

WESTMINSTER NURSERY SCHOOL
Handbook

Welcome Page

Dear Parents,

“Welcome to Westminster Nursery School”

It is with a great deal of excitement that we greet your children and you. We look forward to this school year together and becoming better acquainted.

This handbook is one way you can learn about Westminster Nursery School. Refer to it often throughout the school year for information regarding our curriculum, programs and procedures. It is our hope it will be helpful. Our website is also available to you at www.wnstr.org. If at any time you have a concern, please talk with me personally, with your child’s teacher, or with any of our office staff who will listen and refer your questions to the appropriate person.

This Fall, Westminster Nursery School will begin seventy-one years of celebrating young children and their developmental opportunities and experiences. Please join with us this year as we explore “childhood as a journey, not a race.” Your children and you are very important to us. We are anticipating a wonderful school year!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Michele Zaragoza

Director, WNS

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Mission Statement

Through developmentally appropriate hands-on learning experiences, Westminster provides children opportunities to express ideas freely and spontaneously, to encourage individuality and originality in their work and to approach problems and situations with a searching and endless curiosity.

School Philosophy

Westminster Nursery School celebrates the “wonder” of young children in a Christian atmosphere of care and concern while encouraging them to develop positive feelings about themselves and others. Westminster embraces all aspects of a preschooler’s growth ~ intellectual, social-emotional and physical. Experienced, qualified teachers guide children in learning experiences in accordance with each child’s individual rate of growth, development and readiness. Guided freedom allows for testing and trying different approaches with the comfort of knowing that positive guidance from the teacher keeps the experimenting within the realm of safe, creative learning activities. Westminster believes that “early childhood is not only where the future begins, but that childhood should be a joyous journey, not a race.” Remember “Children learn by doing.”

School History of Westminster Nursery School

Westminster Nursery School was established by the Session of the Presbyterian Church of Toms River in November 1951 with six pupils attending. In 1969 WNS relocated from Washington Street to the new church building at 1070 Hooper Ave. WNS has grown into the oldest and largest church-related nursery school in the state of New Jersey. The Fall 2022 enrollment consists of four-year-olds, three year olds and two and one half year olds. WNS is open to all religions and communities. People travel from as far as Manahawkin, Brick, and Manchester to attend WNS.

The school is housed in the renovated and expanded education wing of the Presbyterian Church of Toms River. The Westminster Nursery School Board is comprised of six church members plus the director of the school. This board makes decisions regarding policy, hiring and budgeting as well as offers support to the school in various other ways. Westminster’s staff and school meet the State of New Jersey Department of Child & Families, Office of Licensing requirements.

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In September 2012 Westminster added three and five full day classes to our four-year-old program choices. September 2008 Westminster opened a program for two and a half year olds. This program has been a success for our youngest students. Our Extended Care program began in 2015. In 2019 Westminster re-introduced Kindergarten to our school program choices. We continue to offer a full time Kindergarten program.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Westminster Nursery School, a New Jersey Nonprofit Corporation, admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origins to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and other school-administered programs.

Enrollment & Financial Policy

Enrolling Your Child

Registration is open to everyone. When enrolling your child, a fee of \$100 per child and \$150 per family, per year must accompany the registration application. This fee is nonrefundable and is not applicable toward tuition. All applications will be reviewed, and parents will be notified of acceptance by mail. All programs are subject to sufficient enrollment.

A medical examination is required of all pupils. All students 59 months and younger must comply with state regulations regarding annual flu immunization. The medical form will be made available to you once your child is accepted.

In the summer, you will receive your "Welcome Packet" in the mail.

Tours to view Westminster's programs, facility, and philosophy are available. Call 732-349-0535 for an appointment. The website is available at www.wnstr.org.

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AGE

- Children must be two and a half on or before October 1 to be eligible for a 2 ½ year-old group
- Children must be three years old on or before October 1 to be eligible for a 3 year-old group
- Children must be four years old on or before October 1 to be eligible for a 4 year-old group

TOILET TRAINING

Successful toilet training is required for all three and four-year-old children entering Westminster Nursery School. Children in 3 and 4 year old programs may not come to school in diapers or pull ups. If a child has a bowel movement accident, a parent will be called to come change the child to remain in school. If a child has a wet accident, the teacher will assist the child in changing his/her clothes. WNS provides a spare set of clothes to wash and return.

CLASS SIZE

- 2 ½ year olds: Approximately 10 children per class with 1 certified teacher and an assistant
- 3 year olds: Approximately 15 children per class with 1 certified teacher and an assistant
- 4 year olds: Approximately 20 children per class with 1 certified teacher and an assistant

Required Forms

- Photo/Personal Information Permission Form
- Medical Emergency Permission Form
- Child's Personal History Form
- Parent Receipt of Information Form
- Completed Medical Forms - Universal Child Health Record & Immunization Record
- Signed 2 ½ Year Old Information Form(if enrolled in the 2 ½ year old program)

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Tuition Fees

Our tuition is an annual tuition. You may choose to pay your annual tuition in full or 10 equal installments. You may also make multiple monthly payments in advance. A 10% discount is offered to additional siblings for families with two or more children enrolled during the same school year. With the 10 Payment plan, the first payment is due August 1st. All tuition payments are due the 1st of each month August through May. Any payment received after the close of business on the 15th of each month will incur a \$25.00 late payment fee. If payment is not received for two consecutive months, a meeting with the WNS Board will be necessary to formulate further financial arrangements and continued school enrollment. Failures to pay/habitual lateness in payments are reasons for dismissal from WNS. Westminster will charge \$25.00 for checks returned to Westminster unpaid by your bank. Payment may be made in your Brightwheel account or in the form of a check made payable to Westminster Nursery School. Auto pay is available and encouraged. If you are paying cash, please request a receipt (please do not put cash in box). You may drop the tuition check in the lockbox in our vestibule or mail it to Westminster Nursery School, 1070 Hooper Ave., Toms River, NJ 08753. It is necessary that your CHILD'S NAME is marked on each check for all your tuition payments, to ensure that your payment will be applied to the proper account in an accurate and orderly way. You will have access to your account on Brightwheel where you can retrieve information for child care reimbursement, tax purposes, etc.

Should you have any questions or concerns during the school year, please feel free to discuss them with Mrs. Festa, our financial administrator, in the main office. Thank you in advance for your timely payments.

2024 – 2025 TUITION FEE

2.5 year old programs

2 HALF DAY = \$2,800.00 annual/ \$280 x 10 installments

2 FULL DAY = \$4,300.00 annual/\$430 x 10 installments

3 HALF DAY = \$3,450.00 annual/\$345 x 10 installments

3 FULL DAY = \$5,450.00 annual/\$545 x 10 installments

5 FULL DAY = \$6,600.00 annual/\$660 X 10 installments

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2024 – 2025 TUITION FEE
3 year old and 4 year old programs

2 HALF DAY = \$2,700.00 annual/ \$270 x 10 installments
2 FULL DAY = \$4,100.00 annual/\$410 x 10 installments
3 HALF DAY = \$3,300.00 annual/\$330 x 10 installments
3 FULL DAY = \$5,100.00 annual/\$510 x 10 installments
5 FULL DAY = \$6,100.00 annual/\$610 X 10 installments
Kindergarten = \$6,700.00 annual/\$670 X 10 installments

Extended Care (1 hour/week) = \$40.00 month

\$100.00 REGISTRATION FEE PER CHILD

\$150 REGISTRATION FEE PER FAMILY
(IF ENROLLING MORE THAN ONE NURSERY SCHOOL CHILD)

\$150 KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FEE

\$25.00 LATE PAYMENT FEE (Applied after the 15th of each month)

\$25.00 RETURNED CHECK FEE

10% DISCOUNT ON 2ND CHILD

PLEASE NOTE: Our registration fee is non-refundable and not applicable toward tuition. No tuition deductions can be made for emergency closings, daily or extended absences during the school year or absences due to a public health emergencies. Because our expenses are paid by tuitions, a withdrawal must be submitted in writing to the Westminster Nursery School Board.

Extended Care

Before and After Care Program. Westminster now offers an extended hours program for the entire school year. Extended hours are from 7:30am - 9:00am in the morning and 3:00pm - 5:00pm in the afternoon.

Discounts

A 10% discount is offered to additional siblings for families with two or more children enrolled during the same school year.

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Changes in Schedule

We ask that in the event that your child's schedule needs to be changed, please notify the office right away.

Waitlist Policy

In the event that you receive your second choice at registration time, your child's name will be placed on a waiting list. When and if your first choice becomes available, you will be notified by the office.

Operational Policies

Hours of Operation

A.M. - 9:00 - 11:30 P.M. - 12:30 - 3:00 FULL DAY - 9:00 - 3:00

Children may be brought to class at 9:00 a.m. (morning/full session) or 12:30 p.m. (afternoon session). Children should be picked up promptly at 11:30 a.m. (morning session) or 3:00 p.m. (afternoon/full session). The times before and after class is the teachers' time for preparation, clean up, or lunch. Each day of class, all children must be accompanied to and from the classroom by an adult.

Westminster Nursery School will notify parents of school closings by using our One Call Now automated calling system and a message on Brightwheel. Closings will be announced on our website and our Facebook page.

School Closings, Emergency Closings, Delayed Openings, & Early Dismissal

In the event of temporary or permanent closure of the school, the parents of enrolled children will be notified in sufficient time, through our electronic communication system, to enable parents to make alternative child care arrangements.

When Toms River schools start on a delayed opening, due to inclement weather or other emergency situations, Westminster Nursery School morning sessions will begin at 9:30 a.m. If Toms River Schools are closed for the day, then WNS will be closed also. Closings will be

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announced on our website and our Facebook page. If the weather situation escalates and an early dismissal is necessary, all students must be picked up at 11:30 a.m. and afternoon classes are cancelled. We seek your cooperation in requesting that you check our website and our Facebook page rather than calling WNS.

With sincere concern regarding the challenging and uncertain times our nation/community may face, Westminster Nursery School wants to inform you of the special procedures we have in place to ensure the safety of your children.

We have talked with the Toms River Police as well as the Ocean County Office of Emergency Management and both have visited our school and informed us of the procedures we should follow. Our director has attended a workshop on emergency planning. Our plan is complete and our teachers are aware of the procedures we will put into place should a situation arise.

Our plan includes both a “shelter in place” and an evacuation alternative. Specific aspects will be communicated to us by township officials depending on the type of threat we might face.

We ask your cooperation for increased awareness for any notifications of alerts during your child’s school session. This notification should give you time to pick up your child.

Attendance Policy

Release of Children/Pick-up Authorization

Each child may be released only to:

- the child's custodial parent(s)
- persons authorized by custodial parent(s)

Parents should provide all contact information through each child's Brightwheel Platform. In accordance with state law, we must have on file the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all individuals authorized to pick up your child from school.

Whether or not a person is listed as an emergency/authorized pick-up, we must receive advance written or verbal permission in order to release your child to them. If you should need to phone us regarding a different person picking up your child, we would ask for a detailed description and require photo identification. We will release children to authorized persons only!

If there are custody arrangements, copies of legal documents must be provided to the director before any staff person can actively prevent non-custodial parent from picking up their child.

PLEASE NOTE: In the event that your child is still at school one hour after closing and we have not heard from you, we will take the following steps (in order):

1. Attempt to contact parent at home or work.
2. Call the people listed on the Emergency/Authorization Card.
3. Call Division of Child Protection & Permanency Hotline to seek assistance in caring for the child until parents(s) or person(s) is able to pick up the child.

Procedures to be followed by a staff member(s) if the parent(s) or person(s) authorized by the parents(s), appear to be physically and/or emotionally impaired to the extent that, in the judgement of the director and/or staff member, the child would be placed at risk of harm if released to such an individual. The procedures shall require that:

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1. The child may not be released to such an impaired individual.
2. Staff members attempt to contact the child's other parent or alternate person(s) authorized by the parent(s).
3. If the center is unable to make alternative arrangements, as noted above, a staff member shall call the Division's 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline (1-877-NJABUSE/ 1-877-652-2873) to seek assistance in caring for the child.

No child will be released to a person even if they are listed in your Brightwheel account. We must have advance written or verbal permission from a parent if this is different from the normal routine. Photo identification must be presented to the staff. Please inform the office of changes in phone number, emergency numbers and other pertinent information. Children will be ready for dismissal at 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Please arrive for them no later than 11:40 a.m. and 3:10 p.m.

Notification of Absence

If your child is going to be absent from school for any reason, we would appreciate that you notify the office. If your child is absent for three or more days, you will receive a courtesy call from the child's teacher.

Withdrawal Policy

A written request for withdrawal from Westminster Nursery School is necessary for the WNS Board to consider releasing parents of their 10-month financial obligation.

Discipline/Positive Guidance/Progressive Guidance

Our school's philosophy in guidance and discipline is to develop skills within each child which help him/her to function effectively in individual and group situations without undue stress or punishment.

Child guidance is another form of discipline (also termed positive discipline, a self-concept approach to discipline). We foster children's inner control and self-discipline by building a child's self-esteem.

EX: "It is fun to share the blocks with your friend John."

We use simple, clear, consistent, rules that a child understands. These appropriate guidelines help children to know what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

EX: "We only build blocks as high as our noses - we need you to come and measure."

We maintain a scheduled but flexible routine to foster a child's security. Teachers maintain structured activities and schedules so children can be active learners, and will not be bored into disruptive behavior.

We use no physical or psychological punishment.

- a. Children are re-directed in a positive manner and other choices of activities are offered.

EX: If a child is being unsafe in the block corner, he/she would be re-directed into another area by saying, "I wonder if it is your turn to paint or play this game now until you can use the blocks in a safe way."

- b. We permit no "put down" by others.

EX: "Sand is for playing not throwing." "It's okay, we all spill."

We provide quiet time to relax and release stress which in turn helps to cut down on confrontations among children.

EX: We use music from the record "Rest and Relaxation."

We use activities from the book "Think of Something Quiet."

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We do not use restrictive measures to keep a child quiet for a long time, take away food or isolate a child from the group. Removal from the situation or restraining the child are accepted measures of last resort, coming after words have failed.

EX: The adult holds the child quietly on a lap when he/she is emotionally out of control. The child is gradually calmed down by the security of the physical closeness and the understanding that if he/she can't control himself he/she is still safe because a sensible, sensitive, adult will take charge.

Parents are contacted by Director in situations where it has been determined by staff that additional awareness, support, and cooperation is needed from the family. Repeated use of re-direction or removal indicates there is trouble in the child's life, and more understanding of both the situation and the child is needed.

EX: A personal or phone conference is arranged to discuss unacceptable behavior. At this time the parent is encouraged to do additional reading from the school's' parent lending library. Example of books suggested may be: A Very Practical Guide to Discipline or Parents Please Don't Sit On Your Kids, etc.

Our staff models good manners and social techniques for social development.

EX: Our school feels strongly that positive role models convey an atmosphere of self-discipline for children to model.

Child guidance and positive group management require high level social skills of empathy and openness. These processes take commitment and practice. The staff deals with the young child's need to feel safe and secure, through personal acceptance, sensible limits, gentle correction, and genuine encouragement. Our teachers address behavior that needs addressing but respect the feelings of the child. This is the essence of a positive approach. Communication and close contact with parents is valued in all situations.

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Termination of Enrollment Policy

Unfortunately, there may be occasions when a child is asked to leave our program, either on a temporary or permanent basis. We want you to know that we will do everything possible to work with the family of that child to prevent this from happening. If such a situation should occur, a parent will be called, correspondence sent home and/or a conference arranged between parents, teacher and director. Reasonable time and efforts will be made in an attempt to remedy the problematic situation. If after two weeks the problem is not resolved or there has been no improvement, the center may find that they can no longer continue to accommodate the child. Examples of such situations may include but are not limited to, failure to make a suitable adjustment to school or uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts. Causes for immediate termination would be if a child causes serious injury to other children or himself/herself or if a parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff, children or other parents.

Safety & Security

Entrance Security/ Building Access

Westminster Nursery School's entrance is located at the south door of the education wing of the Presbyterian Church labeled with signs indicating WNS. Our school doors are secured and locked before, during and after school hours. It will be necessary for all visitors to ring a doorbell in the entrance foyer.

The staff of Westminster Nursery School is very aware of everyone's concern regarding safety. We work very hard to provide a friendly and yet secure environment for you and your children.

During your personal tour of Westminster Nursery School we will share the specific plans and procedures that are in place to insure the security of your children and Westminster. We will answer any questions you may have at that time.

Safety Practices

As required by Licensing, Westminster Nursery School is required to maintain and update, at least annually, a list from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) regarding unsafe

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Products. The list is available to parents at www.cpsc.gov/Recalls. A printed copy will also be available to parents as a reference to view in the office. The link will also be made available on the school's website @ www.wnstr.org.

On-Campus School Activity Policy

When in attendance here at Westminster, there will be times when the child will accompany his/her class from the school building on walks to Fellowship Hall/Church Gym, the playground, and any other outdoor activities during school hours, on the school premises only.

Parking Lot Safety/Car Safety

Entrance can be made on Chestnut St. or from the southbound lane of Hooper Avenue. The main entrance into WNS is located adjacent to the Hooper Avenue driveway. Please do not block the sidewalks. We ask you to park your car and walk your child to the classroom. We have a large school and need everyone's cooperation in making it safe. Come to your child's classroom door to pick-up for dismissal. Please do not leave siblings unattended in your car while picking up or dropping off your Westminster student. Please adhere to child car seat safety laws as required by the state of New Jersey and ensure your child is properly buckled and secured in the vehicle. Please use caution when navigating the parking lot. Drive slowly and watch for wandering children.

PLAY SAFE!

The basic concept of considering playground safety:

- Is it safe for all people?
- Am I taking care of myself, others and the environment?

Adult presence is needed to watch for potential hazards, observe, intercede and facilitate play when necessary. Strings on clothing or ropes used for play can cause accidental strangulation if caught on equipment.

One of our goals is to teach children to behave in an appropriate manner on the playground and ultimately take responsibility for all their actions. Discipline is a responsibility

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that is shared between the home and school. Parents can be most helpful by being responsible for seeing that their children come to the playground and follow the rules.

In order to keep our playground safe and the equipment in good working order, several playground rules are applied to its use:

- Proper footwear is required and no loose clothing especially with strings should be worn. Clothing is not to be tied on bars and/or used as support.
- Adult supervision is required for all children.
- Stay inside the playground area with your children while they are on equipment.
- No climbing, jumping or playing on fences.
- Wood mulch covering is necessary for reducing fall impact and for good drainage. It is not to be picked up, thrown, or kicked for any reason.

The following are not allowed around the playground equipment:

- food, drinks or gum
- pets of any kind
- sticks, wooden or metal bats
- ropes
- roller skates, roller blades or skateboards
- hard balls such as baseballs, golf balls, etc.
- frisbees
- games that involve any tackling, tagging, pushing, shoving, grabbing, pulling, knocking down, tripping, throwing, or climbing or jumping on one another.

Playground equipment is for all children. They should take turns and share the equipment

All children are expected to play cooperatively with other children.

Use playground equipment for their proper purposes only.

Follow directions of adults.

No jumping off high from any climbing bar or platform.

Slides:

- Climb the ladder and go down the slide one at a time.
- Go down in a sitting position, feet forward.
- Wait until the person before you finishes sliding down first.

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- Climb inside the tunnel slide, do not climb on top.
- No clogging the tunnel slide.
- No running or climbing up the slides.

If anything is wrong with the equipment or someone gets hurt, notify any adult and/or get help immediately.

Teachers' CPR & First Aid Training Requirements

Westminster Nursery School requires all staff to be CPR/AED/First Aid trained and certified. This certification is renewed every two years.

Fire/Evacuation Drills

Westminster Nursery School conducts monthly fire and emergency evacuation drills. These drills are timed and reported as required by the Department of Licensing and the Fire Safety Commission. In the event that you are dropping off or picking up your child during a fire/evacuation drill, you must wait until the drill is complete and all children have returned to their classrooms.

Emergency Situations & Closings

The emergency evacuation site will depend on the nature of the emergency. The center director or her designee, in collaboration with the Office of Emergency Management and Toms River Police Department, and other emergency responders, will determine the most appropriate evacuation site based on the emergency. If your child is taken to an emergency evacuation site, you will be contacted at the primary number you provided and be notified of that location.

Each classroom has two emergency exits. The teacher in charge of the classroom at the time of evacuation will determine the safest evacuation route for the emergency. Emergency evacuation plans and maps are posted in each classroom for your review.

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Lockdown Procedures

If the program staff learn of a danger that requires a lockdown of the school, lockdown procedures are in place. During a lockdown, all entrances to the building will remain locked until The Toms River Police Department notify staff that the situation is safe. Please do not attempt to pick up your child during lockdown, as opening the doors to let you in puts all of the children in the program at risk. If you have additional questions about our lockdown procedures, please contact the center director.

Smoking & Prohibited Substances

Westminster Nursery School is a smoke-free facility. We prohibit the use of tobacco, alcohol, and/or illegal drugs on the school premises. We ask that you refrain from bringing in hot beverages at drop off and pick up times.

Health & Medical

Parents are expected to meet all health requirements as stated on your child's medical forms mailed to you with your acceptance letter. These are state mandated requirements. Student medicals must be on file in the main office prior to the first day of school. NJ state law requires the flu immunization annually between September 1 and December 31. Please bring documentation to the office from your doctor following your fall visit to immunize your child. Non-compliant students will be excused from school until April 1 which is the end of flu season. Please help us reach 100% for our annual audit.

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. Westminster Nursery School encourages you to have what is referred to as a "Medical Home", meaning that you have a regular pediatric physician that your child sees who performs regular check-ups to support good health and wellness. The prevention/spread of communicable disease among children in any community calls for cooperation between the home and the school. Refer to the chart on the following page of Rules Concerning Communicable Diseases/Other Health Concern. Please notify the school at once if your child does have an excludable, communicable disease including chicken pox, strep throat, conjunctivitis, German measles, Hemophilus influenza, measles, meningococcus, mumps, tuberculosis, whooping cough, Giardia Lamblis, Hepatitis A, salmonella, shigelloses, impetigo, lice, scabies, or Covid. Each parent whose child may have been exposed to the disease shall receive a written notice of the date of exposure.

Keep your child home IF:

1. He / She has a fever or has had one during the previous 24-hour period.
2. He / She has a cold that is less than four days old.
3. He / She has a constant cough.
4. He / She is fussy, cranky, and generally not him/herself.
5. He / She is tired: rest at such times may prevent the development of illness.
6. He / She has symptoms of a possible communicable disease. (These are usually sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, stomach pain, fever, acute diarrhea or vomiting within the past 24 hour period.)

Healthy Environment

Westminster Nursery School is committed to a clean and healthy environment this helps us to take the necessary steps to prevent the spread of illnesses throughout the school. We implement daily cleaning and disinfecting in our classrooms. Our table tops are regularly disinfected, including before and after meals and snack times. We encourage the children to maintain good hygiene as part of our daily routine. We frequently wash hands in the classroom, specifically before and after eating, after toileting, and after outdoor play.

Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding Policy

Westminster Nursery School subscribes to the following recommendations for promotion and encouragement of breastfeeding and infant feeding practices:

Staff members will encourage and support breastfeeding mothers to continue breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding mothers will have a clean, welcoming place to breastfeed or express their milk.

The conference room next door to the main office is the designated area for mothers to use for nursing purposes.

A refrigerator will be made available for the storage of expressed milk.

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Nutrition

One of the core responsibilities of every early education center is to support the healthy development of our children. Good nutrition is a key component of healthy development. We are committed to serving nourishing food which has been provided by our families, that is clean, safe, and developmentally appropriate for children.

Meals - Lunch for Full Day Students only

- We ask that all provided meals and snacks meet the USDA guidelines (Child and adult care food plan requirements). Lunch should include one serving of: fruit, vegetable, grains (bread, crackers, pasta) and protein (meat, beans, peanut butter, eggs). In addition a serving of liquid milk is suggested. For snacks in your child's lunch, 2 foods from any two categories is sufficient. If you have any questions about options or serving sizes please let us know – we are here to help.
- Children in care full time are asked to provide lunch.
- Children will be allowed to eat their food peacefully and not be rushed during meals.
- Food is not offered as a reward or denied as punishment.

Foods

- Fried foods, high fat foods (containing >35% of calories from fat), and salty foods should be avoided.
- Please do not send in high-sugar products (containing >35% of calories from sugar), including candy.
- We suggest providing whole-grain breads, pastas, cereals and crackers.

Snacks

Children at Westminster Nursery School should bring a healthy snack. This snack may include but is not limited to: water, graham crackers, pretzels, saltines and fruit/vegetables. This should be ONE, dry item that children can eat with ease and independence. Children drink water at snack time. Please do not send an additional drink.

Nutrition Education

- Staff members encourage children to try developmentally-appropriate servings variety of healthy foods as part of the curriculum.
- Children are encouraged daily to eat healthy.

Choose My Plate (choosemyplate.gov)

Eating healthy is a journey shaped by many factors, including your stage of life, family situations, preferences, access to food, culture, traditions, and the personal decisions we make over time.

MyPlate is a great resource to help support healthy eating styles and build on them throughout your lifetime. Everything you eat and drink matters. The right mix can help everyone be healthier now and in the future. This means:

- Start with small changes to build healthier eating styles.
- Support healthy eating for everyone in the family and it will become a habit for your child.
- Focus on variety, amount, and nutrition.
- Choose foods and beverages with less saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars.

All your food and beverage choices count. MyPlate offers ideas and tips to help you create a healthier eating style that meets your individual needs and improves your health.

Universal Child Health Records & Immunizations

Westminster Nursery School requires each of our enrolled children to have an examination performed by a health care provider within one year prior to admission. Parents are required to provide a completed Universal Child Health Record. This record is to verify overall good health and required immunizations. It is to be completed by the parents and the child's Pediatric physician. A copy of this form can be found under the Registration tab on our website.

In accordance with the State of New Jersey Office of Licensing, a child shall be exempted from a physical examination, immunization, or medical treatment if the parent objects thereto in a written statement submitted to the center, signed by the parent, explaining how the examination, immunization, or medical treatment conflicts with the child's exercise of bona fide religious tenets or practices.

Allergy & Medication Policy

Westminster Nursery School requires an authorization form signed by the physician and the parent/guardian of any student who must receive medication during school hours. Our school personnel may administer only emergency allergic reaction or asthma medication to a student with signed doctor's orders. This medication/Epi-pen must be in the original container and accompanied by a written physician and parental/guardian request. Permission forms to medicate for emergency allergic reaction or asthma medication are available in the WNS office.

All children who are diagnosed with a food allergy need to supply their own food for school. If there is a birthday celebration in the classroom, parents will supply their child with an allergy, a comparable snack. When there is a holiday celebration in a classroom, parents will supply their child with a food allergy, a comparable snack. Westminster Nursery School is not able to serve children with food allergies any food from the school or another parent.

All medications are to be checked in through the office and held in the classrooms, with the parent/guardian assuming the responsibility for delivering such and picking up unused amounts when no longer needed.

Management of Illness & Communicable Diseases

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, the child should not attend the center. If such symptoms occur at the center, the child will be removed from the group, and parents will be called to take the child home.

Severe pain or discomfort

Acute diarrhea

Episodes of acute vomiting

Elevated oral temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit

Lethargy

Severe coughing

Yellow eyes or jaundice skin

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Red eyes with discharge

Infected, untreated skin patches

Difficult or rapid breathing

Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes

Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding

Mouth sores with drooling

Stiff neck

Once the child is symptom-free, or has a health care provider's note stating that the child no longer poses a serious health risk to himself/herself or others, the child may return to the center unless contraindicated by local health department or Department of Health.

Excludable Communicable Illnesses

A child or staff member who contracts an excludable communicable disease may not return to the center without a health care provider's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others. These diseases include respiratory, gastrointestinal, and contact illnesses such as Impetigo, Lice, Scabies, and Shingles.

Note: If a child has chickenpox, a health care provider's note is not required for re-admitting the child to the center. A note from the parent is required stating either that at least six days has elapsed since the onset of the rash, or that all sores have dried and crusted.

If a child is exposed to any excludable disease at the center, parents will be notified in writing.

Communicable Disease Reporting Guidelines

Some excludable communicable diseases must be reported to the health department by the center. The Department of Health's Communicable Disease Reporting Requirements and Regulations can be viewed at: <http://nj.gov/health/cd/reporting.shtml>. Please refer to the COVID Policies Addendum for information regarding COVID-19 guidelines.

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Accident/Injury Policy

Your child's safety is of utmost importance to us. During normal child's play, accidental injury does occur. All staff are trained in First Aid, CPR, & use of the AED and will utilize their training in the event of such injury. Parents will be notified immediately via phone if the child's injury occurred above the shoulders. For any other injury, a parent/guardian will be notified by the teacher at the end of the session and asked to review and sign a completed Accident Report. A copy of the Accident Report will be supplied upon request. The Director or Designee will make a decision regarding the care of a child until a parent/guardian/emergency designee is consulted. Westminster Nursery School staff will use its discretion and training as necessary for each incident as it occurs. We will call 911 immediately if the injury necessitates further medical attention. There will be times when a child does not inform a staff member/teacher of an injury. Please feel free to call us to inform us of such incidents as they occur.

Child Abuse & Neglect

In keeping with New Jersey's child care center licensing requirements, we are obligated to provide you, as the parent of a child enrolled at our center, with this informational statement.

The statement highlights, among other things: your right to visit and observe our center at any time without having to secure prior permission; the center's obligation to be licensed and to comply with licensing standards; and the obligation of all citizens to report suspected child abuse/neglect/exploitation to the State Central Registry Hotline (877) NJ ABUSE/ (877) 652-2873. *Some COVID-19 policies may supercede this visitation policy.

Please read this statement carefully and, if you have any questions, feel free to contact the Director.

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Department of Children and Families
Office of Licensing
INFORMATION TO PARENTS

Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52), every licensed child care center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other child care matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents and staff this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families. In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent and staff member's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing (OOL), Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may view a copy of the Manual of Requirements on the DCF website at <https://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf> or obtain a copy by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJDCF, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

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Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the OOL's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are available soon after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the OOL's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review or you can view them online at <https://childcareexplorer.njccis.com/portal/>.

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the OOL for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents.

Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

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Our center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Our center is required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the center, and make the list accessible to staff and parents and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the CPSC at (800) 638-2772.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry Hotline, toll free at (877) NJ ABUSE/(877) 652-2873. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292- 0422 or go to www.state.nj.us/dcf/.

Curriculum

The focus of our Westminster curriculum is the whole child. Because young children learn best through active interaction with the physical and social environment, Westminster's curriculum emerges from a developmentally appropriate environment that is hands on experience rich and responds to the creativity of children and teachers. At WNS, children plan, make choices about which aspects of the learning environment to focus on, participate in small groups, and join in circle-time with the whole group. Teachers build upon, rather than direct or control the thoughts and actions of children. They use their talent and expertise to design, adapt and invent learning centers that best serve the children in the room. Children are guided in critical learning experiences that form the building blocks of healthy development and encompass the developmentally appropriate academic skills and understanding necessary for optimum school readiness.

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Westminster is implementing the latest version of 'The Creative Curriculum' developed by Teaching Strategies, Inc. as a guide for selection of our developmentally appropriate academic learning experiences. Through the implementation of curriculum studies the children will have the opportunity to investigate various topics in a meaningful way which will include literacy, mathematics, science, social studies and the arts. These subject areas will be explored through intentional teaching activities in the Centers within the classroom. Westminster Nursery School believes that purposeful and engaging play is a critical component of how children learn. When children play in meaningful ways, they learn about themselves, other people and the world around them.

Developmental Screening & Referral Policy

Teachers assess the children continuously throughout the school year with the use of anecdotes and observations of daily student/teacher interactions. Your child's teacher will discuss your child's progress at your Parent/Teacher Conference. This information will help reveal your child's strengths, uncover areas of concern, and determine if there are community resources or services that may be useful for your child or your family.

If it is determined that your child may benefit from additional resources, Westminster Nursery School will provide you with resources to refer you to community agencies or services that may be useful to you or your child.

Program Assessment

We continually assess all aspects of our program in a variety of ways in order to maintain high quality. Throughout the year we utilize research based assessment tools such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS). These may be conducted at any time, with or without prior notice to the classroom staff.

The ECERS will be utilized in our classes to objectively look at a variety of factors such as room arrangement, teacher child interactions, learning materials and health and safety procedures. It may be administered by the director or head teacher, or by staff from partner agencies. Results are then discussed by the director and teachers, and an action plan is created to ensure we provide the best possible environment for each child.

We also evaluate the implementation of our curriculum with the Fidelity Checklist, an assessment created by the publishers of the Creative Curriculum. This tool is designed to help ensure the curriculum is being fully implemented, and will be administered by the director or

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head teacher. Results are then discussed by the director and teachers and may be used to guide future staff development opportunities.

Personal Items

What to Wear to School

Westminster Nursery School believes PLAY is the WORK of children. It is important to send your child to school in “play” not “dress” clothes. At school children have opportunities to play with many different types of equipment and to explore and experiment with many different kinds of materials. They mix paint, construct buildings, play with sand and water as well as use paste and glue. They will climb, jump, roll on the ground and play on the floor. For these reasons, please send them to school in play clothes so they will be able to involve themselves freely with the many learning experiences provided. Because open-toed sandals are dangerous to wear when running and jumping outdoors, we ask that you send your child to school in shoes or sneakers for safety reasons. Please print your child’s name on the inside tag of jackets, sweaters, hats, boots, gloves, etc.

Toys from Home

Except for toys that are needed in the very opening days of school to help ease your child’s transition from home to school, we ask that you leave your child’s toys at home or in your car. If an item is brought to school, we cannot be responsible for it. If you have a special book that may be of interest to all of the children, we will appreciate this being shared with the class. Please do not allow your child to bring any devices that can photograph children. **ONLY** children in Kindergarten may bring backpacks to school. Children in nursery school programs may bring a lunch box and water bottle.

Birthdays and Special Classroom Celebrations

Birthdays are observed and celebrated with much joy. Parents may bring a simple snack. These birthday snacks must be store-bought and in a sealed package as per the NJ Office of Licensing. We encourage parents to choose a healthy snack for your child's birthday. Your teacher will provide a list of suggestions for birthday treats along with a birthday card from WNS. Please speak with your child's teacher and she will make this a special time for your child. Goody bags are not a part of our WNS celebration. Please save them for home celebrations and parties. You may bring birthday napkins for the friends in your child's class to use with your birthday classroom celebration. Summer birthdays will be celebrated in the spring.

In order to avoid hurt feelings, outside birthday party invitations will be handed out to classmates ONLY if there is one for EVERY child. Otherwise, please consider mailing your invitations.

Occasionally, special classroom celebrations may take place. At this time you may be asked by your child's teacher to contribute a food item to the celebration. Please follow the instructions of the teacher for these special requests. These food items should be brought to school when you drop your child off.

Family Involvement & Communication

Communication with Parents

Proper communication between our parents and teachers of Westminster Nursery School is important. Teachers may relay information about your child and school activities at drop-off and pick-up. Parents will be provided with information from the teachers in regards to curriculum topics and what the children are learning in the classroom.

It is imperative that you inform the office of any of the following changes to your child's information:

- Physical address, phone numbers, email address
- Parent/Guardian employment information, address and phone number
- Health and Immunization related changes
- Changes in your child's schedule
- Any other information that is pertinent to your child.

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Electronic Communication

Westminster Nursery School uses a combination of verbal, written, and electronic avenues to communicate with our parents. Our school has instituted a call system to notify you of any school closing or other emergency issues that may arise. The phone number and email address that you have provided on your child's registration form will be designated as the one phone number that will reach you at any time. You may be notified at any hour of the day or night. Teachers and school may use the Brightwheel App to communicate classroom activities and classroom information.

Monthly Activity Calendar

Our monthly activity calendar can be found on our website under the "Calendar" tab @ www.wnstr.org. It contains information about upcoming activities and events for our school's families and children. We try to include a variety of cultural activities that may of interest to our families.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parental concerns about classes or children should be brought to the attention of the teacher or director. The office staff is always available to direct you to the right person for help. A conference can be arranged for mutual understandings. Ask for a meeting when you feel it is necessary. Call the office or speak to the teacher directly. School conferences will be offered in the winter and spring.

Transitions

It is a collaborative effort between our families and our staff for a child to have a positive transition from home to school. Each child reacts differently to the separation from their parents when coming to school each day, and we will work together to support each child with this transition.

A child will feel more secure while at school knowing that their parent/guardian values their teacher, friends, and environment.

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When a child enrolls in a new program the child's classroom folder from the previous year, will be shared with the new teacher, including assessments, conference documentation, portfolio items and behavior support plans or IEPs if applicable. Classroom folders are reviewed by the teachers in order to support each child's individual needs and development.

When a child moves to a new program, such as moving on to elementary school, families will be provided with a copy of the classroom folder to share with their child's new teacher.

Strengthening Families

The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Survey is sent home yearly, and we ask families to complete it and send it back as soon as possible. The information we gather is designed to help us learn how to better support you and your family. We use this information to plan family group events, choose parent workshop topics and guide monthly newsletter information. These surveys help us identify needs within our school and allow us to tailor our family support activities to best meet your needs.

Home Language Policy

We are an open and inclusive program where all children and families are welcome. In order to support children whose first language is not English, we implement the following strategies based on national standards of best practice:

- we provide a well-equipped classroom that reflects diversity in materials, displays, books and activities;
- all children will participate in quality language and play experiences throughout the day, with both adults and other children;
- children may be taught basic classroom words in sign language to support communication;
- items in the classroom will be labeled with pictures as well as words;
- where possible, word labels will be added to the classroom in the home language;
- books will be added to the reading area in the home language;
- in order to assist us in communicating in the classroom, we ask families to give us a list of common words the child/ren might use in the home language;

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- we encourage families to speak to children in the home language at home;
- we encourage families to share items that can be used in the classroom that represent their home culture;
- we encourage family members to visit the classroom, and to share cultural activities with all of the children, such as holiday celebrations, foods, music, books, etc.; please contact your child's teacher to schedule a visit;

Back to School Nights

Back to School Night is an orientation night for parents only with your child's teachers to discuss the education and developmental goals for the school year. Please note that these are not individualized conferences. They are to provide parents with an overview of what your child will be doing in class.

Fun Nights

Parent/Child Fun Night consists of an evening hour of a typical day in our nursery school classroom shared with the moms and dads and the child enrolled.

Scholastic Book Fair

Introducing reading to your child is very important to us, this is why we host an annual Scholastic Book Fair prior to the holiday season for families to participate in.

Rainbow Kids

Westminster Nursery School is an outreach of the Presbyterian Church to the community. The Presbyterian Church feels so blessed to have your children in their midst. The children's energy and love flows so freely. In response, the church has created the special program, "Rainbow Kids" to reach out to the spiritual side of your young child. During the school year, the church will provide several assemblies in which your children will participate in music activities, singing and stories. During "Rainbow Kids," the children will discover the wonderful blessing they are, and the love God has for them. Parent participation will be welcomed at the assemblies. The gifted musicians of the church, will bring to life stories of

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God's love. Specific information regarding each of the "Rainbow Kids" assemblies will be sent home with your child.

Gift of Time Workshop & Kindergarten Readiness

This is a workshop presented mid-year for parents that helps them to understand how to make an informative decision as to whether or not their child will be ready for Kindergarten.

Classroom Observations

In the Spring parents have the opportunity to schedule a ten-minute visit to their child's classroom in order to observe your child's interactions in the classroom.

We use ECERS (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale) as a classroom observation tool. It is designed to measure the quality of group programs for children ages 3-5 years old. The ECERS can be used by staff for self-assessment of the quality of their classrooms, and to determine the areas of high quality and areas that may need additional attention. These may also be used by the director, curriculum administrator or other outside agencies, to determine action plans for working with programs or to examine the quality of programs over time.

We also evaluate the implementation of our curriculum with the Fidelity Checklist, an assessment created by the publishers of the Creative Curriculum. This tool is designed to help ensure the curriculum is being fully implemented, and will be administered by the director or head teacher. Results are then discussed by the director and teachers and may be used to guide future staff development.

End of Year Celebrations

To celebrate the completion of the school year Westminster welcomes families to a special party held in their child's classroom that highlights some of their favorite songs, stories, & activities.

Special Classroom Programs

Throughout the school year we are fortunate enough to be able to have various in-house programs presented to the children by select community organizations such as Cattus Island

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Park, Toms River Fire Department, Toms River Department of Transportation, and the Ocean County Library, to name a few.

Open Door Policy

In keeping with the open door policy for parents to visit any time, it will be necessary to ring a doorbell in the entrance foyer.

Parent Concerns/Grievance Procedure

If you have a problem or complaint, your first avenue is to schedule a meeting with your child's teachers. If the problem is not resolved, you may also schedule a meeting with the director. It is our goal to work with each family to create a positive learning environment for every child. By communicating with the teachers on a regular basis, problems should not escalate and should be resolved in a timely fashion.

Parent Resource Library

Our parent resource library contains books on the developmental growth of 2-year-olds, 3-year-olds, 4-year-olds, 5-year-olds, 6-year-olds, 7-year-olds, 8-year-olds, books on death, divorce, hospital stay, adoption, discipline and developmental readiness for school, etc. These books may be checked out in the school office. The director will be happy to offer guidance in selecting books of interest to you.

Parent Resource Binder

We have put together a Parent Resource Binder full of helpful information, including how to access community resources that are available to you and your family. This binder is located on the wall outside our main office. If you do not see the information that you need please speak with the director or one of the teachers and we will be happy to get it for you. If you are interested in family education resources specific to the needs of your child/ren or family, please let us know and we will be happy to share this information with you.

Social Media

Social media are defined as online technology tools that enable people to communicate easily via the internet to share information. Some of the most popular social media are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Westminster Nursery School utilizes both their website and Facebook pages to promote and enhance the school's program. There may also be times when parents will be taking photos or videotaping special programs or events. Although you may feel comfortable sharing photos of your child, other parents may not feel the same.

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Individual and group photos of children at school may not be posted on social media. No discriminating remarks may be made against Westminster Nursery School, its children, staff or any other person connected in any way to WNS. Westminster Nursery School may communicate with parents and staff through the use of text message, email and Facebook. Staff will communicate with parents through the use of a phone call or email from the office. Parent and Staff are not to communicate through texting and/or Facebook regarding the children enrolled at WNS or other school matters.

Photography Policy

We ask for your written permission to photograph, video tape, or use on the internet your child's image during the school year - as you may or may not have indicated on your signed registration application. No names will be published. Westminster Nursery School often incorporates classroom photos (i.e. Halloween, Christmas) for curriculum and/or special activities and programs. The opportunity for you to enjoy these photos will arise throughout the year. Such photos are often posted in the windows and classrooms for your enjoyment. At times when these photographs are taken, there may be multiple children in one photo. There are times when your child may be photographed by the classroom teacher for the purposes of tracking development and student progress throughout the year. These photographs would be included in the child's classroom transition folder that remains in the classroom or in the office for in-school use only. The use of the school's Brightwheel application will incorporate both individual and group photos of the children. These photos will appear in your child's activity feed in your Brightwheel account. If you have any concerns about the photography of your children, please notify the office in writing.

Technology

Westminster Nursery School understands that the use of television and other electronic media can get in the way of exploring, playing and interacting with others, which encourages learning and healthy physical and social development. The occasional use of screen-time for educational purposes will not exceed 30 minutes, whether they are enrolled in half or full day programs. TV screens may be used to connect to educational programs, to show a video of a story read for comparison, or a curriculum based topic. Although our school does have a television that can be brought into the classrooms, we are not connected to cable.