



Family Handbook 2020-21

Northfield Community Nursery School
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www.nfcns.org

Preface – In the time of COVID-19

It is the end of June as I write this; the coronavirus pandemic stopped preschools in their tracts in mid-March and we are all working towards a safe and positive reopening under the guidance of the Department of Children and Family Services, the Centers for Disease Control, the Illinois Department of Public Health, and the Restore Illinois initiative. The information you will read in this document is our best effort to respond to the changing parameters that we must use to guide our reopening, keeping the safety of our students, families and staff uppermost. It must be said that despite the numerous safety practices put in place to support that goal, there is always the risk of being exposed to COVID-19 when participating in group activities.

Is this handbook the final word on how our program will operate in the upcoming year? No, but it is the most complete information we are able to gather based on current requirements and recommendations. If we find that we must make changes, please know that we will reach out to you promptly. Clear and timely communication will be key to a successful, happy and healthy school year for us all. Thank you for your understanding, and for your support of our preschool community.

Heather Burns, Director

Director@nfcns.org

847-446-1116

Introduction

Welcome to Northfield Community Nursery School (NFCNS)! We hope that your child will spend a positive and productive year with us and that this handbook will prove helpful to you. It is designed to give you a brief overview of the school, its history and philosophy, and to provide information about day-to-day activities.

History

Northfield Community Nursery School, a not-for-profit organization administered by a volunteer Board of Directors, has been in operation in Northfield since 1951. Housed in Middlefork School from 1976 until the spring of 1993, we are fortunate to have our current home at the Northfield Community Church, in the same location where the nursery school originated.

Philosophy

Northfield Community Nursery School embraces a play-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum for all children. We believe strongly that children learn best through activities and experiences that are engaging, meaningful, and hands-on. Play is the natural medium through which children engage with and learn about their world.

Through a variety of structured and unstructured developmental activities, we strive to:

- Provide a safe, nurturing environment that encourages the trust necessary for separation and confident participation.
- Promote cognitive, physical (fine and gross motor), social-emotional, self-help, and language development by providing appropriate learning experiences and skilled adult guidance.
- Develop a sense of community through social and educational events for NFCNS families and others, by inviting community members to share their knowledge and skill with our classrooms, and by partnering with area agencies for the well-being of our families and the larger preschool community.

- Support developing friendships and social skills, including problem-solving, negotiation, empathy, respect, and cooperation.
- Offer exposure to rich and novel activities that stimulate and encourage each child’s imagination, creativity, and understanding.
- Work with area elementary schools to ensure that all children entering Kindergarten are prepared to meet the expectations of their next school environment.
- Maintain open and reciprocal communication and partnership with families. NFCNS embraces a collaborative model of joining with families to support each child’s individual development.

We pride ourselves on the warm, caring atmosphere of our school and we encourage all families to participate at their own level of commitment and interest. Family input is valued at NFCNS, and it is one of the important ways we measure our success as a school. NFCNS Director, Heather Burns, and Board President, Julie Aiello, are available to all families, staff, and community members by telephone and/or email. Please reference the Board of Directors listing on our website, www.nfcns.org, for contact information.

Northfield Community Nursery School 2020-21 School Year Offerings

2s (must be 2 by 9/1/2020)	
Monday & Tuesday	8:30 – 11:00
Almost 3s (must be 2 by 4/1/2020)	
Wednesday, Thursday & Friday	8:30 – 11:00
3 Year Old 3- and 4-Day (must be 3 by 9/1/2020)	
Monday through Wednesday	8:45-11:15am
Monday through Thursday	9:00 – 11:30am
Pre-K (must be 4 by 9/1/2020)	
Monday through Friday	12:00pm - 2:30pm
	or
	12:15pm-2:45pm

While NFCNS typically offers **Music and Movement** and **Parent and Tot** for toddlers with an adult, DCFS regulations in the time of pandemic preclude these offerings at this time. Check in next year!

Enrichments and Lunch Bunch

Traditionally NFCNS offers a variety of enrichment classes and lunch bunches to extend the socialization and learning of our regular preschool day. Restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic mean we don’t anticipate offering these options in the 2020-21 school year, but if something changes we will certainly let you know!

Arrival and Departure

We are initiating new arrival and departure procedures in response to health and safety recommendations from DCFS and the CDC. We know they may feel strange, and we anticipate holding some practice runs and perhaps even filming a video or two to help everyone feel comfortable as we approach the start of the school year. Here are the basic components:

- Children and adults are expected to wear masks at the time of drop-off and pick-up
- Wellness checks, including non-contact temperature checks, will be conducted as children arrive. If adults wish to enter the building, they, too must have their temperature checked and logged.
- When possible, drop-off and pick-up will be conducted “car-side”, meaning that teachers will walk children in from their cars at arrival and out to their cars at departure, thus minimizing the number of adults in the building and reducing the risk of infection.

We know you are with us in wanting to do our best to protect the health of all. If you have any questions or concerns about the following plans, feel free to reach out to Director Heather Burns.

Arrival and Departure information is based on our best understanding of current safe practices, and may change as we learn more about COVID-19 or in response to state directives.

Arrival:

- Each class will have its own designated drop-off and pick-up time scheduled at 15-minute intervals
- Adults will stop along the sidewalk outside the preschool entrance (we’ll put out a sign to show you where). When a masked or shielded staff person arrives to assist, the masked adult will exit the car and assist the masked child out of his/her car seat.
- The staff person will escort the child into the vestibule, where a second staff person, standing behind a plexiglass screen, will conduct a temperature check and record the child’s temperature. Both the escorting teacher and temperature taking staffer will review the child for signs of illness.
- When the child has passed the wellness check, the staff person will wave to the waiting adult, who will depart. The child will be asked to wait with another supervising staff person on a designated “spot” until the majority of students have arrived and can be taken to the classroom.
- If the child has not passed the wellness check, the staff person will return the child to the car. The staff person will provide the adult with a brief verbal summary and a notice detailing what to do if a child is excluded from the program.

In the event that the wellbeing of a child requires that a family member/nanny escort the child to the classroom, the family will be asked to park, enter the building and follow wellness check procedures before walking a child down to the classroom or waiting with the group until the children go to their room. All adults entering the building must be masked, must have their temperatures checked and logged, and will be asked to use hand sanitizer.

Adults will be excluded from preschool classrooms unless necessary for the health, safety, and education of children and should always be masked while inside the facility, unless they have medical conditions or disabilities that prevent use of a face covering. The visitor’s temperature will be taken before entrance utilizing the barrier method.

Important information you should know: In the event of a child or adult having a fever of over 100.4 or showing symptoms of COVID-19, that child or adult will be excluded from the program and encouraged to seek medical evaluation. The child or adult may not return to the program until one of the following is satisfied:

- No fever of 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medications for at least 72 hours
- Negative test for COVID-19
- A note from a medical provider documenting no clinical suspicion of COVID-19 infection

Should a child or adult be diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may not return to the program until all three of the following conditions are met:

- No fever of 72 hours *without* the use of fever-reducing medications
- Individual's symptoms, including cough, have improved.
- It has been at least 10 days since the onset of the individual's illness

These new regulations are in specific response to the coronavirus pandemic; you will find additional information about the **NFCNS Illness Policy** later in this handbook.

Departure

Each class will have its own departure time, and departure will also be conducted "car-side." Here is how it works:

- As you pull into the parking lot to pick up your child from school, cars will be lined up starting from the front doors of NFCNS alongside the building, out the parking lot entrance and onto Wagner Road. An orange cone will be set up to designate where the lead car should stop and wait for individual children to be brought out.
- Each child at NFCNS will receive a car card with his/her name on it, along with a suction cup clip to facilitate the card's being displayed in the windshield. This card must be affixed and be **VISIBLE** in the front windshield. Please watch the teachers and make sure they can read the name(s) on your card(s) – the angle of sun and windshield make it almost impossible to recognize drivers.
- The teachers, upon reading the name(s) in the windshield, will bring the appropriate children to that vehicle. Once the children are in the car, **please pull forward into one of the parking spaces** and buckle seat belts/car seat straps at that time. Do not attempt to buckle the children in car seats while in the car line.

If your child will routinely participate in a carpool or be picked up by someone other than a parent, you may ask for additional car cards. **Please note: only persons listed on the NFCNS electronic student file form or given written authorization by you, the parent/guardian, will be allowed to pick up a child.** If you require more pick-up cards, please email NFCNS Director, Heather Burns at director@nfcns.org.

The Department of Children and Family Services licensing regulations prohibit the release of a child to anyone other than parents/guardians without **written parental/guardian authorization**.

Use of Face Masks/Coverings during Arrival and Departure

As in every outing into a public space where 6 feet of physical distancing may not be possible, adults and children are expected to wear facemasks/coverings for their own protection and the wellbeing of the NFCNS community. We know it can be challenging, but we are counting on you to help your child understand and become accustomed to wearing a face covering, especially during key moments such as in the hallways or bathrooms. Here are the parameters for the safety of our community:

Staff: all staff shall wear a face covering while serving children and interacting with parents and families. Staff must wear either a transparent face shield or face covering whenever 6 feet of physical distancing is not possible.

Children: Children ages 2 and older should wear face coverings, if those children can safely and appropriately wear, remove, and tolerate masks.

When children can be safely kept at least 6 feet away from others, they do not need to be encouraged to wear a face covering

Face coverings must not be worn while children are eating and drinking. Strict and consistent physical distancing will be practiced during snack time.

Face coverings need not be worn while engaging in active outdoor play as long as children are able to keep physical distance from others.

Children 2 years of age and older will be supervised when wearing a mask. If wearing the face covering causes the child to touch his/her face more frequently, staff will reconsider whether the face covering is appropriate for the child.

Other adults: Parents, guardians, visitors and those who are authorized for pick-up and drop-off should wear a face covering at all times during drop-off and pick-up and at any time entering the facility.

Exceptions:

Children under 2 years of age

Children who cannot safely and appropriately wear, remove, and tolerate face coverings

Children who have difficulty breathing with the face covering or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance

Children with severe cognitive or respiratory impairments that may have a hard time tolerating a face covering

Children for whom the only option for a face covering presents a potential choking or strangulation hazard

Children who, due to a behavioral health diagnosis or an intellectual impairment, are unable to wear a face covering safely

Individuals who need to communicate with people who rely on lipreading

Individuals who have medical conditions or disabilities that prevent use of a face covering.

Late Pick-Up Policy

A \$10 charge will be assessed for any child who is picked up more than 10 minutes after the child's dismissal time, with \$1 charged for each additional minute thereafter.

If a child has not been picked up within 15 minutes past the dismissal time Northfield Community Nursery School staff will begin telephoning the parents' work, cell and home numbers in an effort to contact the parents. If, after calling all the available parent contact numbers, a parent cannot be reached, the staff will contact the emergency contacts listed on the child's Emergency Contact form.

If the child has not been picked up within 45 minutes of the dismissal time and parents and emergency contacts have not been available, the Director or Director-Designee will contact the Northfield Police Department, in accordance with Illinois Department of Children and Family Services licensing regulations.

Northfield Community Nursery School acknowledges its responsibility to ensure the child's well-being until such time as the parent, authorized pick-up person, or police department representative arrives. Staff will not hold the child responsible for the late pick-up and will not discuss the issue with the child.

Parents are expected to maintain updated contact information in their child's files. More than three instances of late pick-up may be grounds for dismissal.

Each family is required to review and confirm receipt of this policy – you will find this policy and the acknowledgement form in the student file materials on our website. We provide the Late Pick-Up Policy here for your reference.

Contacting the School

To contact the school, the main number 847-446-1116 will be answered daily 8:15 am-3 pm by the Director. Voicemail will be activated when no one is available in the school office and during non-school hours. Please feel free to leave a message on the school voicemail at any time. Messages are retrieved each morning and at the end of the day.

You may also email the Director, Heather Burns, at director@nfcns.org. Email will be checked throughout the school day.

Please note: during the summer messages for the program may be emailed to director@nfcns.org.

Contacting Your Child's Teachers

At the start of the school year your child's teacher(s) will provide you with their contact information. You may also contact the director and ask her to forward your message to the appropriate staffperson.

www.nfcns.org – your source for school information

The NFCNS website is a complete resource for all current and prospective NFCNS families. The website houses the latest information about NFCNS including the snack calendar, fundraisers, school start/end dates, and upcoming events. The website also helps families learn about the staff, program offerings by age including enrichment, and school policies. Downloadable school forms are also available in PDF format. The website is frequently updated so be sure to check back often for news and announcements.

Contacting Your Child's Classmates – the School Directory

NFCNS will provide each family with a directory sheet containing contact information for their children's classmates. Families may request directory sheets for additional classes as needed.

NFCNS shares family contact information with the Alliance for Early Childhood, of which it is a member, for the purposes of publicizing teacher tribute opportunities and for use during their annual campaign. NFCNS also communicates with Middlefork School to facilitate the transfer of graduating Pre-K students to Middlefork, and may share contact information of Pre-K families residing in Northfield as a means of tracking upcoming kindergarten registrations.

If you do not wish NFCNS to share your contact information in the above manner, please contact the Director in writing at the beginning of the school year.

Weather, School Closings and Outdoor Play

Active outdoor play is part of our daily curricula. Plan to supply weather-appropriate outerwear each day (and be sure to label each garment with your child's name).

If your child does not bring weather-appropriate clothing on a day when the class plans to go out, your child's class may miss its large motor play opportunity. Please do your best to provide all the

garments your child needs to play comfortably outside. As a general rule of thumb, children will play outside when the temperature, with the wind chill, is 20 degrees or higher.

From time to time, weather conditions such as snow or high water on roads may cause NFCNS to close. Generally, NFCNS follows the weather decisions made by Sunset Ridge District 29, however it is always wise to check specifically for closing notices posted by our school. You will find closing information posted at the following sites:

- Emergency Closing Center - <http://www.emergencyclosingcenter.com/ecc/home.jsp>
You may search for our school by name and city, find it alphabetically, or search by program phone number (847-446-1116). You may also subscribe to email notifications at the ECC website (please note: we learned last year that sometimes the system is SLOW to notify!)
- NFCNS website – www.nfcns.org
Closing information will be noted on the home page.

NFCNS does not make up cancellation days, nor does it offer refunds for those days.

In the event that NFCNS closes for COVID-19-related reasons, an amended refund policy may be in effect.

Backpacks/totes

We ask that children bring a backpack or sturdy tote to school each day to serve as a hold-all for anything being sent home, or as a container for boots, snowpants and the like. Please be sure that your child's name is on the top or front of the backpack so that we can be sure it comes home with him/her at the end of the day! Generally, unless a specific request comes from your child's teacher, we discourage children from bringing items from home. It is very sad to see a child upset when a "home toy" is lost or damaged, and some of the items that children wish to bring to school are not always safe or suitable for the classroom. We appreciate your help in minimizing the number of items that come to school unsolicited.

Clothing

At NFCNS we "dress for mess!" We want your child to be comfortable throughout the day and for every activity. Please send your child to school in clothes and shoes that allow active play, whether in the playground or in the gym, and be sure that play clothes are sturdy and washable.

A special note about footwear: loose-fitting crocs and slippery-soled sandals can be unsafe. Please consider secure, athletics-style shoes for your child's school wear.

At the start of school, your child's teacher will ask you to bring a change of clothes for your child (including shoes and socks) in a large zip lock bag. This year we will also ask for 2-3 facecoverings/masks to be kept at school. Be sure your child's name is clearly marked on all items, including the bag. Since this clothing will remain at school for the entire year, it should be large enough to accommodate your child's growth. The clothing will be returned by the last day of school. If your child is toilet-training or is prone to "accidents", you may wish to send more than one set of "bottoms."

During the cold and wet weather, please send your child with hats, gloves, boots, and snow pants every day as we do go outside whenever possible. Please mark all of these items (each glove and boot) with your child's name, as there may be duplication within the classroom. We do not always recognize which items belong to each child!

Help us help your child: when you purchase outerwear, please consider how challenging it is to put on. Over the school year we will work together to help your child learn to dress him/herself to go outside; clothing with small zippers, tight straps and “fiddly” fasteners can be frustrating for both children and adults!

Facemasks

We ask that you send your child to school in a facemask daily, and also that you provide 2-3 additional face coverings/masks to be kept in your child’s classroom. Thank you!

Required Documents for Student Files

In June and July NFCNS will provide all incoming and returning families with information about required documents for their students’ files. Much of the required information may be entered electronically; NFCNS will email the link to the student file document.

Student file forms must be completed/returned to school by August 14th for the upcoming year. Please remember that these files will be reviewed by the Department of Children and Family Services as part of our annual licensing review. **Every blank must be completed with either the required information or the note N/A (not applicable).** Incomplete forms will be returned for completion.

As part of the required documentation NFCNS must have a photocopy of your child’s birth certificate as well as a Certificate of Child Health Examination completed within the 6 months prior to your child’s enrollment, and every two years thereafter. Proof of immunization or documentation of medical or religious exemption is required based on current DCFS regulations. If you are taking your child for his/her annual physical exam, you may wish to have your doctor complete an updated form to be turned in to school. Forms can be found on the website, and some doctor’s offices keep them on hand.

If you have elected to refrain from immunizing your child because of religious beliefs, you must complete the Illinois Certificate of Religious Exemption to Required Immunizations and/or Examinations Form before the start of the school year.

If your child has an allergy or medical condition that should be managed at school, please contact Director Heather Burns, who will talk with you about accommodations and provide you with any forms that may need to be completed in order to allow our staff to administer prescription medications such as an epi-pen. See more details in the Allergies section of this handbook.

NFCNS reserved the right to suspend or terminate a child’s enrollment should the required paperwork not be turned in to school.

Absence Policy

If your child will be absent from school, please leave a message on voicemail or email the director. If your child is diagnosed with an illness that is considered "contagious", please be sure to inform the school so that we can put out an illness notice to other families.

If your child or someone with whom your child has been in close contact with is diagnosed with COVID-19, please keep your child at home and contact the school immediately.

Illness Policy

In order to protect the health and well-being of our students and staff, please keep your child home from school should s/he exhibit the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Rash, without a doctor's note stating that the rash is not contagious; the child may attend school
- Diarrhea, defined as runny, loose stools
- Vomiting
- Wheezing
- Strep throat, chickenpox or any other contagious illness
- Lethargy
- Ear pain
- Runny nose that cannot be contained by the child (child cannot wipe his/her nose and/or mucus may make contact with equipment/other children)

If your child exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 please keep your child home from school: These symptoms include but are not limited to the following: (drawn from the Centers for Disease Control <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>)

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

If your child shows symptoms that **do not include a fever or other signs of COVID –19**, your child may return to the program when:

- They have been symptom-free for 24 hours. If a child has been sent home sick from school the child may not attend school the following day.
- They have been treated with an antibiotic, when appropriate, for at least 24 hours
- They are able to participate comfortably in all typical program activities, including outdoor time
- Your doctor has provided a note stating the child's condition is not contagious and that the child may return to school

If your child has a fever or shows symptoms of COVID-19 your child may return to school when the one of the following has been met:

- No fever for 72 hours *without* the use of fever reducing medications
- Negative test for COVID-19
- A note from a medical provider documenting no clinical suspicion of COVID-19 infection

If your child develops any of the above symptoms at school we will notify you. For your child's comfort and to reduce the possible spread of infection, you must pick your child up within 30 minutes of our phone call.

If your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness such as strep, please contact the school so that an Illness Alert, containing information about the condition, symptoms and treatment, can be provided to our families. If your child has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or if your child has been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with the virus, please notify the school immediately. The school will then contact the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Department of Children and Family Services.

Should a child or adult be diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may not return to the program until all three of the following conditions are met:

- No fever for 72 hours *without* the use of fever-reducing medications for at least 72 hours
- Individual's symptoms, including cough, have improved.
- It has been at least 10 days since the onset of the individual's illness

As noted earlier, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic we will conduct wellness checks for each child at the time of arrival. In the event of a child or adult having a fever of over 100.4 or showing symptoms of COVID-19, that child or adult will be excluded from the program and encouraged to seek medical evaluation.

Each family is required to review and confirm receipt of this policy – you will find this policy and the acknowledgement form in the student file form you will complete online. We provide the Illness Policy here for your reference.

Guidance and Discipline

Northfield Community Nursery School is committed to maintaining a positive climate for young children. NFCNS's Guidance and Discipline Policy is structured according to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Licensing Standards and developmentally-appropriate practice in order to promote the highest level of respect for each child. The goals of this policy are as follows:

- Support positive self-esteem
- Encourage cooperation with others
- Promote accountability for one's actions
- Teach problem-solving
- Develop social skills
- Promote self-regulation

The Staff of NFCNS will:

- Communicate expectations and consequences in a clear, child-friendly manner to all students. Staff will speak at the child's level in a non-threatening tone of voice.
- Provide positive, specific information about desired behaviors and suggest strategies to correct undesirable behaviors.
- If a child must be removed from an activity or group in order to regain control, the child shall remain in the classroom and be given appropriate time to recover. The decision to rejoin the activity or group will be made after an age-appropriate discussion between staff and student.

No child will be disciplined for toilet accidents.

The following staff actions are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching and any other measures designed to induce physical pain or fear.
- Threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom.

- Abusive or profane language.
- Any form of private or public humiliation, including threats of physical punishment, and
- Any form of emotional abuse, including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing or isolating a child.

If any of these actions is evident, the Director of NFCNS must be informed immediately.

Written rules for each classroom must be posted and reviewed with children routinely.

Ongoing disciplinary issues will be discussed with the child's family. A pattern of unacceptable behavior will result in the development of a plan of response, which will include:

- Anecdotal records of the child's behavior
- Observation and feedback from the Director
- A meeting with the family to develop behavior management strategies and goals

In the event that behavior management goals cannot be reached by the above actions, NFCNS will notify the family that the following steps are to be taken in order for the child to remain in the program, and will be taken at the family's expense:

- Consultation with a licensed professional, such as a developmental therapist, psychologist, or Northern Suburban Special Education District staff
- Implementation of a one-on-one aide

If it is determined by NFCNS staff that the school is unable to meet the child's individual needs, demonstrates inability to benefit from the program offered by NFCNS, or whose presence is detrimental from the group, shall be discharged from the facility. In all instances, when such a determination to discharge a child has been made, the child's and parents' need shall be considered by planning with the parents to meet the child's need when he or she leaves the school, including referrals to other agencies or facilities.

NFCNS reserves the right to suspend, expel, or deny participation in any program or event to any child or adult whose behavior materially interferes with or disrupts the quality of those offerings, the enjoyment of them by other participants, or the ability of staff to conduct or manage such activities.

Each family and staff person is required to review and confirm receipt of this policy – you will find this policy on our website. We provide the Guidance and Discipline Policy here for your reference.

How We Stay in Touch...

Good communication between home and school is part of the foundation for school success. Here is how we will communicate with you:

- Just before the beginning of the school year your child's teacher will contact you and invite your child and you in for a visit. At that time, your teacher will discuss the best way to communicate with her and ask the best way to communicate with you!
- Each Friday during the school year you will receive the *Friday Flash* – the school's weekly informational email with upcoming events, important deadlines and other helpful reminders.
- Even better, your child's teacher will send a *Weekly Update*, detailing the activities and learning that your child has enjoyed through the week. She will also add reminders and timely information about classroom plans.
- Parent/Teacher conferences are typically scheduled in the fall and spring for 2s and Almost 3s, 3-Day and 4-Day students and all Pre-K students. We anticipate conducting these conferences virtually, either by phone or by video conferencing. These meetings are a great opportunity for teachers and families to discuss children's progress, interests and strengths. However, we strongly encourage families to reach out to their child's teacher at any time throughout the school year to discuss any questions or issues that may arise. If teachers have concerns, observations or

- information that should be communicated in a timely fashion, they will contact families promptly.
- ...and this year we will work hard to be creative in our communication. Clear and prompt communication will be essential in this novel circumstance!

NFCNS supports open and direct communication at all levels. *If you have a concern about your child and/or an issue in your child's classroom*, please first speak with your child's teacher at an agreed upon non-classroom time. Drop-off and pick-up times are not good choices for these conversations as teachers are focused on transitioning children safely. If your concern is not resolved after speaking with your child's teacher, please contact the Director for further communication and resolution. *If you have a concern about a staff member or school-related issue*, please contact the Director.

Tuition and Payments

Invoices are emailed to the family email address on file with the school. Per the NFCNS Registration Contract, tuition is due within 30 days of the installment due date or a late fee is applied. Please refer to the Registration Contract for a schedule of tuition installment due dates. Please contact the school Business Manager, Julie Schmidt, at julieschmidt.ncns@gmail.com, for invoice and tuition payment information.

Please make checks payable to Northfield Community Nursery School and indicate in the memo section the child's name and class (i.e. Jane 5 day). During the school year **payments may be placed in the lockbox in the school hallway**. During the summer please send payments to NFCNS, 400 Wagner Road, Northfield, 60093.

Payments may be made in advance. **No cash** should be sent through the mail or left in the lockbox **please**. To ensure that your payments are received in a timely manner, we kindly request that you do not hand payments to NFCNS staff or board members.

Payment plans and scholarships are available upon application and approval of the NFCNS Board. Please contact the Treasurer at treasurer@nfcns.org for more information.

Withdrawal

If you wish to withdraw your child after enrollment for any reason, you must give prior written notice to the Vice President of Enrollment, Katie Lutz, and/or NFCNS's Director. Withdrawal will result in forfeiture of the tuition deposit. Additionally, you will be responsible for the tuition up until the time your child's spot is filled with a new student. If NFCNS is unable to fill your child's place you are responsible for the full tuition. For more information, please refer to your enrollment contract.

Snacks

We are happy to provide your child with a healthy snack each day at school. The snack guidelines are mandated by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. You'll find our monthly snack calendar posted each month on the school's website and also posted on each classroom bulletin board.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special days at NFCNS! Your child's birthday celebration will be scheduled into one of the days on the snack calendar. If your child has a summer birthday, we will select a day to celebrate his/her "half-birthday" in a special way.

Because of the increased number of food allergies, we celebrate each child's birthday with a special popsicle treat provided by the school. We would hate to exclude anyone from a birthday celebration because a treat brought from home contains allergens! There are no exceptions to this policy.

Allergies

If your child has a food allergy you must inform the Director and follow school allergy protocols. We require that you and your doctor complete a Food Allergy Action Plan, and that you provide written authorization to administer whatever medications are needed to manage an allergic reaction by completing a Permission to Dispense Medication forms for each medication. You must also supply the school with the appropriate medications, labeled with the prescriptive label when applicable. We ask that you review our snack calendars and indicate foods that your child should not receive; if we are unable to provide acceptable alternatives we may ask that you provide us with a sealable container of appropriate snacks for your child's use. This container and contents must be marked with your child's first and last name, and we will ask that you complete a Special Diet Agreement.

Hearing and Vision Screening

In accordance with State of Illinois regulations, NFCNS will contract with Pupils Vision and Hearing Testing, Inc. to provide hearing and vision screening to children enrolled in the 3-Day, 4-Day and Pre-K classes. The screening typically takes place in November. There is a fee for this service; dates and details will be provided after the start of the school year. The screening process is positive and playful, and parents have expressed appreciation for the early notice of potential issues that allow for early remediation. Director Heather Burns will be happy to answer any questions or provide more information about this routine and simple screening.

Integrated Pest Management

It is the policy of NFCNS to implement and practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to control pests in the building and minimize the exposure of children, families and staff to pesticides. Illinois state law requires licensed preschools to practice IPM indoors and to notify all parents and staff prior to pesticide application, whether indoors or on the grounds. Please contact the Director, Heather Burns, if you would like more details about NFCNS's IPM.

Other Safety Issues:

Radon: NFCNS performs testing for radon levels every three years as required by the State of Illinois. Our current radon report is posted in the preschool office for your review.

Water testing for lead levels: All water sources in the preschool have been tested for lead levels by an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency-certified laboratory. The resulting report is posted in the preschool office for your review. If there should be a change to the preschool water supply the water will be re-tested.

Firearms: NFCNS prohibits the presence of firearms on its premises except those carried by peace officers.

Visiting NFCNS

New guidelines from the Department of Children and Family Services preclude our welcoming visitors to our classroom in the interest of protecting the health of children and teachers. Please check with Director Heather Burns with questions.

A Note about Animals

Due to NFCNS insurance requirements, absolutely no pets will be allowed on school premises (this includes during “Show and Tell”). As much as we would enjoy meeting your furry family members, dogs may not be brought to school at any time, including drop-off and pick-up.

Special Events at NFCNS

This is an unusual time in the life of our preschool, and although we anticipate that many of our fundraising and social events will be cancelled for the upcoming year, we are endlessly creative! Stay tuned – we will find new ways to connect and build community!

Volunteers and the NFCNS Board

Did you know that in addition to a wonderful staff, NFCNS has a parent-run board executing many functions for the school? NFCNS’s board of parent volunteers dedicates their time to work on a wide range of activities, including:

- Programs – welcome coffees and fundraisers
- Administration – budgeting, tuition planning and teacher contracts
- Facilities – overseeing playground and classroom materials maintenance

There are lots of different ways you can be part of the learning and excitement that happen at NFCNS every day. Your level of involvement is up to you. Whether you work at home, work outside the home full time, or fall somewhere in-between, there are opportunities to participate at whatever level feels most comfortable. And you don’t need to be a board member to share your time with the school. If you have a specific talent or interest, please let Director Heather Burns know that you would like to contribute.

If you are interested in getting involved at any level, please contact our Board President, Julie Aiello, at board.president@nfcns.org . Whether you would like to volunteer for a specific activity or want to become entrenched in the operations of the school, we welcome your participation. Also, don’t forget that board members, past or present, receive priority registration for preschool classes.

As always, the board strives to represent the voices of our parent community. If you have something to say, please contact one of the board members or our Director, Heather Burns, with your thoughts. Your feedback is one of the ways we measure our success as a school.

Fundraising

Throughout the school year, NFCNS’s Fundraising Committee organizes activities and events to raise money for our wonderful school. Participation in these events is strictly voluntary.

Private donations are also welcomed. NFCNS is a 501c3 non-profit organization and may qualify for employer match programs and grants. The fundraising committee is available to assist with completing applications on your behalf.

For more information about fundraising, please visit www.nfcns.org.

Other Resources for Families

Northfield Community Nursery School enjoys a cooperative relationship with the Alliance for Early Childhood, the Children’s Home and Aid Society of Illinois, Northern Suburban Special Education District and many other community groups, and is familiar with agencies providing family supports and early intervention. If there is some way in which we can assist you, please let us know.