

SPROUT HOUSE
PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK
Signature Page – Please Sign Below and Return to Office

revised: April 2022

The Parent/Guardian Handbook contains many important policies and procedures. Please read through it carefully and sign below to acknowledge your receipt and understanding of this information, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **INFORMATION TO PARENTS DOCUMENT**
- **POLICY ON THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN**
- **POLICY IN GUIDANCE AND POSITIVE DISCIPLINE**
- **POLICY ON METHODS OF PARENTAL NOTIFICATION**
- **EXPULSION POLICY**
- **POLICY ON THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA**
- **POLICY ON HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROCEDURES**

Child's Name: _____

Please print

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Please print

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Walking Trips/Playground Use

I give permission for my child to take short walking trips with Sprout House staff around the neighborhood – across Chatham Borough Memorial Field, Main St., around and into the Library of the Chathams, and to use the playground at Chatham Memorial Park.

Parent Signature: _____

SPROUT HOUSE, INC.
Parent/Guardian Handbook
STATE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS – INFORMATION TO PARENTS

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ORIENTATION

1. September Orientation Sessions. In an effort to make the transition to a new school or a new class as easy as possible, Sprout House schedules orientation sessions for parents to attend with their children prior to the first day of school. The orientation sessions run for 45 minutes and take place with the children's teacher(s) in the classroom. Parents are notified over the summer of the date and time of their orientation session.

Please Note: The orientation routine will be different under the COVID-19 regulations.

2. First Day of School. For preschool children who are attending Sprout House for the first time, a **parent must attend school with the child either during Orientation or on the first day of school.** This is to ensure the child's feeling of security throughout the new routine and to acquaint parents with the setting and the teachers. Please be prepared to stay with your child for as long as she or he needs on the first day. Some children will need a quick drop off and others will need a parent to stay and read a book, draw a picture, do a puzzle, etc. We welcome you to choose the option that will be least stressful for your child.

Please Note: This routine will be different under the COVID-19 regulations.

3. Transitional Objects. If it will help your child with the transition from home to school, they may bring in a tiny (palm-sized) stuffed animal or lovey. Please do not send in any other toys from home.

4. Family Photos. A photo of one or both parents is required for each child. Also, please donate a family photo for our album. This makes the connection between school and home stronger.

GENERAL PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

1. Sign in/Sign out. You must sign your child in and out at arrival and at departure. Please be sure to write legibly so that we have a clear record in the case of a fire or emergency.

2. Morning Drop-off Guidelines. Parents say goodbye at the front door. Children will be walked into school with a teacher.

3. Pick-up Guidelines. Your child's class will have a designated exit.

4. Cubbies. Your child's cubby is to be used to store all outdoor clothing and boots, lunch containers, and any other items from home such as transitional objects.

We do not have space to store items such as car seats, suitcases, sports equipment, etc.

5. Parking. Please pull all the way into the parking lot and park in a non-reserved space. Please be mindful of spots reserved for clergy or disabled. Do not park in front of Sprout House or in the driveway. Also, please do not ever leave a car with the engine running or any child in a car unattended.

PARENT NOTIFICATION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1. News and Announcements.** Parents will be notified by email of news and announcements.
- 2. Closings/Delays and Special Events.** Notifications of school closings/delays and special events will be emailed. Check email if weather is inclement.
- 3. Accident/Injury/Illness.** Parents will be notified by telephone in the event of an illness. We will contact you by phone immediately if your child receives any type of head injury, a bite that breaks the skin, a fall from a height or any injury that requires professional medical attention.

POLICY ON THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN

1. Authorized Pick-ups. Each child may be released only to his or her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parents(s) to take the child from the center and to assume the responsibility for the child in an emergency if the parent(s) cannot be reached. Identification will be needed.

Minors under the age of 18 years are NOT permitted to pick up children from Sprout House. The only exception is made for immediate family members 17 years of age documented in writing.

Parents are required to provide at least 2 persons who are authorized to pick up their child(ren) in an emergency. This information must be included on the Family Data form and include the authorized pick-ups' names, addresses, and telephone numbers. Please remember to review and update these periodically. **WITHOUT EXCEPTION**, no child will be discharged to unauthorized parties. Identification will be needed.

Parents must leave a written permission slip or send an email if someone other than a designated person is to pick up your child. The parent should also verbally notify the teacher.

2. Non-custodial Parents. If a non-custodial parent has been denied access, or granted limited access, to a child by a court order, the center shall secure documentation to that effect, maintain a copy on file, and comply with the terms of the court.

3. Failure to Pick up. If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) fails to pick-up the child at the time of the center's daily closing, the center shall ensure that:

- The child is supervised at all times;
- Staff members attempt to contact the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
- An hour or more after closing time, provided that the other arrangements for releasing the child to his/her parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s), have failed and the staff member(s) cannot continue to supervise the child at the center, the staff member shall call the NJ Abuse Hotline (1-877-NJ-ABUSE) to seek assistance in caring for the child until the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the child's parent(s) is able to pick-up the child.

4. Physical/Emotional Impairment. If the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parent(s) appears to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgment of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual, the center shall ensure that;

- The child may not be released to such an impaired individual;
- Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or an alternative person(s) authorized by the parent(s); and
- If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, a staff member shall call the NJ Abuse Hotline (1-877-NJ-ABUSE) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

HEALTH /MEDICAL PROCEDURES & POLICIES

1. Annual Health Exam. Each child must have a complete physical exam by a licensed physician or other qualified medical personnel, and must submit documentation on the Universal Child Health Record form prior to enrollment, and **update annually**.

2. Immunizations. Children must receive required immunizations in accordance with N.J.A.C. 8:57-4.6 and 4.7 prior to enrollment. Documentation must be submitted with the annual health exam. This information must be submitted prior to the start of school.

3. Illness Policy. If your child becomes ill at school, he or she will be kept comfortable in the office until they are able to be picked up.

Sprout House will not admit children who have any of the illnesses or symptoms listed, unless a note from a licensed physician indicates that the child poses no serious health risk to himself or other children:

- Severe pain or discomfort;
- Acute diarrhea
- Two or more episodes of vomiting within a period of 24 hours;
- Elevated temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit;
- Sore throat or severe coughing;
- Lethargy
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin;

- Red eyes with discharge;
- Infected or untreated skin patches;
- Difficult or rapid breathing;
- Skin rashes, in conjunction with fever or behavioral changes;
- Weeping or bleeding skin lesions that have not been treated by a physician;
- Swollen joints;
- Visibly enlarged lymph nodes;
- Stiff neck; or
- Blood in urine.

A child may be re-admitted when symptom free for 24 hours.

4. Excludable Communicable Diseases. Sprout House will not admit a child or staff member with an excludable disease as listed below until a note from a licensed physician indicates that the individual has been diagnosed and poses no risk to her/him self or others.

Respiratory Illnesses

- Chicken Pox German Measles*
- Hemophilus Influenza * Measles*
- Meningococcus* Mumps*
- Strep Throat Tuberculosis*
- Whooping Cough*
- Covid

Gastrointestinal Illnesses

- Giardia Lambia* Escherichia Coli*
- Hepatitis A* Salmonella*
- Shigella* Campylobacter*

Contact Illnesses

- Impetigo Lice
- Scabies Shingles

*We are required to report these diseases to the Public Health Department.

5. Illness Log. We are required to keep a log of illnesses. Please notify us in the morning if your child will be absent due to illness.

6. Administering Medication at School. If your child needs prescription or non-prescription (over-the-counter) medication while at school, please provide:

- Written approval regarding the administration of prescription or non-prescription medication. **Important note: No medication, including over-the-counter, non-prescription, will be administered without written approval from the child's parent.**
- The medication in its original container, **clearly labeled with your child's name**, with the prescription label or manufacturer's label and instructions that clearly show the name of the medication, the date prescribed, the expiration date and directions for administration.

- The appropriate measuring device needed to give the accurate dose of the medicine.

7. Accidents at School. If your child is involved in a minor accident at school, an Accident Report form will be written by your child's teacher, documenting the details and the action taken.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

1. Policy When Behavior is Inappropriate

- Remove the child if there is a danger to person or property.
- Ask the child to clarify what he/she is doing.
- Provide reason why the behavior is inappropriate.
- Redirect the child (suggest other interesting things to do).
- Take the time to describe both the teacher's and the child's feelings in an understanding way, maintaining firmness in not allowing the behavior.
- Wait for the child to decide whether he/she can return to the activity at hand, if possible.
- In some cases, the child may not return to the activity.

2. General Guidelines

- The director and teachers shall ensure that the methods of guidance and discipline used are focused on promoting positive behaviors; and are consistent with the developmental needs of the child. There shall be no use of corporal punishment.
- There shall be no verbal abuse. Teachers shall not use an inappropriate tone or language to shame, humiliate, threaten or intimidate children. Teachers shall refrain from name-calling and labeling children.
- Discipline shall not involve food as a reward or as a punishment in any way, nor will we force or withhold sleep, nor associate discipline with toilet learning.
- Children shall not be isolated as a punishment, confined without supervision, or required or forced to take an uncomfortable position or to repeat physical movements.
- Staff shall not withhold active play as discipline unless the child's action presents a danger to self or others

CLOTHING

1. Self-managed Clothing: Clothing worn at school should be easy for children to fasten and remove independently. This includes overalls, high-top shoes, belts, button sleeves, and difficult snaps. Elastic waists and Velcro shoes are recommended for young children. Please note: Jewelry is not allowed in school for safety reasons.

2. Change of Clothes. An **ENTIRE** change of clothing (underwear, socks, shirt, and pants) is to be kept in a shoebox, provided by Sprout House, in case of accidental soiling. Please be sure all items are **LABELED**, in season, and of the correct size.

3. Shoes & Boots. Outdoor and indoor shoes are needed daily. Flexible soled shoes (rubber type soles) and shoes with closed toes and heels are needed in the gym and outdoors on the playground. (no sandals, clogs, tevas, party shoes or crocs) Boots (rubber or hiking) are not permitted in the classroom. Children should always bring boots on cold, wet, snowy or muddy days. Avoid laces or your child will be waiting for help, instead of participating. In the interest of conserving resources and avoiding unnecessary plastics and chemicals, we are hoping you choose shoes for your child that do not contain lights.

4. Outdoor Clothing. The policy is that there will be some outdoor play every day when the temperature is above 20⁰F. Warm outdoor clothing, including **snow pants, coats/jackets, hats, mittens, neck gaiters, and winter boots**, should always be available on cold, snowy days. Mittens could be attached to coats or fastened by ribbon **through** the coat sleeves. Please be aware that long scarves are not permitted because they are dangerous on the playground. **Raincoats and rain pants or muddy buddies and rain boots** are required for rainy/wet days. Even in warm weather, pants are safer than shorts with consideration of bug bites and scrapes.

5. Jewelry is not allowed for safety reasons.

Important Note: All outdoor and indoor clothing, shoes and boots must be labeled with your child's name.

TOILET LEARNING and DIAPERS

Sprout House accepts children who have not yet learned toileting. Please provide your child's teacher with a supply of 5 diapers or pull-ups, and Wipes **CLEARLY** labeled. Our staff can offer guidance when requested.

MEALS

Sprout House is a NUT-free environment.

1. Snacks. Sprout House serves simple, natural, morning/afternoon snacks daily. **No sugary treats or non-nutritious snacks (including birthday treats) are served.** For birthday treats, parents are welcome to bring in bagels and cream cheese or healthy muffins.

2. Lunch Guidelines. Our prime focus for lunch is community - eating together and conversing in a natural way, modeling good table manners, and respecting each other and the gift of food.

- Meals should be nutritious and should include whole grains where possible, vegetables and fruit.

- No sugars, dyes, chemicals (this includes cookies, candy, Fruit Rollups, Shark Bites, etc.)
- No foods that could cause choking in young children, such as whole grapes or baby carrots; if these foods are sent for lunch, please cut them in half or in smaller pieces.
- Meals should be environmentally packed. Please utilize reusable containers as much as possible. This is a good chance to teach your child about eliminating waste, which we deeply value at Sprout House. Cloth napkins will reinforce this concept.
- Uneaten food will be returned home to minimize waste and to allow parents to monitor what children are eating.
- A beverage may be provided in a reusable container. Water will be served to children who do not bring a beverage.

REST/NAP

Please send in a crib sheet and blanket for your child's sleep mat. These items will be stored at school for the week and sent home on Fridays to be washed and returned.

CALENDAR/ATTENDANCE/TARDINESS

1. School-year Calendar. Parents must check the school calendar for holidays on which the school is closed. The calendars are distributed to families and a copy is located on the parent bulletin board over the sign-in area, as well as on our website (sprouthouse.org).

2. Attendance: Please call Sprout House if your child is not coming on their scheduled day. Records must be kept for reportable illnesses, so please advise us of your child's symptoms.

3. Tardiness. Please make every effort to arrive on time. It can be disorienting for young children to enter the classroom once the day has already started, as well as disruptive to the other children and teachers

4. Vacations. We realize that some of our families take vacations or family trips during the school year which conflict with the Sprout House term. We encourage you to regard these trips as extended learning experiences. However, for Kindergarten students these absences are counted against state mandated attendance requirements and are recorded. It is again your responsibility to ensure that any missed work is made up upon your return. Additionally, extended absences are difficult for children socially and are not recommended.

5. School Closings due to Inclement Weather. In inclement weather, school closings and/or delayed openings will be announced via email. Please remember to check your emails when inclement weather threatens.

CONTRACTS/BILLING/FEES

1. Contracts. Your contract states the program, schedule and monthly tuition fee for which your child is registered. Any changes to your contract must be approved by the office.

2. Tuition Invoices. Invoices will be emailed by the first of the month, November -May. Payment is due by the 10th of the month or the first business day after the 10th. Late fee is \$10. (\$20 for 22-23 school year) If payment is not received by the last day of the month, Sprout House reserves the right to restrict the child's attendance until payment is received.

3. Late Pickups. A child who is picked up later than the contracted time will be charged a \$10.00 late fee. In addition to the \$10.00 late pickup fee, a fine of \$1.00 per minute will be placed on this type of lateness. Termination will be considered in such cases. (Late pick-up charge will increase to \$20 school year 22-23)

DISPUTE/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Disputes should be addressed with the specific staff member. If parent and staff member are not able to resolve the issue, bring the matter to the Director. If resolution is still not satisfactory, the parent may appeal to the Board of Directors.

EXPULSION POLICY

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of enrolled children.

PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Verbal abuse to staff.
- Other (explain)
-

CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
- Uncontrollable tantrums/ angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.
- Other (explain)

SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION

- If after the remedial actions above have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center.
- The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period.
- The parent/guardian will be informed about the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the center.
- The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety).
- Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED SOLELY BECAUSE A PARENT:

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center.
- Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures.
- Without giving the parent sufficient time to make other child care arrangements.

PROACTIVE ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO PREVENT EXPULSION

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior.
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriate of activities, supervision.
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
- Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Child will be given time to regain control.
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
- Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.

- Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion.
- The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
- The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior.
- Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation on premises.
- Recommendation of evaluation by local school district child study team.

LITERACY

1. Pre-reading/Pre-writing. Sprout House teaches pre-reading and pre-writing skills in the context of our integrated curriculum utilizing supported play, creative arts, literature, and science/nature. Current educational literature recommends that you refrain from teaching writing letters and numbers to nursery school children. Refer to literature on the anatomy of the eye and hand and the importance of learning concepts rather than straight line/ curved line recognition. For many children, the tendency to form letter reversals and develop improper pencil grips has far-reaching effects. Children will happily and easily learn these skills later anyway.

2. Children's Names. It is highly recommended that children's names be printed with the standard upper case capital letter followed by lower case (example: James rather than JAMES). The different configurations may be confusing to a young child.

CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

1. Planning. Sprout house does not use a pre-packaged early childhood curriculum (such as High Scope or Creative Curriculum). Curriculum is designed by classroom teachers to incorporate Preschool Standards established by the New Jersey Department of Education utilizing developmentally appropriate practices recommended by NAEYC (the National Association for the Education of Young Children) and addressing the emergent interests of the teacher and children in each class setting. High level pre-planning is done on a monthly basis and more detailed lesson plans are prepared weekly. The most detailed lesson plans are prepared for the Kindergarten level to ensure compliance with the New Jersey Core Curriculum requirements.

2. Assessment. Curriculum is evaluated monthly to ensure adequate exposure to the different genres in the areas of Language and Literacy, Music and the Science Inventory. Additionally, each child is assessed quarterly to ensure they are getting adequate exposure and experience with all of the appropriate materials, equipment and practices appropriate for their developmental stage, and the class program is evaluated to be sure it is providing those opportunities.

TV, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Sprout House does not use television or computers in the classrooms with children.

The use of Social Media is limited to updates and posts to our website (sprighthouse.org) and Facebook page.

Unauthorized use of children's photos or videos is prohibited.

PARENT PARTICIPATION AND PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parents are welcome to visit the classroom with advance notice, and are asked to be seated if observing. A strong parent-teacher dialogue is encouraged. A note or email or DOJO message to the office or a specific teacher can initiate a conversation regarding a concern. Your child's teacher will invite you to Class DOJO at the beginning of the year. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year, in November and in the spring, and at any other time that either a parent or teacher feels it might be appropriate.

CLASS DOJO will show you highlights of daily curriculum.