



# Temple Shalom Preschool

Planting seeds in the minds of our future.

**Parent Handbook**

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## CONTENTS

WELCOME!	3
PHILOSOPHY	4
NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY	4
ENROLLMENT APPLICATION	5
PAYMENT OF FEES	5
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	5
WITHDRAWAL POLICY	6
CONFIDENTIALITY	6
FUNDRAISING	6
SCHOOL CLOSINGS	6
HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS	7
COMMUNICATION	7
COMMUNICATION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY	8
PROCEDURES FOR ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL	8
PARKING	9
SAFETY AND SECURITY	9
EVACUATION PROCEDURES	10
ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT POLICY	10
CHILD ABUSE POLICY	10
CHILDREN'S WELLNESS	11
MEDICATION	12
HEAD LICE POLICY	12
OUTDOOR PLAY	13
ALLERGIES	13
FOOD ALLERGY POLICY	14
LUNCH AND SNACK	15
KOSHER POLICY	15
CLASS PLACEMENTS	16
DEVELOPING SELF-REGULATION AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY	16
SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT AND SEPARATION	17
PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING CONCERNS AND NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCES	18
BITING	18
CLOTHING	19
DIAPERING	19
POTTY TRAINING	20

## WELCOME!

We are delighted you have chosen Temple Shalom Preschool for your child's early education! Temple Shalom Preschool has been a part of the Naples community for almost three decades and continues to serve families and their young children in the tradition of excellence for which we are known. We offer a unique educational opportunity in a Jewish setting that is both enriching and rewarding.

Our mission is to provide each child with a positive preschool experience through a Jewish lens, while promoting their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. The early years are learning years, and at Temple Shalom Preschool, your child will grow to his/her fullest potential. We celebrate each child's unique spirit and recognize that children develop at different rates. Because children have varied interest and strengths, we provide them with the opportunity to learn new skills and master them at their own pace.

Parent collaboration and communication with the teachers and administrators is encouraged to ensure a smooth transition between home and school. Our goal is for you and your child to enjoy your experience at Temple Shalom Preschool. This handbook is designed to provide information about our policies and procedures as well as to answer any questions you may have about our preschool.

Once again, welcome to a new school year at Temple Shalom Preschool! We look forward to growing with you and your child! Thank you for inviting us on your child's educational journey.

Sincerely,

*Susan Feld*

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## **PHILOSOPHY**

Temple Shalom Preschool offers a warm and loving environment for children between the ages of two and five. Our program is designed to foster social, emotional, cognitive, language, physical, and spiritual development in our young students. This is achieved through developmentally appropriate curriculum experiences and activities, through a Jewish lens.

The learning environment is supportive of children's physiological needs for activity, sensory stimulation, fresh air, rest, and emotional nourishment. Teachers incorporate a wide variety of experiences, materials, equipment, and instructional strategies to accommodate a broad range of children's individual experiences, maturation rates, needs, interests, and learning styles. There is an effort to achieve an optimal balance between children's self-initiated learning and adult guidance or support. To strengthen children's sense of competence and confidence as learners, motivation to persist, and willingness to take risks, teachers provide experiences for children to be genuinely successful and to be challenged. Learning is designed to build upon what children already know and are able to do (activating prior knowledge) to consolidate their learning and to foster their acquisition of new concepts and skills.

The Jewish component of our program offers an opportunity to appreciate the positive values of Judaism (at an early, impressionable age). The focus of this area centers on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays through creative activities, song, cooking, arts and crafts, story and dance.

Temple Shalom Preschool staff members are an extraordinary group of committed and experienced teachers who are integral to the success of our program. They are skilled professionals who offer children affection, compassion, and guidance. The community of our program allows parents and teachers to work together in the best interest of each individual child.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Temple Shalom Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of any religion, race, national or ethnic origin. All children and families are entitled to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available at school.

## **ENROLLMENT APPLICATION**

Enrollment is accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Priority is given to currently enrolled students and Temple Shalom members, and then enrollment is open to the community. Registration is complete when accompanied by the completed application and the tuition deposit. The tuition deposit and tuition are non-refundable. No credit is given for family vacations, holidays, illness, or early withdrawals, and days may not be swapped. Refunds are not given for any reason or exception.

During the summer months, a packet of information and forms will be sent home. The due date for return of these forms, including current immunization records signed by the child's physician, is ten business days before the first day of school. All children attending the Temple Shalom Preschool must be immunized.

## **PAYMENT OF FEES**

In order to maintain the high quality of the school program at the most affordable rate possible for all, the following procedures have been established.

- It is your responsibility to make your tuition payments according to schedule.
- Children are enrolled on a school-year basis, from August through May. Your monthly tuition is a portion of the yearly tuition and is established for your paying convenience. Therefore, the same monthly payment is required regardless of the number of school days in each month.
- The monthly payment is due on or before the first day of each month, except in August. For the month of August, you are only responsible for half of the month.
- All tuition payments not made by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month will be subject to a \$25.00 late payment fee. If a special problem or hardship exists, immediately contact the Director.
- By failing to pay the overdue tuition and subsequent late fees by the 15<sup>th</sup> of any month, you risk relinquishing your child's placement in the program.
- There will be a \$25.00 service charge for any checks returned for insufficient funds.
- If a student withdraws from Temple Shalom Preschool for any reason, parents understand and agree that no portion of the tuition and fees paid shall be refunded and that any remaining unpaid balance of tuition and fees for that semester shall be immediately due and payable to Temple Shalom Preschool.

Temple Shalom Preschool accepts the following methods of payment: credit card or check. Please note: we cannot accept cash payments.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

A limited amount of financial aid is available to families who have completed the enrollment process, including remittance of the deposit. Financial aid applications for the following school year are due on the last day of March. Awards will be made in June. The application must include the prior year's Federal Tax Form 1040 and a letter explaining any unusual or unique family circumstances. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

## **WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Once a child is officially enrolled, and a family wishes to withdraw from Temple Shalom Preschool for any reason, parents understand and agree that no portion of the tuition and fees paid shall be refunded and that any remaining unpaid balance of tuition and fees for that semester (September-December or January-May) shall be immediately due and payable to Temple Shalom Preschool. Temple Shalom Preschool reserves the right, at all times and for any cause that it may consider sufficient, to request the withdrawal of a student. Involuntary withdrawal for any reason will result in the loss of current and prepaid tuition and fees.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Temple Shalom Preschool will maintain the confidentiality of all student records as required or permitted by law. Any information collected, such as health and safety data or custody court orders, is used for the benefit of the child's educational development. This information may include assessment data, grades, medical history, and anecdotal records. We may request quarterly updates to keep our files current. No one has immediate access to student files except authorized staff. Files are kept in the administrative office and are locked in a file cabinet.

Temple Shalom Preschool will not release any portion of a child's file without the unanimous written consent from the child's parents and/or all adults who are legally responsible for the child, or unless required by law. Authorized family members have the right to review a child's file upon request. If you wish information to be shared with another program, we must have written consent. A child's file may be released pursuant to a court order or subpoena. Our regulatory authority, the Florida Department of Children and Families, upon request may review children's files.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Temple Shalom Preschool fundraisers benefit scholarships and enrichment. There are opportunities to participate in fundraising events throughout the school year. Participation in fundraising activities is optional.

## **SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

Temple Shalom Preschool follows the Collier County Public Schools calendar with some modification. We observe all Jewish holidays and are closed on those dates. In the event of inclement weather or a weather emergency, Temple Shalom Preschool will follow the decision of the Collier County School Board regarding school closings. Listen to your local news station for the appropriate announcements. Lee County decisions will not affect Temple Shalom Preschool. School closings will be posted on the Temple Shalom website, [naplestemple.org](http://naplestemple.org). You may also call the Preschool office if you are not sure if school is closed as there will be a message with the necessary information.

## **HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS**

As part of a Jewish Temple, we celebrate the Jewish holidays in addition to a variety of secular and national holidays, such as the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving. We understand that families celebrate religious holidays at home. Please do not bring holiday cookies, costumes, or other items related to Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Easter, etc. to school.

Birthdays are really special for young children, and we want to celebrate with the family and the child's classmates! Please read and follow the guidelines for birthday celebrations.

We ask that parents be ever mindful of our nut-free policy. You may send in store-bought foods, preferably in packaging that does not say "may have been manufactured in a facility that processes nuts or nut products."

We ask that parents send in MINI cupcakes or muffins or individual ice cream cups for birthday celebrations. Also, consider a celebration that is non-food related, such as a game or activity for the class.

We do not serve children the following foods: nuts, popcorn\*, pretzels\*, or any items where the packaging says "may have been manufactured in a facility that processes nuts or nut products." NOT permitted: party favors for CUBS, gum, candy, gifts, balloons, professional entertainment.

Party invitations for out-of-school parties may be distributed at school if all children in the class will be receiving one.

For the Cubs two year olds, we ask that you NOT bring party favors, small toys, or other items that may be possible choking hazards.

\*Acceptable for Pre-K only

## **COMMUNICATION METHODS**

Communication is the most important aspect of all relationships. Your child's teacher is your first point of contact since she/he is the individual who spends the greatest amount of time with your child. We welcome discussions that directly relate to your own child. We also are open to discuss issues that address early childhood education, curriculum, behavior practices, and parenting. The Director has an "open door" policy and is always available to parents.

There are many resources available for parents, and we hope to be the link to these whenever possible. A monthly newsletter will go home from the Director, and an activities calendar will go home from every teacher.

## COMMUNICATION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

During the school day, if you wish to check on your child's well-being, you may do so by calling the office at 239.455.3227. The Director or Administrative Assistant will immediately visit your child's classroom for a brief observation or will call the classroom teacher on the intercom for immediate feedback.

Teachers are expected to attend visually to children at all times and may not receive text or cell phone calls during the school day. Parents are requested to refrain from calling the teacher's personal cell phone. If you wish to speak with your child's teacher, leave a message with the Preschool office, and the teacher will return your call after school has dismissed.

## PROCEDURES FOR ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Temple Shalom Preschool offers a variety of half and full-day programs. Your child is expected to arrive at the time set for the program you have selected. When you bring your child to Preschool, you are required to escort him/her to the classroom. At dismissal time, you are also required to pick up your child in the classroom. For safety and security, you must sign your child in upon arrival and sign out at dismissal on the appropriate form.

Doors open at 9:00 am. Parents are welcome to wait in our lobby until the doors open.

Safety and security are our first concerns. At all times, parents must be mindful of their children when entering or leaving the Preschool. All children's hands should be held when walking along the sidewalk and driveway. Siblings of preschoolers must also be supervised at all times. Younger siblings cannot be left in cars.

Your child may only enter or leave with you or a responsible adult designated by you. Your child will not be released to any intoxicated individual. If your child is to depart with someone other than a parent or designated person, we must be notified in writing. In addition, please alert anyone who is designated to pick up your child that they will be asked to show a driver's license or another form of picture identification. In the event of a last-minute change or emergency, notify the office as soon as possible so that your child and the teacher can be informed.

**Morning drop off and afternoon pickup times are not appropriate times to engage in lengthy dialogue with the teacher or other parents.** Please keep your comments to the teacher brief. If you feel the need to have a more in-depth discussion with the teacher, an alternative time for such a meeting may be scheduled. Conversations with other parents need to take place outside of the classrooms so that teachers may begin their activities promptly.

Half-day dismissal begins at 12:15 pm and ends **PROMPTLY** at 12:30 pm. Staff in the half-day program often have additional responsibilities that start at 12:30 pm and must be available to begin immediately upon dismissal.

Full-day dismissal begins at 1:45 pm and ends **PROMPTLY** at 2:00 pm.

Extended day dismissal begins at 3:00 pm and ends **PROMPTLY** at 3:15 pm.

It is of primary importance to be **PROMPT** at dismissal time. Your child expects you and looks forward to seeing you at the end of each day. Lateness can cause uneasiness, especially in the younger children, so please be on time. We certainly understand that there are sometimes extenuating circumstances that cause a parent/caregiver to be late. If there is to be a late pickup, please call the office so that we can notify the teacher.

We understand that traffic or other circumstances may cause you to be late for pickup time, however you will incur a fee if you are more than five minutes late. The late fee is \$10.00 and will be charged in five-minute increments.

## **PARKING**

Please park in the school parking lot in the regular parking spots so that you are not blocking other cars or people leaving the school. Turn off the motor and escort your child into the building and to the classroom and sign in. Use extra caution when leaving as cars are coming and going in the parking lot.

Remember to hold your child's hand while moving from the car to the building and when exiting the building and going to the car at pickup. Every person dropping off or picking up a child must be diligent in maintaining necessary safety procedures. No one should be driving more than 10 mph when near the Preschool entrance.

**When entering Temple Shalom, bear to the right** and then go straight. Follow the road around and park in spaces for Preschool parking. Please **DO NOT** park in the **Reserved Parking** spots. When leaving, exit going towards the front of the building, following arrows all the way to the right of the loop to keep the flow of traffic all going in the same direction and maintain the safety of our children.

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

We strive to keep all children and families safe and secure. We follow local law enforcement policies, as well as policies from the Jewish Federation of Greater Naples, and Secure Community Networks, our security consultant agencies.

All entrances to Temple Shalom remain locked at all times. The outside entry door that leads to the Preschool wing will always remain locked and may only be accessed with a key code. An armed security guard will be posted at the entrance of the Preschool and will patrol the premises of the building during preschool hours, Monday through Friday 8:00 am – 3:00 pm.

The teaching and administrative staff of Temple Shalom Preschool work hard to maintain a safe environment for all children. Children are supervised at all times and are never left alone. At least one teacher is present in each classroom when children arrive and depart. A phone is located in each classroom to allow teachers immediate ability to call for help in case of emergencies. A staff person working with each group of children is certified in Pediatric CPR and First Aid. Children are taught safety rules within each classroom as well as safety rules for outdoors.

The teaching and administrative staff will release children only to persons noted on the release form provided by the parent. If an emergency arises, the parent must provide written notification giving the pickup person permission to take the child. Photo ID's are required for anyone we do not recognize. Please let your family know this ahead of time so they won't be offended. Our priority is the safety of the children.

If there are custody issues involving your child, please provide the school with court papers indicating who has permission to pick up the child. We may not deny a parent access to their child without proper legal documentation. No child will be dismissed to any adult other than the parents unless we have prior written authorization.

Parents must individually sign in each child every morning and again at dismissal. Daily attendance is checked by the office each morning and absentees noted. Attendance is taken periodically throughout the school day. Doors in the Preschool wing are kept locked at all times and entrance is permitted at the school entrance only. Our front entry has a video surveillance camera and a buzz-in system.

### **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

Fire drills are conducted monthly to ensure the safe, orderly and efficient evacuation of all occupants of the school using all available exits. Roll call is taken from the attendance register when the children are in a safe place. Specialists and office staff have been alerted to assist with evacuation during routine fire drills. We also conduct tornado, hurricane and lock-down drills yearly.

### **ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT POLICY**

All accidents and incidents will have written reports that are completed by staff members, reviewed by the Director and kept on file. If the accident or incident is minor, you will be notified when you pick up your child. We will call parents about any significant accidents or incidents. If the Director determines that the child needs medical attention, you will be informed during the initial contact by phone.

### **CHILD ABUSE POLICY**

Teachers and caregivers are in a unique position to identify and help abused and neglected children. In the state of Florida, if a teacher or caregiver has "reasonable cause to believe" a child is being abused or neglected, the suspicion must be reported to the Department of Children and Families or to local law enforcement. We are required by law to do so immediately. Failure to report is a misdemeanor that carries a fine, or imprisonment, or both.

ALL persons must report suspected cases of child abuse – this includes doctors, teachers, parents, family members and friends. Mandated reporters are protected by the state in terms of liability and confidentiality. Reporters who "act in good faith" are immune from any civil or criminal charges that may result. **For the protection of children and staff, it is our policy that teaching staff are always interruptible and observable when with children.**

## CHILDREN'S WELLNESS

Your child's health is of the utmost importance to us. At this age, children are just beginning to develop immunities. To reduce exposure to colds, flu, conjunctivitis or other contagious diseases, we ask that you weigh all factors when determining if your child should attend. Please be considerate of all concerned – SICK CHILDREN MUST BE KEPT AT HOME.

Families are notified in writing when a communicable disease has been introduced into our program, while maintaining the confidentiality of the contagious child.

Children should remain at home during the initial and most contagious days of a cold or illness. This concern is for his/her comfort and for the protection of the other children in the program. Children may not attend with: fever, diarrhea, vomiting, a frequent or severe cough or cold, persistent runny nose, skin infection, conjunctivitis, or rash. If any of these symptoms are visible, your child will be refused admittance for the day; or, if any symptoms become evident during the day, you will be notified immediately. For the comfort and well-being of your child, you will be requested to pick him/her up as soon as possible, within 30 minutes. If we are unable to reach you, we will call your emergency contacts. Children may return after 24 hours, fever-free, vomit-free and diarrhea-free. For the health of all children, children who have had impetigo or strep must be treated 24 hours prior to readmission. Children who have had scabies or lice must have proof of treatment.

Exclusion is recommended when the child's illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities as determined by the staff of the school and/or the illness results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the ability to care for other children.

When children are unusually fatigued or show signs of illness, they should be kept at home. In general, if children are not able to play outside, they are not well enough to come to school. We do not have any provision for a child to remain indoors at outdoor playtime.

Medical information found in children's files is confidential and the files are located in the school office, under lock and key. The child's file must contain emergency medical information and emergency names and phone numbers. In case of serious illness or accident, if the parent cannot be reached, the emergency number indicated on the application form will be called to care for the child. Please do not list grandparents who are out of town. If neither of these adults can be reached, the doctor noted on the enrollment application form will be contacted. If the doctor cannot be reached or immediate intervention is necessary, Emergency Medical Services will be contacted. Our closest EMS services use Physicians Regional Hospital.

Temple Shalom Preschool requires that a parent/caretaker can be reached in case of an emergency. It is the parents' responsibility to make sure all phone numbers are kept current. If there is a change in emergency numbers during the course of the school year, notify the Preschool office.

### **Guidelines for children who are too ill to come to (or stay) at Preschool**

Fever

Diarrhea (frequent runny, watery, bloody stools)

Vomiting  
Unexplained rashes  
Discharge or crusting from the eyes or ears  
Greenish or yellowish nasal discharge  
Continual clear nasal discharge accompanied by fever and/or inability to participate in normal classroom activities  
Excessive coughing  
Sore throat, breathing trouble, swollen glands and related symptoms  
Irritability or confusion  
General inability to participate in school activities due to illness  
Child requires individual care/support of the teacher

We appreciate your calling to explain any absence – we miss your children when they are absent and are concerned if we do not know why they are not with us.

### **MEDICATION**

Parents are urged to adjust dosages so medication will not need to be administered during the program day. All oral medication, whether over-the-counter or prescription, must be accompanied by a completed medication form and a fax from the physician. The Director and teacher must be notified if your child will be taking medication. Medication may be given from its original container and must be clearly marked with child's name, name of medication, dosage and the time that the medication is to be administered. Children may not handle medication. Medication permission forms for application of topical medicines are available and must be completed and signed by a parent before administering.

### **HEAD LICE POLICY**

Head lice are a nuisance and produce relatively benign consequences. If an infestation is treated early, we can avoid many children being affected. Head lice infestations occur in all socioeconomic groups and do not represent poor hygiene. Families often get very upset about lice; however, lice do not cause disease.

Lice are parasitic insects the size of a sesame seed. They live on the blood they draw from the scalp. They deposit tiny gray/white eggs known as nits on a hair shaft three to four millimeters from the scalp. Nits that are not close to the scalp will not hatch because they need warmth from the human body to do so. Lice can live only one to two days away from the scalp. Lice infestation may cause scratching and skin irritation.

Lice are spread through direct contact with hair or headgear of infected people. It is also spread through sharing and storing combs, brushes, hats, coats, blankets, or sheets. It can only be spread through live crawling lice, not by nits. The incubation period is six to ten days from laying to hatching of eggs. Lice can reproduce two to three weeks after hatching. Infected people are contagious until they are treated with a chemical that kills lice and viable eggs have been killed or removed.

If a child at Temple Shalom Preschool has been identified with head lice, the following protocol will be followed:

- Parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child at their earliest convenience.

- Your child must be treated with a lice removal product recommended by his/her physician.
- When the child returns to school, you must show proof of treatment by bringing the packaging from the treatment product. Your child will be checked before reentering class by the Director or her designate.
- Mechanical removal of the lice and nits by combing them out with a special fine-tooth comb is necessary. It helps find lice in the hair and remove the dead nits so that re-infestation of a treated child is easier to detect. Examine the heads of other family members by separating hair follicles to look for lice as well.

We strongly recommend the following steps be taken to eliminate infestation in your home:

- Articles that may have been contaminated should be laundered so that the fabric is exposed to a temperature of 130 degrees Fahrenheit. Use the highest hot settings to wash and dry bed linens, towels, clothing and outerwear to kill the lice. Dry cleaning clothing and bedding is also appropriate.
- Toys, personal articles, bedding and other fabrics that cannot be laundered with hot water can be kept in a plastic bag for 10 days to rid them of lice.
- Soak combs and brushes in a disinfectant solution (1/4 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water) for at least 10 minutes.
- Vacuum carpets, upholstered furniture and beds to remove any wandering lice.

Once a child or teacher is diagnosed with head lice, the following measures will be taken by Temple Shalom Preschool:

- The Director or designated person will check the heads of all members of the infected classroom for two weeks or more.
- If more than one person in the classroom is infected, a no-nit policy for returning to school will go into effect.
- Ziploc bags will be placed in the infected classrooms for children to separate their coats, hats and other belongings.
- Fabric toys will be removed from the classroom and rugs will be rolled up.
- We will require that soft pack lunch bags be temporarily replaced with paper lunch bags.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

Weather permitting, all classes will spend time outside every day. Sunscreen is recommended, but please check with your physician before use. Sunscreen should be applied at home. If your child is unable to play outside for any reason, it is advisable to keep him/her at home that day. If a child is not well enough to play outside, he/she is not well enough to attend school. There are no accommodations for an unwell child to play inside while the class is outside. To protect children from exposure to high heat levels, we may limit outdoor activities.

## **ALLERGIES**

If your child is allergic to anything, please note this on the physical examination form and in writing to your child's teacher. Temple Shalom Preschool STRIVES to be a peanut-free school. Food brought into our school, including lunches, snacks, and birthday treats, may not

contain peanuts even if for individual consumption. Please check the labels on pre-packaged food to be sure.

## **FOOD ALLERGY POLICY**

Temple Shalom Preschool recognizes that food allergies can cause serious life-threatening conditions for some children. To keep all our children safe, we will strive to limit those foods that have been determined to cause allergic reactions in children. Although we acknowledge that we cannot guarantee a nut-free environment, we will strive to be a nut-free environment in the Preschool area. Since many other activities and programs occur on the Temple Shalom campus, we cannot guarantee a nut-free environment outside of the perimeters of the Preschool.

We ask that individual students, families, and staff NOT bring peanut butter, nuts and nut products for lunch and snacks. Foods served at school related receptions, fundraisers, and classroom birthday celebrations must be nut-free.

Each student with a diagnosed food allergy will have a physician's authorization for medication to be immediately administered to help counteract any possible reactions to food allergies, but these medications can only do so much. Your help and participation is vital to make this policy work.

The following procedures were developed from the *Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network's School Guidelines for Managing Students with Food Allergies*

### **FOOD ALLERGY PROTOCOLS and PROCEDURES**

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES of the Family:**

1. Notify the school of the child's allergies on the health form at the beginning of each year or, if the allergy is diagnosed during the academic year, notify the school in writing as soon as possible.
2. Provide written medical documentation, instructions and medications as directed by a physician.
3. Provide properly labeled medications and replace after use or upon expiration.
4. Where age appropriate, educate the child in the self-management of the food allergy including:
  - a. safe and unsafe foods
  - b. symptoms of allergic reactions
5. Review policies/procedures with the school staff and the child's physician after a reaction has occurred.
6. Provide current emergency contact information, and update all contact information throughout the school year if there are changes in phone numbers or address.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES of Temple Shalom Preschool:**

1. The administrative staff and classroom teacher will review health records submitted by parents and physicians.
2. The school will ask families and staff to provide only non-nut food options when bringing special treats or food for receptions, birthdays, or special events.

3. The administrative staff will review all packaged foods purchased for snacks to ensure they are tree nut and peanut free.
4. A child's medications will include an emergency kit that contains a physician's standing order for epinephrine. Medications will be kept in an easily accessible secure location in the child's classroom, with additional epinephrine in a locked cabinet in the Director's office.
5. Following an allergic reaction, the Director and classroom staff will review the incident with parents and implement additional plans, if necessary.
6. Teachers will oversee snack and lunch time procedures so children will not trade or share food with others.

## **LUNCH AND SNACK**

Children bring their own snacks and lunch to school. We are unable to heat up or refrigerate lunches. We recommend sending an icepack when needed. In preparing snacks and lunch for your child, try choosing fruits, veggies, yogurt and sandwiches. If your child remains for After Care, two snacks will be needed.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends two foods at each snack time. One should be a fruit or a veggie and the other should be a "crunchy". To ensure safety, all food and beverages brought from home are to be labeled with the child's name. We strive for a nut-free environment; do not provide nuts of any kind or peanut butter with your child's lunch and snack.

It is our policy that once a child's food items are set on their plate, it is likely the food may be exposed to contamination and is, therefore, thrown away at the end of the meal. If you want leftovers to be returned, please send an ice pack and speak individually with the teacher.

Children under the age of four may not be served the following foods – whole hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, a spoonful of peanut/soy butter, and chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole. Grapes **MUST** be cut, as well as hot dogs, into small, bitesize pieces. Acceptable foods include sandwiches, low-fat yogurt, fresh or canned fruit, cooked vegetables cut up, banana slices, whole-grain crackers, rice cakes, mini-pizzas, low-fat cheese. Information relative to allergies must be included on the child's registration forms.

It is **IMPERATIVE** that you inform us of any food allergies your child might have, such as peanut butter, milk, eggs, etc. A meeting with the teacher before school begins will ensure that no child is served foods to which they may be allergic.

Temple Shalom Preschool follows the kosher dietary restrictions as noted in the following section.

## **KOSHER POLICY**

Keeping kosher is a central tenet of Jewish life. Accordingly, pork and pork products and shellfish may not be brought into the building. Mixing meat/poultry and dairy products within a

meal is also not kosher (i.e., a meat/chicken/turkey and cheese sandwich should not be brought to school). In addition, if the Jewish holiday of Passover falls on school days, bread and other products containing yeast (pasta, crackers, cookies, pretzels, etc.) should not be brought in during that time. We will provide matzo for the students. Adequate notice and specific information will be provided as the holiday approaches (Passover usually falls in March or April).

## **CLASS PLACEMENTS**

Class placements are determined by the following criteria:

- First-come, first-served according to date of application & deposit
- Birth date
- Recommendations of teacher
- Compatible combination of ability levels in the group
- Emotional and social needs of individual children
- Even gender mix in the group
- Three versus five day attendance

Every possible request will be seriously considered and discussed amongst administration and faculty. Decisions are not arbitrary, and extreme effort will be made to accommodate the wishes of all families. In some cases, however, requests may not be granted.

The appropriate request procedure will be as follows:

1. Requests for specific teachers, or for your child to be with a friend, must be made in writing at the time of enrollment.
2. Any requests must also be accompanied with the appropriate deposit.
3. Deadline for requests is April 30.

The following lists our class groupings and the required birthdate deadline for your child to be placed in that respective class:

- Cubs – children turning two on or before September 1
- Young Lions – children turning three between September 2 and December 31
- Lions\* – children turning three on or before September 1
- Pre-K - children turning four years old on or before September 1

*\*Children in the Lions three year old group are expected to be completely and fully toilet-trained. The child must be able to clearly verbalize needs and be able to independently handle all toileting chores unassisted. Diapers and pull-ups are not permissible in the Lions classrooms, nor are pacifiers or sippy cups.*

## **DEVELOPING SELF-REGULATION AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Our approach to discipline is through conflict resolution processes, prevention, and classroom behavior management procedures. As part of social development and relations with others, children will be guided to:

- Try alternative methods to solve a problem

- Join with others in activities
- Participate in routines
- Try negotiation or other socially acceptable means
- Initiate and sustain interaction
- Express feelings in acceptable ways

When parents and teachers use similar approaches to discipline, it creates yet another connection between home and school for your child. Teachers appreciate your support and are always willing to share with you the strategies that work well with your child at school. If a child has consistent difficulty with a particular behavior such as hitting or biting, we will work collaboratively with parents to resolve the issue. This means that communication is key in discussing the behavior and the resolution. The Director may request the family to have the child evaluated by a developmental specialist in order to create a behavior management plan. Depending on the severity of the situation, this plan may be a prerequisite for continued enrollment.

All children grow and develop at different rates and exhibit different behaviors. Should there be any concern about your child's self-regulation, our policy is to:

- inform you verbally and in writing of the concern;
- arrange for the teacher to meet with you; and
- create and implement strategies in the classroom and at home.

If the concern continues, our policy is to:

- schedule a meeting with you, the child's teacher, and the Director to further develop strategies that will support improved behavior
- recommend professional support from an outside agency or professional assistance
- implement strategies with support from an outside agency or professional assistance

If positive progress is not achieved, we will schedule a meeting to determine the next best course of action for your child's well-being. It may be determined that it would be in your child's best interest for you to make other arrangements for his/her school setting.

## **SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT AND SEPARATION**

The first day of school is an exciting day for everyone. Some young children may have hesitancy when separating from their parents. Our experienced preschool teachers will help make this adjustment smooth for both the child and the parent. Look to your child's teacher for their recommendations during the first days of school attendance.

The following are some successful strategies for a smooth transition:

- Accompany the child for an introductory visit on Meet & Greet Day
- Discuss school routines with the child
- Assure the child that "mommy/daddy/grandma" will always, always come back
- Remain relaxed and assure the child that the teachers and the environment are safe.
- Look to the teacher for guidance if the child is clinging or showing any signs of anxiety. The teachers know effective techniques for making the child feel safe, stimulating their interest, and facilitating the child with involvement in the class activity.

## **PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING CONCERNS AND NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCES**

We encourage families to work collaboratively with staff to contribute to decisions about their child's goals and activities. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the teacher, as well as attend regularly scheduled conferences to facilitate their role as primary decision makers for their child.

We ask that parents speak with the child's teacher if a concern arises. (A translator will be sought, if needed). Parents and families may also speak with the Director at any time. The Director may negotiate a solution or may encourage families to obtain outside services such as a pediatric evaluation, speech and hearing evaluation, behavioral evaluation, etc.

### **BITING**

Current research suggests that biting may be a normal developmental phase for infants and toddlers, but when it happens, it can be scary and frustrating for everyone involved. Because of the developmental nature of most biting, experts stress that biting is not something to blame on the child, parents, or teachers.

Experts believe that biting in toddlers between 12 and 36 months old is a form of communication (i.e., to communicate frustration while learning social, language, and self-control skills). Toddlers seldom plan ahead, but rather they see and act on what they are experiencing at the moment. Toddlers do not have the language necessary to control a situation, or their attempts at communication are not understood or respected. Biting becomes a powerful way to communicate with and control others and the environment. Biting demonstrates autonomy and is a quick way to get a toy or attention. Many toddlers do not yet understand sharing, or that touch can hurt, and they need to learn other ways to communicate besides biting.

Because theorists think that biting may be related to the child's developmental stage, punishment in general is not advised either at home or in a child care center. Instead, experts recommend focusing attention on the victim, shielding the victim from the biter, initiating first aid measures as necessary, and consoling the victim. The literature strongly suggests that caregivers and parents not bite the child back as a punishment or to show the child how it feels to be bitten.

For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. Our staff members quickly remove the biter from the situation without dramatic movements, attention, or an emotional response that could provide negative reinforcement to the biter. Parents and caregivers can tell the biter that "biting is not OK," "I can't let you hurt your friends," etc. Toddlers in particular may not understand time-out, but caregivers need to make sure that the biter is not near other children until he or she has calmed down and can be redirected to other play.

Overall, we strive to maintain positive relationships with parents during biting outbreaks, to keep parents informed of the strategies being employed, to empathize with parents of both biters and victims regarding their feelings, and to communicate to parents the staff training and intervention efforts that are occurring to remedy the problem. Guidance to children who bite should be provided with the goal of helping children develop inner control of their feelings and actions.

A quick and consistent response at home and in the center can help children who bite learn to express their feelings in words so that they can become better able to control their behavior. A written report is completed for any biting incident, and parents of both children are informed. Names of children who are involved in the incident are not shared. If additional staff is needed to shadow a child who is biting, the family may be charged for this service.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs at our center:

- The biting will be interrupted with "Biting is not okay."
- Staff will stay calm and will not overreact.
- The bitten child will be comforted.
- Staff will remove the biter from the situation and redirect. The biter will be given something to do that is satisfying.
- The wound of the bitten child shall be assessed and cleansed with soap and water. If it is determined that there was a blood exposure, further steps need to be taken.
- The bitten area should continue to be observed by parents and staff for signs of infection.
- The parents of both children will be notified of the biting incident. Appropriate forms will be completed (Incident Report).
- Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.
- **If the biting becomes excessive and the staff is unable to redirect the child, we may ask that you remove your child from the program for a period of time to be determined by the director. Learning and/or behavioral strategies must be in place before the child may return to the program.**

## CLOTHING

Our program provides a wide variety of activities; please dress your child in appropriate play clothing so he or she will be able to participate fully. This includes wearing shoes that are both comfortable to play in and are appropriate to wear for a mulch-covered playground (i.e., sneakers). Flip-flops and Crocs are not allowed. Clothing should be easy for children to get on and off in order to encourage independence in dressing and toileting. All children should have a complete change of seasonal clothing (including socks and underwear) **labeled with his/her name** at school. When dirty or wet clothes are sent home, please send back replacements the next day. Parents of children in diapers should leave a supply with the child's extra clothing.

## DIAPERING

For those children who are in diapers, please make sure there is a sufficient supply of diapers available for your child. Parents must check your child's spare clothing items each week and replenish when necessary. Please refrain from sending your child to school in regular underwear until the training process is complete. "Pull-ups" for school are recommended during this transition. All children entering the three-year-old class are expected to be fully trained and not wearing "pull-ups" to school.

## POTTY TRAINING

For entry into the three year old group, all children must be totally and completely potty trained. This means that the child can independently walk to the toilet, re-arrange clothing, eliminate, and self-clean. When accidents occur, teachers will assist children in changing clothes and cleaning up. The only exception to our potty training policy are children with a documented medical condition, and each will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Our policy for potty training is that parents play the main role in initiating the process. As you begin the process at home, please make an appointment to speak with your child's teacher so we may duplicate the process in the classroom.

Please do not send your child to school in underwear until you have practiced pottying at home for several weeks. Send your child in a pull-up with loose clothing that is easy to pull up/down. Elastic waistbands are great. Please, no overalls or Onesies because they are difficult for children to remove independently. Accidents are common and should be expected in the training process. Send several extra sets of clothing, underwear, socks and shoes. We do not use potty chairs or potty rings for hygienic reasons, please do not send to school.

The goal of potty training is independent toileting. Wearing clean and dry underwear is the ultimate objective. We do not rinse out soiled underpants, we throw them away.

Underwear may be worn to school when children demonstrate the following:

- Eliminates both types in the potty at home and at school (not just urine)
- Lasts longer than an hour between potty visits
- Stays dry in a pull-up at school and dry in underwear at home
- Consistently goes to the potty independently for at least one week in school
- Tells a staff member that they need to go or is going on their own
- Requires a pull-up only during nap time, if necessary

## **THANK YOU!**

Thank you for taking the time to review our policies and procedures. Parent collaboration and communication with the teachers and administrators is encouraged to ensure a smooth transition between home and school. Our goal is for you and your child to enjoy your experience at Temple Shalom Preschool.

Don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher or the Director at any time!

*“Train up a child in the way he should go,  
and when he is old he will not depart from it.”*  
*Proverbs 22:6*