
- the **“B” co-oper** will return to their child’s classroom and close any open windows and doors, then proceed to the additional areas and assist, making sure that the door to the Coat Room has been closed before exiting the building.

**When on the Playground:**

- If your child’s class is outside on the playground, the **teacher** will gather her students together and move them to a location along the far side of the fence, and take attendance.
- The **“A” co-oper** is to help the teacher gather the children, and keep them along the fence.
- The **“B” co-oper** is to first help gather his/her child’s class along the fence. Then s/he will go to the windows of the Sibling Nursery and help evacuate the children out the windows, should that be necessary. Then s/he is to rejoin his/her child’s class on the playground.

**Further considerations:**

- If a class is on a field trip, arrangements to cover the Nursery should be made prior to the trip.
- If the class is not all together (say some are with the teacher outside and some are with a co-oper inside finishing up snack), then the inside co-oper is to send the children outside to where the teacher is, then close up the room and check their additional areas before joining her class.

WAIT FOR THE “ALL CLEAR” SIGNAL BEFORE RE-ENTERING SCHOOL.

***In case of a real fire:***

*If there is a fire, the Fire Drill Procedures are to be followed as closely as possible. If there is an obstacle (warm door, smoke, etc.) the **teacher** will assess the situation and determine which is the safest way to evacuate her students, (options include leaving through the window marked EXIT) and she’ll determine where the class should reassemble (parking lot, playground or other safe alternative location). Once reassembled she’ll wait for further instructions.*

*It is **imperative** that the **Sibling Nursery** be evacuated, and the **emergency cards** (a class set has been given to each teacher, if the binder is not accessible) be brought outside. Once outside no one is to re-enter the building, instead help lift the children out through the windows, if necessary.*

*If there is a fire right at the start of or end of the school day, when we’re in the process of transferring responsibility of the children either to the teacher or back to the parents, consideration must be made as to the whereabouts of all involved so that all are evacuated and accounted for.*

*Once the building is safely evacuated an available adult will be dispatched to call 911.*

***In case of a gas leak:***

*If the smell of gas is detected in the air, evacuate the building immediately. Do not turn off the lights or take time to shut the windows. Do, however, shut the classroom doors. Follow the rest of the procedures as described above.*

## Addendum 4: Emergency Evacuation Drill Instructions

*Please note: the premise for an emergency evacuation drill is not the same as it is for a fire drill. For a fire drill the object is to evacuate the building to a safe location as fast as possible while leaving the building with as many fire breaks as possible. The purpose of an emergency evacuation drill is not speed, but to practice procedure so that we know what to do in case we ever need to evacuate the campus. We do want to proceed carefully, with all required “bits and pieces” to the off-site location.*

- **What’s the timing of the drill?**
  - Usually after the children have met with their teacher and settled into the morning;
  - Determined with the Director and conducted by the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
- **What will the verbal signal be to start the drill?**
  - “Prepare for Evacuation” declared by Emergency Preparedness Coordinator,
  - “Move out” signal will be given by the Director, when all preparations are completed, as determined by the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.
- **Who does what when the drill has first been declared?**
  - Once the need to evacuate has been declared, the **teacher**, the **students** and the **“A” Co-oper** are to remain in the classroom and complete the in-classroom preparations to evacuate.
    - The **teacher** and the **“A” co-oper** are to go over to the Emergency Cabinet in the classroom and remove the red, pre-packed backpacks for the adults, plus the purple & white epi-pen container (if it is being used to store an epi-pen).
  - the **“B” co-oper** gathers the children’s backpacks and jackets if necessary, and brings them back to the children in their child’s class.
  - The **Emergency Preparedness Coordinator** notifies the sitters in the nursery to prepare the children to evacuate the building, and when ready to proceed to hallway outside room 107/108.
    - The sitters are to wait for a signal from the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator before leaving the nursery room.
- **Now who does what once all the supplies are in the classroom?**
  - **Teacher**
    - should locate and gather the following:
      - teacher red emergency backpack, which should have the walking rope(s) and neon yellow vests the teacher and co-ops are to wear,
      - Sign-in/Sign-out clipboard, which should have
        - class emergency cards,
        - on-site and off-site maps
        - local emergency phone numbers
        - list of games
      - student epi-pens/medications (purple box in your classroom’s emergency cabinet)
      - personal ID materials (usually kept in her purse)
    - should take out and get ready for use the
      - walking rope(s) (inside the teacher’s backpack)

- neon yellow vests,
  - take attendance
  - help get children ready for the evacuation, with the co-operators.
- **“A” Co-oper**
  - Put on neon yellow emergency vest
  - Put on co-oper emergency backpack
  - Assist the children with putting on
    - any outer wear
      - jackets
      - gloves/mittens
      - hats
      - boots
    - child’s personal backpack (from their coat hook)
      - check that straps are adjusted properly, so the child can wear it comfortably enough
    - wrist bands (located in the teacher’s emergency backpack) if this were a real evacuation and not a drill.
- **“B” co-oper** *complete in the following sequence:*
  - Will first assist in readying the children to evacuate by
    - gathering all the children’s backpacks and coats for their class.
    - putting on a neon yellow vest.
    - helping children put on outwear garments and individual backpacks.
  - Will wear one of the two red co-oper backpacks filled with emergency supplies.
  - Will ensure windows and doors are closed, as well as all the same areas beyond their classroom as during a fire drill.
  - **In addition, the “B” co-oper(s) from**
    - **both 4s classrooms are to work together to**
      - take the dolly/hand truck from the playground stairwell,
      - go to room 104 and locate the 3 blue jugs of water stored in the lower cabinet and the yellow straps for securing them onto the dolly/hand truck;
      - bring the water jugs, probably one at a time, out to the parking lot;
      - once all three are outside, secure them all onto the dolly using the yellow straps;
      - bring the water jugs with us on the drill.
    - **rooms 102 & 112 are to determine if the nursery workers need help.**  
Once their needs are met, these co-operators are to return to their class.
- **Director**
  - Cash from secure locked location
  - Full set of school emergency cards
  - Communication device (i.e. – cell phone)
- **Ready to leave the school? Now what?**

- Wait for the “*Move Out*” signal from the Director, (who has consulted with the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator before issuing the signal)
- **Which classes exit through which door?**
  - the Room 109 (the Coat Room) door
    - Room 103 – Sibling Nursery (who have already gathered outside room 107/108 in the Hallway)
    - Room 104
    - Room 107/108
    - Room 110/111
  - the arched breezeway door between our school and RPC
    - Room 102
    - Room 112
- **Once outside in Parking Lot, now what?**
  - Each class is to line up where it would for a fire drill and the teacher is to take attendance
- **Once the entire school is in the parking lot, do the classes leave the parking lot in a particular order? Yes,** as follows:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> - Fours class (Director’s class if she is also a teacher)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> - Sibling Nursery personnel and SN children
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> – Threes &/or Twos classes
  - Last – Fours class (if there’s a second Fours class)
- If this is a drill, a **scribe**, who is not the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, will be used to record what actually happen, note any issues or concerns, and make note of any suggestions made at the time of the drill.
- As part of the “post mortem” comments, observations and suggestions are welcome from teachers and, co-ops who participated in the drill.

## Addendum 5: Shelter-in-Place Drill Instructions

*Please note: the premise for a shelter-in-place drill is similar to that of a fire drill, in that they are both timed. For a fire drill, the object is to evacuate the building to a safe location as fast as possible, while leaving the building with as many fire breaks in place as possible. The purpose of a shelter-in-place drill is for each class to move to their assigned interior space as quickly as possible, with as many fire breaks in place (doors and windows shut) as possible.*

- **What's the timing of the drill?**
  - Usually after the children have met with their teacher and settled into the morning;
  - Planned with the Director, Conducted by the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
- **What will the verbal signal be to start the drill?**
  - “**Shelter-in-Place**” declared by Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
- **Who does what when the drill has first been declared?**
  - Once the need to shelter-in-place has been declared, the **teacher**, the **students** and the “**A**” **Co-oper** are to move the children to the assigned interior spaces as quickly as possible.
    - The **teacher** is to take with her
      - her attendance sheet
      - her Sign-in/sign-out clip board;
      - the purple & white epi-pen container (if it is being used to store an epi-pen),
    - the **teacher** leads the children to her class’ designated interior space;
    - the **A co-oper** makes sure that all the children follow the teacher and that no child is left behind.
  - the “**B**” **co-oper**
    - closes any open windows and doors after everyone else has vacated the classroom;
    - then rejoins her class, closing any applicable doors
  - When there is a **Single co-oper**, this co-oper goes with her class, functioning as the “**A**” co-oper, but is also to close any open windows and doors between the classroom and their interior shelter-in-place area.
  - The **Emergency Preparedness Coordinator** is to
    - Determine if the Sibling Nursery workers need help moving their little ones to their shelter-in-place location, to detail a “**B**” co-oper from any of the classes to assist
    - time the drill, and record the time on the record sheet in the office.
  - **Director** is to have with her
    - the full set of school emergency cards
    - a communication device (i.e. – cell phone)
- **Who decides when the shelter-in-place drill is over?** The Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, after s/he has witnessed all the classes moved to their assigned interior space, and the drill timed.
- **What happens after the shelter-in-place drill is over?** Classes resume.