



**PARENT HANDBOOK
2023-2024**

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Forward

Kensington Nursery School (KNS) is a non-profit, state-licensed family centered nursery school and is governed under state approved regulations. Class size for any one session is limited to 20 children, with one head teacher, an assistant teacher, and teacher's aide when enrollment warrants.

In the months to come, you will begin what can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life --seeing your child develop and grow into a unique individual. It is the hope of our staff that our nursery school can help your child grow emotionally, physically, socially and intellectually. In short, we want to share in the delight of watching your child grow with you.

This handbook is designed to aid you in answering some of your questions. Please read it carefully. If at any time you have a question that seems unanswered in this handbook, please feel free to ask any of us. Your questions and comments help us grow and learn more about your children with whom we work.

We hope that your year as a parent in the Kensington Nursery School will be most satisfying, rewarding, and fun! Thank you for sharing your child with us and for being part of our family at Kensington Nursery School.

The Staff

Kensington Nursery School

Philosophy

Kensington Nursery School, an outreach program of the Kensington Congregational Church, is a non-profit, state-licensed, family centered school. Kensington Nursery School is open to any child regardless of race or creed. As a family centered school, we welcome and rely on parent involvement in our school. This is not only your child's school; it is your school too! Our success depends on the support of our families and our dedicated staff. Family support and involvement demonstrates to the children that they and their school are important and valuable.

Kensington Nursery School meets each child where he/she is developmentally and challenges them to grow. Our curriculum is child-centered, play-based and developmentally appropriate. Each child learns through exploration, the joy of discovery and critical thinking. Our nurturing and safe environment gives children the opportunity to try new things, explore the world around them, and gain independence. Our wide variety of experiences helps each child develop a sense of self and appreciation for the uniqueness of others and of the world around him/her. Children come together in an atmosphere of acceptance and care, which encourages sharing, helping others, courtesy, respect for others and their property, and an understanding of their responsibilities as a member of a community.

****All employees of Kensington Nursery School are required and mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect. See pages 13-18 for more information.****

School Policies

Please call the school @ 860-828-7412 or use ClassTag to notify the staff if your child will be absent for any reason. Please include a brief description of reason for absence.

Arrivals and Dismissals

For the safety and security of our school, doors remain locked throughout the day. Classroom doors open for arrival at 8:55 am.

If you arrive after 9:10am, you will need to knock at the classroom door to gain access.

Session times are: Pre-K 3: 9:00am - 12:30pm
Pre-K 4/5: 9:00am - 1:55pm

Dismissal time is: Pre-K 3: 12:30pm
Pre-K 4/5: 1:55pm

If you are unable to pick up your child, please notify the Teacher. Written parental permission is required for anyone else to pick up your child. In an emergency, we will refer to the emergency pick up list and photo I.D. will be required at pick up.

If a student is not picked up 15 minutes after class dismissal the parent(s)/guardian will be contacted by phone. If the parent(s)/guardian cannot be reached the emergency contact person(s) will be notified by phone. If neither the parent(s)/guardian nor emergency contact person(s) can be reached by phone KNS staff will call the police. Two staff personnel (minimum 18 years of age) will remain with the child.

Waiting in the courtyard is not permissible at any time during school hours. Please wait in the playground area. The courtyard is an exit area and must be kept clear in case of emergency.

Health Information

Health forms

All children attending the preschool are required by state regulation to have an up-to-date health assessment and immunization form on file. The forms must include the signature of the health care provider. This form must be updated within 30 days of your child's next annual exam.

Medication

Kensington Nursery School staff will only administer medication for life threatening conditions (i.e., allergies). A written authorization from a physician and parent must be on file. All medications are provided by parents and kept on hand at school. Staff is trained in first aid, CPR, and the administration of medications such as Epi-pen.

To protect our students with nut allergies, KNS is a nut-free school. No peanuts, tree nuts, nut butters or spreads are allowed at school.

Illness

Children are able to enjoy school and participate fully when they are healthy and well rested. Please do not send children to school if they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- A fresh cold - continuous or off-color nasal discharge
- Fever - must be fever free unmedicated for 24 hours
- Vomiting/Diarrhea - keep home for 24 hours after symptoms resolve
- Continuous Cough
- Sore throat

Children who display any of the above symptoms should test for COVID-19 (home test or lab) before attending school. See COVID-19 Addendum for further information.

In the interest of keeping our school a healthy and safe learning environment, children who exhibit symptoms of illness while at school will be sent home. Parents will be contacted to arrange pick up of children who become ill while at school.

If your child will be absent from school, please call or use ClassTag prior to class and include the reason for your child's absence. The school phone number is **860-828-7412**. You may leave a message if we are unable to answer your call.

Supervision

Providing a safe, comfortable, warm and loving environment in which to learn, grow and thrive is the goal of the supervision policy of Kensington Nursery School. Keeping children safe is a top priority of Kensington Nursery School. Children will be actively supervised by staff at all times while school is in session, from parent drop-off until parent pick-up. Active supervision is achieved through focused and intentional attention and observation. Staff is actively watching, listening and counting all children throughout the day.

Ratios:

Student: Staff ratio is planned at 7:1. Should the ratio fall below 10:1 due to staff illness/absence, session will be cancelled for the day. Substitutes will be used to avoid cancellation. Class size will not exceed 20 students.

Supervision of Children:

In order to supervise effectively, teachers and staff must:

- Know the abilities of the children
- Establish clear, simple safety rules
- Be aware of, scan for and remove potential safety hazards
- Place yourself strategically to adapt to the needs of the children
- Scan play activities and circulate
- Teach children developmentally appropriate and safe use of equipment.

Indoors: Staff will actively supervise children at all times. The environment will be clutter free and allow for children to be seen and heard. Staff will position themselves to see and hear all the children in their care. Staff regularly scans and counts children, especially during transitions. Play is not allowed in rooms without staff present.

Bathroom: Children are allowed to use the bathroom independently. Privacy is afforded by closing the door (not fully) to allow a visual barrier while allowing staff to monitor should the child need assistance. Staff will ensure children wash hands following bathroom use.

Outdoors: Active supervision is provided at all times. The environment and equipment will be clutter free and well maintained. Staff positions and repositions to be able to see and hear all of the children in their care. Staff continually scan and count children, particularly at times of transition to and from outdoor play areas.

Supervision focuses on the positive rather than the negative. The goal is to teach children to be safe while at work and at play.

Discipline

At the beginning of each school year, together we establish and discuss our classroom rules. The rules focus on consideration of others, use of words instead of physical actions, and kindness. The goal of discipline is to help the child develop self-control and move toward appropriate social behavior. We use developmentally appropriate methods for resolving conflicts such as:

- Positive guidance:
When disputes arise, the staff will encourage "talking it out" with the goal to acknowledge feelings and find solutions using the children's ideas whenever possible.
- Setting clear limits:
Staff will encourage and model positive behavior, employ positive reinforcement and clearly defined rules.
- Redirection:
A child having difficulty or who is disruptive may be asked to make an activity choice in another area.

The staff offers active support, guidance and reminders of desired behaviors. Children are continuously supervised during disciplinary actions. The use of abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating or frightening punishment is prohibited. Physical restraint is not used unless necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other people.

Registration/Admissions

Admission to Kensington Nursery School is by lottery as outlined in the KNS By-laws. Once enrolled, a child is ensured placement at Kensington Nursery School for the subsequent year. Re-enrollment and placement are completed during the pre-registration period. A lottery is used for placement when there are greater than 20 applicants for a session. For more specific information regarding the admission, enrollment and withdrawal process, please refer to the KNS By-laws or contact the KNS Administrator.

Toilet Training

All children must be toilet trained prior to the start of the school year or they will not be eligible for admission. Each child will use the toilet independently while at school. In the event of a toileting accident:

- Staff will retrieve spare set of clothing, wash & thoroughly dry hands and put on protective gloves
- Child removes soiled clothes, self-cleans, and dresses in fresh clothing. Staff assists as needed.
- Soiled garments are returned to parents in a sealed plastic bag for laundering.
- Child and staff wash & thoroughly dry hands before returning to activities.

Tuition

During enrollment, each family signs the Kensington Nursery School contract whereby they agree to a tuition payment schedule. Tuition not received by the 7th of the month will incur a \$20 late fee. An additional \$10 per day late fee will be assessed each day after the 8th of the month. These fees are waivable with advance arrangements and approval by the KNS Director. For more specific information regarding the tuition amounts and payment due dates, please refer to the contract or contact the School Administrator or Director.

Kensington Nursery School is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
Our tax ID number is: 06-0776617

Communication

KNS administration and staff will keep an open line of communication between families and the school. Teachers are always ready to share information about your child's day at school! KNS will use ClassTag as a primary source of communication to keep families up-to-date with all that is happening in the classroom and information about school wide events. ClassTag is an online classroom events management and parent involvement tool for teachers. This app allows teachers to create custom classroom events and share notices for parents to review, RSVP, and participate in. We will also provide home/school folders to send and collect paperwork. Should you need to call the school, the phone number is (860)828-7412, please leave a message if no one is available to answer your call.

School Closings

KNS closings will be regulated by:

- Berlin Public Schools closing, due to inclement weather.
- Discretion of Teacher and Director.
- Advisement from the Central CT Health District due to an outbreak of infectious disease within the school/class.
- In the event that both Teacher and Assistant Teacher are out, school will be cancelled.

Closing of Berlin Public Schools due to inclement weather is reported by the local TV and radio stations. Closings affect Kensington Nursery School as follows:

- Early closing of Berlin Public Schools because of inclement weather will result in an early closing of KNS. Classes dismiss at 11:30am.
- 2-hour delay opening for Berlin Schools will result in an abbreviated day for both classes as follows:
 - Pre-K 3 Class: 10:30am-12:30pm
 - Pre-K 4/5 Class: 10:30ap - 1:55pm

**** NOTE:** Announcement of cancellation of "Pre-K programs" due to weather on local stations is for public schools only. If you are in doubt, check ClassTag for the latest updates.

School policy is to make up inclement weather days when they exceed two cancellations for the Pre-K 3 Class and three cancellations for the Pre-K 4/5 Class.

Child Needs

Please send the following items with your child:

1. One complete change of clothing: socks, underpants, shirt and pants. (To be collected at the beginning of the school year and held for emergencies).
2. A lunch box with ice pack and reusable water bottle marked with child's name.
3. A recent photograph at the beginning of the school year that will be returned.

Clothing worn to school

To play freely and without inhibition, your child needs to feel comfortable. He or she may not want to participate in activities if fearful of soiling their clothing. Dress your child in washable clothing that allow for freedom of movement. Sneakers are the recommended footwear. Dress shoes/sandals/flip flops are not recommended, especially for outdoors on the play equipment. The classrooms are adequately heated in the winter, so do not dress your child too warmly. On cold days, send mittens and a hat for outdoor play. Snow pants and boots are required for snow play.

THE CHILDREN GO OUTSIDE UNLESS THE TEMPERATURE IS VERY LOW OR IT IS RAINING (at the Teacher's discretion). Please see that your child is properly dressed for outdoor play. If your child cannot go out for some reason, please keep the child home, or pick him/her up before the class goes outdoors.

Snack/Lunch Time

As a class, we will enjoy snack in Pre-K 3 and lunch in Pre-K 4/5 each day.

During Snack and Lunch Time, we use our best manners, use polite words, and enjoy conversation with friends. All children remain seated at their table until it is time to be excused. Children ask to be excused prior to clearing their place and leaving the table.

The Pre-K 3 program will enjoy a snack at school each day.

Children will bring their snack daily.

Please:

- Pack lunch in a lunch box or bag labeled with your child's name
- Include an ice pack to keep cool
- Snack must be nut-free (no peanuts, tree nuts, nut butters or spreads)
- Include a re-useable water bottle with drink, labeled with your child's name.

The Pre-K 4/5 program will also enjoy lunch at school each day. Children will bring their lunch daily.

Please:

- Pack lunch in a lunch box or bag labeled with your child's name
- Include an ice pack to keep cool
- Lunch must be nut-free (no peanuts, tree nuts, nut butters or spreads)
- Include a re-useable water bottle with drink, labeled with your child's name.

****KNS IS NUT-FREE! NO PEANUTS, TREE NUTS, NUT BUTTERS OR SPREADS ALLOWED!****

Kensington Nursery School

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A Policy Statement

Children have a right to be free from abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating or threatening punishment. Children have the right to be ensured a nurturing and safe environment.

All school personnel (director, teachers, teacher assistants, teacher aides and working parents/adults) have the responsibility to report incidents of suspected child abuse. This includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional, educational, and/or physical neglect.

Definitions of Abuse and Neglect

Abuse

1. Physical injury or injuries inflicted upon a child (other than by accidental means) by a person responsible for the child's health, welfare, or care or by a person given access to the child by such a responsible person.
2. Injuries which are at variance with the explanation of their occurrence.
3. Presence of conditions which are the result of maltreatment such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

Neglect

Can be described in one or more of the following ways:

1. Has been abandoned
2. Is being denied proper care and attention, physically, educationally, emotionally or morally
3. Is being permitted to live under conditions, circumstances or associations injurious to the child's well-being
4. Is in danger of being abused even though one does not have reasonable cause to suspect or believe any such abuse has actually occurred

Intent of the State Law

The policy stated in the Connecticut General Statutes 17a-101, 17a-101a, 17a-101b, 17a-101c and 17a-101d:

1. Aims at the protection of children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected through injury and neglect.

2. Requires reporting of suspected child abuse/neglect to achieve this aim.
3. Requires reporting and other specific procedures when the suspected abused is a school employee.
4. Calls for the investigation by a social agency and/or police department to determine actions (if any) necessary.
5. Provides for services, when necessary, and strengthens the family so that it may provide good childcare.
6. Permits temporary or permanent removal of the child from his/her home if such is necessary for his/her safety.

School Procedures for Reporting Child Abuse

1. School personnel may initially question the child to determine if the child's injuries resulted from other than accidental means, sexual abuse, or malicious acts by the child's caretaker. However, in no case, should the child be subjected to undue pressure in order to validate the suspicion of abuse. Validation of suspected child abuse is the responsibility of the Department of Child and Families (DCF) and/or the police department. Any doubt about reporting can best be resolved by consulting with DCF.
2. A. If the alleged perpetrator of the abuse does not reside in the home with the child, then the teacher, the director or the director's designee will notify the parent that a referral has been made.
B. If the alleged perpetrator of the abuse lives in the home, and/or in judgment of the teacher and/or director, the parent may punish the child for revealing the abuse; thus, the notification of the parent of the child abuse referral will be done by DCF.
3. Mandated reporters must report orally to the DCF Hotline or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected and must submit a written report (**DCF-136 form**) to DCF within 48 hours of making the oral report.

NOTE: Phone numbers for DCF and the police department shall be posted in proximity to the school telephone with other emergency numbers. The central intake toll free number for DCF's Careline (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) is 1-800-842-2288. The DCF Regional Office is located at 505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT and their phone number is (860) 832-5200.

If the suspected abuse is observed by a working parent, the teacher, teacher assistant and/or teacher aide must be informed immediately in order to follow the stated procedures. The observer of the suspected abuse will also inform the director who will inform the pastor and the Christian Faith Formation Committee of Kensington Congregational Church.

4. A child, by word or action, may identify a particular injury, the extent of which can only be determined by removing the child's clothing. **In the event that visual confirmation of injury or neglect is necessary, no school personnel may request or remove the child's clothing.**
5. Whether or not the report of suspected child maltreatment was initiated by the school, the victim may be questioned by a DCF social worker and/or police officer. DCF may inspect school records as a part of their investigation without obtaining permission of the child's parent or guardian.

NOTE: It is certainly advisable that DCF and/or the police interview the child at school with parental knowledge; however, in some situations where the child may be in immediate danger, it is not always possible.

Emergency Care

1. If a student appears to be seriously injured, an immediate medical examination by the school doctor or family doctor shall be requested. In addition to the school doctor, a staff member shall be present during such examination.
2. If a school medical advisor is not readily available and there is no need for emergency first aid, other school personnel who have completed a course in first aid may render first aid to the child. (A person providing such aid is not liable for civil damages for any personal injuries which result from acts or omissions in rendering the emergency first aid.)
3. Transportation for a child to a hospital in any emergency situation that may be a result of abuse or neglect will be provided to the same extent as it would be provided to any other child in need of emergency service.

Reporting Procedures When the Suspect is School Personnel

1. Any school personnel (teacher, teacher assistant, teacher aide, and/or working parent/adult) who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused by school personnel must report the abuse to the KNS director and/or the chairperson of the KNS Board of Directors (BOD). If the suspected party is the director, school personnel should also make oral and written reports directly to the pastor of Kensington Congregational Church and the chairperson of the KNS BOD.
2. The KNS director and/or the chairperson of the KNS BOD or their designee shall immediately notify the child's parents or guardian and make an oral report immediately by telephone to DCF and the local police department or the state police.
3. This oral report must be followed within 48 hours by a written report to DCF and the local police department or state police. The KNS director will provide a written report to the minister, the Christian Faith Formation Committee and the Church Committee of Kensington Congregational Church.

4. The report must name the child, parents, address, child's age, nature and extent of injuries, the name of the suspected school personnel and any other information that might be helpful in protecting the child.
5. Whenever an investigation produces evidence that a child has been abused by a staff member of a public or private institution or facility providing care for children, such institution, school or facility may suspend such staff person. Such suspension shall be with pay and shall not result in a reduction or termination of benefits to such employee. Such suspension shall remain in effect until the incident of abuse has been satisfactorily resolved by the investigative agencies involved.
6. Whenever a report has been made by any school personnel or by any person that abuse or neglect has occurred at an institution or facility that provides care for children which is subject to licensure by the state and DCF has reasonable cause to believe abuse or neglect has occurred, the Commissioner of DCF shall forthwith notify the state agency responsible for licensure of such institution or facility of such information.

Role of Department of Children and Families

1. **Determination of Need:** If the director or the director's designee believes that an interview in the school setting may be necessary in order to protect the child, DCF must be notified as early in the school day as possible. DCF will advise school personnel whether the child must be interviewed in the school. If DCF determines that a school interview is appropriate, the DCF social worker will notify the director or the designee prior to the visit. The DCF worker will provide DCF identification upon request. Should the worker not arrive as scheduled and the school personnel decide that the retention of the child beyond the school day is necessary to protect the child's well-being, the director or the designee must attempt to notify the parents of the child. If reasonable attempts by the director or designee are unsuccessful, the director or the designee will notify the town's social worker or the police department to ensure that the child is protected and receives appropriate overnight accommodations.
2. **Process (In-School Interview):** The school will provide a private place for the DCF worker to interview the child. School personnel will not be part of the interview unless specifically asked to do so. In either event, the investigation is to be conducted solely by the DCF worker. If during the investigation, the DCF worker requests the removal of the clothing worn by the child, the examination will be made by the school or family doctor in the presence of the DCF worker and the director or designee and in accordance with the procedures outlined above.
3. **Removal from the Home and/or School:** If DCF has probable cause to believe the child is suffering from serious physical illness or injury or is in immediate danger from his/her surroundings, and that immediate removal from such surroundings is necessary to ensure the child's safety, DCF may remove or

authorize a law enforcement officer to remove the child from such surroundings without the consent of the child's parents or guardian. If removal of the child from the school is determined to be necessary, DCF shall inform the director or the designee of the removal. **Note:** It is the responsibility of DCF to notify the parents of any such activities or actions taken by DCF following the interview.

Protection against Liability

CT General Statute, Section 17a-101e, states that "Any person, institution, or agency which in good faith makes the report required by this section shall be immune from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed and shall have the same immunity with respect to any judicial proceedings which result from such report, provided such person did not perpetrate or cause such abuse or neglect."

Penalties for False Reporting or Failure to Report Abuse or Neglect

The penalty for failure to report suspected abuse/neglect by a mandated reporter is a fine of not less than \$500.00 and not more than \$2,500.00 and shall be required to participate in an educational training program pursuant to subsection (d) of section 17a-101.

AND

Any person who knowingly makes a false report of child abuse or neglect pursuant to sections 17a-101a to 17a-101d, inclusive, and 17a-103 shall be fined up to \$2,000.00 or imprisoned for not more than one year, or both.

Staff Training

School Employees Hired After July 1, 2011

All school employees hired on or after July 1, 2011, shall be required to complete the mandated reporter training program. All such school employees shall complete the refresher training program not later than three years after completion of the initial training program, and shall thereafter retake such refresher training course at least once every three years.

School Employees Hired Before July 1, 2011

On or before July 1, 2012, all school employees hired before July 1, 2011, shall complete the refresher mandated reporter training program, and shall thereafter retake such refresher training course at least once every three years.

Information on and contacts for scheduling mandated training can be found at www.ct.gov/dcf.

Documentation Requirements

The school will keep a copy of the Form 136 submitted to DCF; a copy of a DCF inspection, if one was done; and a copy of the witness statement, if one exists.

Questions/Concerns

If at any time you have any questions or concerns regarding your child or the program, please bring them to the attention of the Head Teacher, a member of the KNS Board of Directors or the Director. We are happy to hear your ideas and input. Your help and ideas make our program better!

Have a great year at Kensington Nursery School!