

The Community School of West Seattle

Family Handbook

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The phone number at school is

(206) 763-2081

Fax: (206) 762-2369

Email: CSWS@Comcast.net

9450 22nd Ave SW. Seattle. WA. 98106.

www.CommunitySchoolWestSeattle.org

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WELCOME

We are very honored that you have chosen The Community School of West Seattle (CSWS) for your family. We look forward to building a relationship with you and your child and you are welcome at the school at anytime. There are a few things that are important for you to know about our policies and procedures and we hope this handbook will answer all your questions and provide further insight into who we are and what we do. If you think something is missing or you have any questions PLEASE talk to Sarah Airhart.

HISTORY

The Community School of West Seattle is a 501c(3) non-profit organization recognized by the IRS. The board of trustees is made up of parents who have been or are at the school and community members. Sarah Airhart, the founder of our school is also the director. She has worked in early childhood education for over 20 years. Sarah and her husband Jason have two daughters, Emma and Harriette.

The Community School of West Seattle got its start in 1999 when Sarah Airhart organized a “Messy Play Day” for a group of families in the community. In September of 2000 a small pre-school class started with 12 families and in 2003 the Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade were added. Today we serve over 100 families in toddler classes, pre-school, Kindergarten, first and second grade.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Community School of West Seattle (CSWS) admits and welcomes students and families of any race, color, gender, sexual orientation, national, ethnic and cultural background, religion, family make-up or circumstances, to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities of the school. CSWS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, ethnic and cultural background, religion, gender, sexual orientation, family make-up or circumstances in the administration of its educational and admissions policies, scholarship programs or any other school administered programs.

ANTI-BIAS STATEMENT

CSWS is inclusive. At the core of our school is an understanding that anyone who feels connected to what we do is welcome. This includes people of all colors, sexual orientations/identities, family make-ups, religions, physical abilities, income levels, educational levels, and lifestyles. We model behaviors and language for our children, families, community and staff that values and respects every individual in the community. We actively resist and challenge biases and stereotypes and work towards creating a cohesive community in the classroom and school. This ultimately impacts the larger community in which we live.

EVERY family is acknowledged. Here are some examples of what a classroom free of biases and stereotypes looks like: girls can play with trucks; boys can wear dresses; two mamma’s (or papa’s) is a family and so is one; mommy can go to work and daddy can stay home; some families make their own babies and some families adopt their babies; some people go to church/synagogue/temple and some do not; boys can cook and clean; just because someone has grey hair doesn’t mean they are a ‘grandma’; girls can be loud and physical; bodies come in all shapes and sizes; skin comes in lots of colors and so does hair; there are a lot of ways to have physical ability; and the list goes on. At CSWS, every type of family and individual is acknowledged, reflected, and welcome.

Increasing diversity is a goal at CSWS. It is important that the diversity of the greater community is reflected at our school, especially ethnically. One of the goals at our school is to increase the ethnic diversity of our enrollment and our staff. Children are not born racist. One of the most powerful ways to make sure they never become racist is ‘relationship’. When a child has a friend or play mate that is not the same ethnicity as them, it allows them to have a real human connection that has nothing to do with color. They get to **see each other not as ‘different’ but as friends.** That experience is a very powerful antidote to racism. Because we have predominantly Caucasian families at our school it is even more important that we practice inclusion. Whenever conversation happens around skin color we include all the colors of skin, not just the ones in the room. Even ‘white’ skin comes in many shades. Our selection of books, the pictures we hang on the wall, music we listen to and materials we put on the shelves are all chosen to reflect diversity. Everything about our school comes from this place. It is also a mission of the school to increase our ethnic diversity which is currently at 24%. Ideally we would reflect at least 35% ethnic diversity.

CSWS is a HATE FREE zone. It is important that you know we respect your right to have your own family values and religious beliefs. We will however ensure that everyone in our school community is treated respectfully and feels included in our community.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

There are several forms that **MUST** be completed **BEFORE** your child starts at CSWS. Hopefully you have received the Registration Packet. **PLEASE** read and complete **all the forms** in this packet. These include:

Contents:

1. Registration Form
2. Health History
3. Emergency Consent/Field Trip/Media Release form
4. Food Preferences Form
5. Immunization Form
6. Tuition Agreement

You will also receive a Demographics form. This form is optional but it does really help us in our grant writing efforts. Organizations who give grant funds like to know what populations their money is serving. As a school we want to know our population so that we can make sure that we are in-line with our Anti-Bias statement.

Allergies and Food Preferences:

-If your child has allergies you will also need to complete the **ALLERGY PLAN**.

-If you have food preferences/restrictions you will need to complete the **FOOD PREFERENCES** form.

The more information you can share with us in these forms the better we can understand and help meet your child’s individual needs as well as offer you with any resources or support we might have available.

Registration Fee: The Registration Fee is **\$150 per family** and is **NOT** refundable. Please include the registration fee when you submit your registration packet if you haven’t already done so.

Ages Admitted: CSWS admits children into Messy Play Day between 15 and 18 months and up to 3 years. The pre-school classes are for 3 to 5 year olds. The K-2 program is for children who are at least 5 years old in September and up to 8 years old and/or considered 2nd grade.

TUITION AND PAYMENT POLICIES

Tuition at CSWS is an ANNUAL amount which covers attendance for the whole school year September through August. You can choose to divide your annual tuition and make 10 or 12 monthly payments. BOTH payment options pay the same annual tuition amount.

- 10 monthly payments are due September to June
- 12 monthly payments are due September to August

You are responsible for your annual tuition regardless of attendance. If however you leave BEFORE May 1st you will not be required to pay any more tuition than you have already paid. **We require one month's notice or one month's tuition if you leave prior to May 1st.** If you attend after May 1st, the full year's tuition is required regardless if you stay through August or not.

- ◆ See the current tuition sheet and calendar for this year's rates and school closure dates.
- ◆ Tuition is due on or before the **1st of every month** for that month—for example December tuition is due by the 1st of December. The only exception to this is September when tuition is due on the FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.
- ◆ Payments can be made in cash, money orders or checks, payable to CSWS. You may post date a check for the 1st and it will not be deposited until the 1st. You can give us several postdated checks all at once. You may also set-up for an automatic check payment to be mailed to us from your bank account. See your bank for details. If needed, you may make specific payment date arrangements, for example your tuition is paid on the 5th instead of the 1st. This must be set up prior with the director otherwise you will be charged the late fee.
- ◆ **Please write your child's FIRST AND LAST name on the check** or money order, then put your tuition in the blue TUITION BOX located in the entry area
- ◆ A LATE FEE of \$25 is added after the 5th unless you have made prior arrangements with the director
- ◆ The sibling discount is 15% off the regular tuition.
- ◆ Tuition is due in **FULL EVERY MONTH** for the total 10 or 12 months you agreed to make payments for even if you do not attend during the summer. Full tuition is due when school is closed-as specified on the school calendar or you are on vacation. Please make arrangements to pay your tuition on time.
- ◆ When the school is closed for vacation, tuition is STILL DUE by the 1st. You can mail it or post date a check and leave it before we close or you can drop it off during the break.
- ◆ We DO accept DSHS payments if you qualify for state assistance. See the director for more info.
- ◆ **NO CREDIT** or refund is given for time you are away on vacation or other random or scheduled days you miss. Exceptional circumstances like extended sickness will be considered on a case by case basis.
- ◆ If you are having a hard time paying your tuition PLEASE talk to the director about alternative payment options. We offer some sliding fee spaces in each class. Please ask for the scholarship application if needed.
- ◆ Tuition and tuition policies are reviewed and set annually by the Board of Trustees
- ◆ **After school care** is also due on the 1st of each month with your tuition. You can reserve it ongoing for the year, on a month-to-month basis or as drop-in if space is available. As with tuition, the days you reserve each month are the days you pay for whether you use them or not. You can also change or add days as needed throughout the year depending on available space. Sibling discounts are not applicable to after school care fees.

FAMILY ACCESS

Once your child is enrolled you and your family are welcome at any time. We encourage and welcome your visits. Please note that if there are custody disputes and a parent is not legally allowed to visit with the child YOU MUST NOTIFY THE DIRECTOR AND STAFF IN WRITING ASAP and provide a copy of the court documents.

INFANT SIBLINGS IN CLASS

Infant siblings are welcome at all times. Please feel free to feed your child wherever, however and whenever your child needs to. Please include them in what's going on. We prefer that you do not leave them in a car seat or stroller for extended periods of time unless they are asleep.

VISITING and VOLUNTEER POLICY

When you and your family or friends visit or volunteer with us, we ask that you pay close attention to a few things.

- ◆ The children are very busy so please do not interrupt them unnecessarily.
- ◆ Please honor a child's focus of interest and let them pursue it as long as they wish.
- ◆ In the classroom talk in a soft voice. Speak to the children with respectful language, as you would wish to be spoken to.
- ◆ Be prepared to take your child with you if you leave before the end of class.
- ◆ If you do have to leave without them always say goodbye when you go.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PROVIDE

PLEASE label everything in permanent marker in order to identify lost items

- 4 bags of unopened snack per month from the list attached (See SNACK on page 9). This snack goes into our school snack cupboard and is shared among the whole school. There will be a chart located by the kitchen, please check off by your child's name each month when you drop off your snacks. If you prefer, you may pay a \$20 snack fee per month instead of bringing in a snack.
- **If your child is in diapers or pull-ups please bring a whole package of them and a package of wipes every few months for our diaper kitty in the bathroom**
- A zip lock bag with your child's name on it containing ONE COMPLETE change of clothes
- When transitioning from diapers to underwear please provide LOTS of EXTRA clothes and underwear, including socks and shoes
- Seasonally appropriate clothes-a jacket when it's cold, solid shoes or boots when it's wet, a swimsuit when it's hot. We go outside rain or shine!
- A picture of the whole family for the classroom
- The lost and found is at the front of the school

PERSONAL ITEMS FROM HOME

As part of the learning experience, all children use the materials in the classroom. We have an ample supply of equipment and materials for the group. Please **DO NOT BRING TOYS FROM HOME**.

PLEASE label everything in permanent marker in order to identify lost items. CSWS cannot assume responsibility for loss or damage to any personal possessions children bring from home. Help your child to not bring toys or other objects from home. Perhaps they can come for the car ride but must stay in the car seat until the end of

class? Or you can take a picture of a favorite item and they can have it in their pocket? If you can not work through the struggle in the morning we can help you when you get here!

On occasion the teachers will ask for things from home like a picture, a book (please not from a TV show or movie) or a rock from the garden for special projects or you may have taken a trip to the beach and want to bring us some shells, these situations do not fall under this policy!

SIGNING-IN and SIGNING-OUT

- When you arrive: **It is a state LAW that you MUST sign in using your FULL signature** on the SIGN-IN sheet located by your child's classroom. Write in any notes that the teacher should know-if someone else is picking them up, if they are leaving early etc....
- When you leave: **It is a state LAW that you MUST sign out using your FULL signature** on the sheet that you signed in on. Make sure you CHECK IN/MAKE EYE CONTACT WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER BEFORE you leave.

If someone other than the usual person will be picking the child up you MUST let us know that day. If they are not already on your 'authorized pick-up' list on your registration form you may want to add them but you must tell us who they are IN WRITING. We prefer to have been introduced beforehand when possible. Please let them know that they may be asked to show ID.

We **will NOT release a child** to anyone, including the parent/guardian, if we suspect their ability to drive safely has been **impaired by drugs and/or alcohol**.

Please help us comply with these state mandated requirements.

STAFFING

The teaching team is critical for implementing our philosophy. Our Staff are an amazing group of people. They have the desire to work with young children and have the ability to connect with children, be compassionate and are knowledgeable and are always in the process of learning. We look for Lead Teachers that have experience in a similar age classroom and position as well as early childhood education. We have teachers with early childhood and elementary degrees, some with many years experience and some who joined us as parents. But what they have in common is that they 'get it'. They understand and feel connected to what CSWS is about.

CSWS supports its teaching staff. We provide regular opportunities for professional development. Each staff person is required to complete 20 hours of training through STARS (State Training and Registry System) upon hire-unless they have a degree or substantial experience and training in early childhood, and 10 hours of training every year thereafter. We pay for all training, offer paid planning and prep time and pay our staff for every holiday and vacation during the year. It is important that they are seen as a professional who's area of expertise is young children. Please know that they are an excellent resource for any of your questions.

We run state background checks on all our employees and they are all First Aid and CPR certified.

Babysitting: If you choose to arrange CSWS staff to baby-sit, services must be outside the school and with the understanding that such arrangements and payments for services are solely between the individual and the child's family. The arrangements are not sanctioned and liability is not assumed by the school.

HEALTH CARE PRACTICES

Disease and illness can often be shared and is easily spread among young children. Even with appropriate hygiene practiced regularly, both at home and at school, we still get sick occasionally! We have established a Health Care Policy to help us reduce/minimize the illnesses and disease exposure to the children, staff and families. It is critical that the health policies and procedures in our center be respected and adhered to at all times. This will ensure a much healthier environment for children, parents, and teachers. Please read the full Health Policy in the parent area.

- Regular hand washing by children, staff and parents especially after being with the animals
- Keeping sick children home
- Keeping the school clean and sanitary
- Disinfecting and sanitizing critical areas-food prep, diaper changing, toys, bathrooms etc...
- Maintaining a safe environment inside and out
- Trained staff in First Aid/CPR, emergency procedures, health and hygiene techniques

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS ILL

If your child has any of the following symptoms please stay home in bed ☺ Please give us a call to let us know if they have any of these symptoms. It is NOT necessary to call if they have a minor cold or you are playing hooky!

Fever of at least 100 ° F *and who also have one or more of the following:*

- Vomiting on 2 or more occasions within the past 24 hours.
- Diarrhea: 3 or more watery stools within a 24-hour period, or any bloody stool.
- Rash, especially with fever or itching.
- Eye discharge or conjunctivitis (pinkeye) until clear or until 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
- Sick appearance not feeling well and/or not able to keep up with usual activities.
- Open or oozing sores, unless properly covered and 24 hours has passed since starting antibiotic treatment, if treatment is necessary.
- Lice or scabies. For head lice, children and staff may return after treatment and no nits. For scabies, return after treatment.

Children will be readmitted to school when they no longer have the above symptoms and are 'back to themselves'. CSWS will notify you if your child has been or may have been exposed to a communicable disease.

WHAT A DAY MIGHT LOOK LIKE

Each classroom is unique. The teachers have a lot of autonomy to run their classroom in a way that is meaningful to them and to the particular needs of their group. Outside each classroom you will find a sample daily schedule. Our EMERGENT CURRICULUM allows us to maintain flexibility. There is nothing about our day that is rigid or can not be rearranged to better meet the needs of each classroom in that moment. What works in one classroom may not work in another. And we want it that way. It keeps us on our toes, in the moment and connected to our children. The one thing we have discovered that happens the same time every day is SNACK 😊

These are just SOME of things you can expect to see on a daily basis:

Outside play	Disagreements	Small and large group	Dressing-up
Sensory experience	Problem solving	Discussions	Singing and dancing
Art/craft/creation	Hand washing	Science	Counting/sorting
Physical active play	Building	Snuggling	Writing
Music/singing	Emotions	Movement/dancing	Animals
Letters	Math	Reading/stories	FUN!

We do NOT schedule a ‘nap time’. If your child wants to lie down we have a nap mat and comfy areas for some quiet time. We do provide for some ‘down’ time after lunch for the children who are here for the full day pre-school classes.

SNACKS

- *Please bring in 4 unopened bags of snack each month.* This snack goes into our school snack cupboard and is shared among the whole school. There will be a chart located by the kitchen, please check off by your child’s name each month when you drop off your snacks. If you prefer, you may pay a \$20 snack fee per month instead of bringing in a snack. If providing snack is ever a burden to you financially please discuss this with the director. We want this to be a pleasant experience and for you to know how meaningful it is to the whole school.
- *Please make sure your child has had breakfast before they arrive.* If they refuse breakfast please offer a snack in the car on the way here.
- **We are a NUT FREE zone!** Due to the increasing and often life threatening allergies to nuts we have chosen to be a nut free zone. This means that **NO NUTS** including **PEANUT BUTTER and other nut butters, snack mixes that contain nuts or anything with nut ingredients** are NOT allowed in the school. Soy nuts and seed butters are fine.

Our snack time together in the classroom is a special experience and a time for us to come together as a community and share food-a very powerful experience for many of us. Therefore our snacks should support the meaningful time we spend together. We have included a list of snacks that we would encourage you to purchase to bring into school. There may also be some other types of snacks you and your children enjoy and we welcome those too if they meet our guidelines in the shaded grey box below.

CSWS will provide the fresh fruits and vegetables with every snack. Filtered water is always served at snack time and available throughout the day in the class.

Please try to choose items with :

NO preservatives - NO artificial coloring - NO artificial additives
NO added sugar - NO artificial sweetener

Please remember we are a **NUT FREE zone.**

Gluten Free items are especially welcome!

Dairy Free items are especially welcome!

The following items are some of our favorite snack foods:				
ANY snack item for Trader Joes	ANY snack item from PCC	Baked Whole grain crackers	Rice cakes-slightly salted	Baked Cheesy crackers
Pita Bread /hummus	Fruit leather	Veggie Booty	Pirates Booty	Pretzels
Tortilla Chips	Sour Cream	Seaweed snacks	Tings	Cereal
Rice Crackers	Fruit Filled Bars	Saltines	Oyster Crackers	Veggie Sticks
Veggie Chips	Goldfish	Bread Sticks	Croutons	Popcorn

If your child has special dietary needs please complete the appropriate forms-either the ALLERGY form if the allergy has been diagnosed by a licensed health care provider and/or the FOOD PREFERENCES FORM. These forms are available from the director.

LUNCH

WE ARE A NUT FREE ZONE. No nuts at all!! That means no PB&J!!! Soy nut and seed butters are okay but no other nut butters.

If your child is staying the full day in a Pre-School class or the K-2 class they will need to **bring a lunch from home everyday.** Lunch is served at about 12:40. Please pack items that will sustain and nourish a growing child. It is a good idea to pack a little more than you think your child might eat, and then you have a snack for on the way home! And use YOUR judgment as to what to pack. At 9am a kid might feel like just a yogurt but by 12pm they are HUNGRY so please pack a full lunch box even if your child says they don't want it!!!

➤ **You must pack an ICE PACK in your child's lunch box.**

While it may seem like a little thing, we ask that YOUR CHILD carry in their lunch box and put it in the appropriate spot. This supports developmentally appropriate skills as well as allowing independence. It also helps when they have to get their own lunch box at lunch time, because then they know where it is! They should also be responsible for taking it home!

PLEASE MARK YOUR LUNCH BOX AND THE INDIVIDUAL TUPPERWARE/THERMOS ETC... WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME. Please use a permanent marker. MARK EVERYTHING!

A lunch box might include:

- A sandwich (NOT PB&J) as we are PEANUT FREE) other nut butters are ok.
- A whole piece of fruit or fruit cut up
- Cut up veggies with a dip
- A SMALL yogurt or piece of cheese
- A water bottle with their NAME ON IT
- A bag of crackers
- Cut up meat and cheese
- Use a thermos for left over spaghetti or soup - We **do not** use the microwave to heat kids lunch so make sure you heat it up BEFORE you put it in the thermos-it will stay warm.
- Bagel and cream cheese
- Vegetable Sushi rolls-no raw fish please!
- Wraps or roll-ups with cream cheese or tuna salad

There are only a few things we DO NOT ALLOW in children's lunch boxes so PLEASE DO NOT PACK THEM:

- **Anything with NUT ingredients**
- **Carbonated drinks- including soda, fizzy water or juice in a can or bottle etc...**
- **Food that has to be heated or cooked**
- **Candy or Gum (not even ONE piece!)**

HOW WE APPROACH DISCIPLINE

It is our intention and commitment to provide a safe and nurturing environment. At CSWS, we do not physically, verbally or emotionally punish any child and we will not allow anyone else to do so on our premises, including the parent/guardian.

It is important to know that children are more physical at a young age during conflict because they are not able to fully articulate what they want to say right away. They are often quick to shove, push and snatch something they want. Just because a child is doing these things does NOT make them 'bad' or 'violent'. There is an 'expected/acceptable' level of developmentally appropriate physical behavior that MOST children engage in at one time or another.

At CSWS discipline is not something 'done' to a child, rather it is incorporated into how we communicate, respect and treat our children everyday. Children are learning the most valuable life lessons when they have conflict with peers (or parents or teachers for that matter!) How they are treated during these times of stress and emotional confusion is very important to how they develop their own level of understanding of others and themselves. OUR purpose in conflict resolution is to maintain dignity and connection for each party involved and to allow THEM to come to some agreement. This can look like an adult supervising or facilitating a conflict from a distance, the adult may hear it and see it but not interact if it looks like the children are working it out-which often they do given the opportunity. It could also be that the adult sits close by and puts a hand on a child's shoulder to reassure them that they are safe. It can be that the adult actively engages in the conflict by separating the children physically if necessary and patiently listening to each child express their frustration and hurt. The process is an important part of resolution. We ask the children to suggest solutions and most often they will come up with a plan that we would not have, but it works for THEM. There is NEVER any put downs, name calling, blaming or shaming. When we see children in physical altercations we always attend to them by first creating a safe space, separating them if necessary, then validating the emotion and expressing our need for safety. It is important that they have a moment to calm down before we begin the conflict resolution process.

If there is a continued issue with a child or the safety of others is compromised we will ask to meet with you one on one. At that meeting we will discuss the situation and look at strategies to help all involved. We may need to meet more than once and we would want to stay in communication through out the process. If after implementing the strategies outlined at the meetings, which would always include looking at what it is WE are doing and how WE can better meet your child's needs, it may be that our style does not work for your child, perhaps they need a different structure, a smaller class size, or more freedom. Whatever it is, we want to support you. We will try to offer you other resources for further assistance.

If your child poses a serious and immediate threat to the safety of themselves or others we will ask you to remove your child immediately. We will also try to offer you resources for further assistance.

If at any time you have a question or concern regarding your child and 'discipline' at CSWS, please bring it to our attention, we want to be available to discuss it with you.

PRACTICES REGARDING HOLIDAYS

Every day at CSWS is a celebration of the joy of childhood.

It is so important to us that everyone feels welcome on any day of the year. That is why we do not "celebrate holidays" at school. It is NOT our place to 'teach' your child about any particular holiday-especially since most of them are based on religion. We believe it is a family's right and responsibility to share their religious values/beliefs with their child. That does not mean we do not share in the experience. We want the children to bring to US the

joy and experiences they have at home. We love to hear about the celebrations they share with their families during the year and it is always fun to see pictures of these events in a child's life and to talk about the many ways we celebrate. Materials are always available for the children to make whatever they want-cards, gifts, ornaments, as long as it is the child's direction it is welcomed and encouraged.

BIRTHDAYS

As delightful as it is for children to want to share their birthday and have a party at school, it is just too much external stimulation for our environment. Your child is of course welcome to tell us all about their birthday-just try to stop them!!! And we will talk about it and if any of the children suggest making a card they are welcome to, it just won't be something we set-up as the day's activities. If you want to bring something 'different' to add to our snack you are welcome but please **NO CUPCAKES**. Small muffins, exotic fruit salad or banana bread is wonderful and we will all really enjoy it!

Children are **free to celebrate and share with us what is important to THEM**. When the children share their experiences with us, wonderful classroom conversations occur that are really inspiring and genuine. We celebrate lots of events together; pot-lucks, the start of school, the seasons and our own personal growth. That's a lot of parties!!!

The Community School of West Seattle is a neutral haven from all the corporate madness surrounding most holidays. It is the one place that stays untouched, and that is a pleasure to a child who just wants to PLAY! We honor you as a family in celebrating whatever you desire and we hope that you will honor that our community celebrates each one of you everyday.

FIELD TRIPS AND TRANSPORTATION

Before any trip the staff will go over the Transportation and Field Trip guidelines. A copy is available for you to look at in the parent area.

The Pre-School classes rarely go on field trips. Because they come for such a short time our children really come to be HERE. They may occasionally take a walk down the lane to pick leaves or find bits of nature. If the class should decide to take a field trip you will be given plenty of notice and the option to not go. If we needed to transport children we would either take the bus or ask for volunteer drivers*. You would provide your own child's safety seat and of course have the option of driving your own child.

The K-2 class often takes a field trip. The local libraries are a regular stop and the class either walks or takes the local bus. We will ask you to provide the bus fare. Another favorite is walking around the block. Parent volunteers are always welcome to help lower the adult to child ratio. If they go on a more adventurous trip you will be given plenty of notice and the option to not go. If we needed to transport children we would either take the bus or ask for volunteer drivers*.

We have also discovered the wonders of renting a school bus. They come with qualified drivers and all the insurance needs. So look for an annual 'school bus' ride.

Children are closely supervised AT ALL TIMES on trips and we always try to take extra adults so that each one has only a few children to be directly responsible for. We choose the locations carefully for suitability and safety as well as relationship to any current theme in the classroom or with the season. If there is anything we can do to make you feel more comfortable please talk to us about it-we want you to be able to enjoy all aspects of our program.

* Volunteer Drivers must have medical and liability insurance, a current driver's license and a safe and reliable vehicle with seat belts that are in good working order. You would provide your own child's safety seat and of course have the option of driving

your own child. One person in each car must have a current first aid/CPR card. A first aid kit will be available for the trip as well as some safety equipment, such as jumper cables, spare tire, safety triangles and a flash light.

ANIMALS

You may have noticed that we have animals at school. We enjoy our animals and take good care of them. They are an important part of what we do. The children love to watch them, feed them and find out about them. They get to touch most of them and we let them participate in their care by feeding them, treating them gently and making sure that the animals are safe. We teach the children that they must always wash their hands after being with the animals and we always have hand sanitizer close by. We also expect adults to wash their hands too! If your child has or develops an allergy to our animals please let us know. We will work with you to find a solution that works for all of us. For more information about each animal you can read the information sheet that is posted with each animal.

DIAPER CHANGING

We are happy to change your child's diaper and we do NOT require that your child be toilet trained to be in our program. For children in diapers we ask that you put a fresh diaper on right before class and bring us a whole package of diapers and wipes every few months to add to our kitty at the changing table. If you prefer that your child wear only the diapers and use only the wipes that you provide please put them in a zip lock bag with your child's name on them and make sure we know that is your preference.

We have a safe and clean changing area in the bathroom outside of the pre-school classrooms that we use for all changing. Our diaper changing procedure is posted next to the changing table. Part of respecting children is knowing that diaper changing is a very intimate procedure and some children feel uncomfortable having someone other than the primary caregiver doing it at first. If your child is one of them please let us know so that we can work together to keep your child clean and comfortable. We will do our very best to help a child feel safe so that we can change them, we've had lots of practice so we're pretty good!

OUR APPROACH TO USING THE TOILET

Enrollment is NOT based on your child's ability to use the toilet-or not! We believe this practice to be discriminatory and NOT in-line with developmentally appropriate practices or ADA guidelines! We know that children use the toilet when they are ready-unless they have specific physical/medical issues. If you suspect this, bring it to your pediatrician's attention. Every child has his or her own timeline. What we have seen is that children are using the toilet on their own with no 'training' involved when they are ready. This is often between 3 and 5 years old. Some children go earlier and some go later.

Toilet training is a very tender topic. It can create a tremendous amount of stress in both a child's and parent's life. We do not force a child or manipulate with rewards to use the toilet. We will take them to the toilet and help them as needed. If a child wets themselves they are treated with gentleness and respect, they have done nothing wrong. We have also found that learning to use the toilet is one of the areas where peer pressure is a 'good' thing! When the children get to see other children going to the toilet, they are self-motivated to learn, and that always has the best results. We ask that your child always wears either, diapers, pull-ups or panties and that you provide plenty of them!!! We cannot have bare bums! We hope that you will feel comfortable discussing any of your concerns with us. And we have lots of tips to share!

MEDICATION/REMEDIES

- CSWS will NOT administer the following over the counter medications/remedies:
 - ❑ Fever reducer/pain reliever
 - ❑ Cough suppressant
 - ❑ Decongestant
 - ❑

If your child needs these medications it is likely that they are not well enough to attend school. Please keep them home. We WILL administer antihistamine if your child suffers from allergies. You MUST fill out the MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION form available from the director.

CSWS will only administer medications/remedies with a licensed health care provider's consent

A licensed Health Care Provider's consent may be given in 3 different ways; anyone of these ways is acceptable consent:

- ❑ The provider's name is on the original pharmacist's label (along with the child's name, name of the medication, dosage, frequency (can NOT be given "as needed"), duration and expiration date); *or*
- ❑ The provider signs a note or prescription that includes the information required on the pharmacist's label; *or*
- ❑ The provider signs a completed Medication Authorization Form.

If at any time your child requires medication/remedies that we would have to administer during school hours you must fill out a MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION form and let us know all the details.

- Directions must be clearly printed on the ORIGINAL container with your child's name on it. And the EXACT dosing instructions MUST BE ON THE LABEL. Medication/remedies will be kept in the 'staff only' cupboard in the classroom or the fridge if needed.
- **SUNTAN LOTION** is considered a medication due to the ingredients. PLEASE apply sunscreen BEFORE you come to school. But don't worry; we would never let your child be put at risk of sunburn just because you forgot! We always have some here. At the beginning of the summer season we will ask you to complete a permission form for us to apply sunscreen to your child. This form gives us consent for 6 months.
- **DIAPER CREAM** is considered a medication due to the ingredients. Please fill out a medication authorization if you want us to put it on your child's rash.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of a **minor emergency** a trained staff of CSWS will administer first aid. Every effort will be made to contact a parent first. If we are unable to contact a parent we will call the ER contact person as indicated on the registration form. An accident report will be completed as soon as possible and a copy given to the parent and put in the child's file. It will also be recorded on an incident log.

A minor emergency might be:

- Open cut perhaps requiring stitches/Possible broken finger or toe/Fainting /Asthma attack-dependending on the severity and availability of medication, an asthma attack may also be considered a serious emergency.

In the event of a **serious emergency**, 911 will be called and a trained member of staff will administer any necessary first aid/CPR. If deemed appropriate by the 911 operator the child may be transported directly to the emergency room by a staff member of CSWS or an ambulance will be sent to us. Every effort will be made to contact a parent first. If we are unable to contact a parent we will call the ER contact person as indicated on the registration form. An accident report will be completed as soon as possible and a copy given to the parent and put in the child's file. It will also be recorded on an incident log.

A serious emergency might be:

- Severe deep and gushing cut/Seizure for unknown reason/ Asthma attack-dependending on the severity and availability (or not) of medication.

The hospital we will transport to is:

Name of Hospital: Highline Medical Center

Address: 16251 Sylvester Road SW. Burien

Phone: 244-9970

Asthma and Allergic Reactions

If your child has asthma on a regular basis, or if the allergic reaction is life threatening please make sure we have a supply of the medication prescribed by your DR/ND at school.

An individual written plan of care will be followed in emergency situations. For example:

Asthma:

- An individual emergency treatment plan shall be kept on file for any child with asthma.
- The plan shall be implemented when a child exhibits asthma symptoms at child care.
- Parents shall receive a written accident report

Allergies:

- A food allergy plan shall be filled out and kept on file for children whose registration form indicates food allergies. Please make sure we know if the reaction is severe or not. If your child has an Epi-pen at home we **MUST** have one here at school too. A list of all children with food allergies and/or restrictions will be posted in every room.

In the event of **suspected or witnessed poisoning** we will call Poison Control and follow their instructions. Syrup of Ipecac will only be used if Poison Control directs us to do so.

DISASTER AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

We have taken extended procedures to assure our safety during a disaster. This is different from an emergency such as a fire or accident. A disaster would include earthquake, acts of terrorism, volcano, explosion, etc. We have a full disaster plan in action and our staff has received training in it. We practice parts of our plan on a monthly basis, sometimes in the classroom and sometimes at staff meetings. We have all our supply needs for 72 hours for over 100 people. Our supplies include food, clothing, water, shelter, first aid and entertainment. As well as equipment such as flash lights, tarps, ropes, etc.

It is very important to us that you feel that your child is in the best possible hands at all times, but especially during a disaster. Because we have a plan in place it is very important that if we should experience a disaster that you also have the appropriate information.

If we are able to stay in our building we will. You should:

- STAY CALM and try to get to us as soon as you can.
- DO NOT call us on the phone. Chances are phones will not be operable but if they are usable it is IMPERITIVE that the emergency crews can use them and that we can call out if we need to.

If we are NOT able to stay in our building we will go to:

- **The blue church lot at the north end of 22nd Ave SW**

Please pay special attention to our PICK-UP policies. They WILL NOT be the same as a regular day.

When you come to pick-up your child or you have someone else pick-up your child:

- There will be a waiting line of emotional parents. Please STAY CALM. Your child is safe and will very soon be reunited with you. It is our responsibility to make sure ALL our children are taken care of. This procedure will ensure that. This of course includes YOUR child.
- When you arrive there will be a line for incoming parents. This is a check in point. You MUST CHECK IN FIRST.
- Bring a picture ID and be prepared to show it. We understand that in some circumstances it may not be available so please bear with us. It may not be someone who knows you that checks you in. This is an important safety step so please be patient.
- One emergency personnel will go and get your child from the child care area and bring them to you.
- You must then go to the CHECK OUT point. You may NOT leave until you have been cleared to do so.

You can also help us by:

- Keeping your contact information current and up to date
- Letting us know of any medications your child must take at home due to chronic conditions so that we can have a supply of their medicine in our kit

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher conferences are held twice a year. Please see this year's calendar for dates. This is a very important time for us to connect with you about your child's experience and yours! It is one of the few times we ever get to meet without your child in the room! Please sign-up for the conference as soon as you see the sign-up sheet and if you are parenting with a partner we strongly encourage you both to attend. Either before or at the conference you will receive a write up from the teacher about your child. It may be in a narrative form or a list of developmental areas the teacher has observed and is working on.

We spend a great deal of time OBSERVING your child and want to share these observations with you. We want to give you a little insight into their day with us, what we notice about them interacting with other children, how and what they play and do with their day, the areas of the class they really like and those they avoid, and what areas of interest we have noticed and how we want to approach further growth in those areas and some ideas to promote interest or growth in others. We take care to not judge or compare them against each other. Each child is on their own path. If you have any concerns about your child's development please feel free to **talk to the teachers or the director at any time during the year.** We are always available to share our insights with you and possibly help you find resources that may be of assistance. We will also share our observations, questions or concerns with you on a regular basis.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

It is important to us that you feel you have the information you need about your child's experience here and what is going on at school. There are a number of ways we try to communicate these things to you.

- By **checking in with your child's teacher before you leave**, making eye contact and saying hello/goodbye, they can touch base verbally with you about any news they might need to share.
- You have your own **Parent Pocket**. Any notes or information we need you to have will go in there. **CHECK IT EVERY DAY!**
- Class and All School **email** lists serve as great ways to bring information quickly to a large audience.
- Each classroom has its own notice board. If you check it regularly you will see information about what the day looks like, any events scheduled, photos, monthly calendars and curriculum updates.
- In the entry way you will find a notice board just for School Business. Get into the habit of checking it regularly so you don't miss postings about upcoming events, school closures, pot-lucks, gatherings and other school related news.
- Some classrooms have a newsletter that goes out quarterly or more, **PLEASE READ IT**. These have lots of information about specific curriculum activities that have been happening in the classroom. They are also great for starting conversation with your child about their class.
- The school has a newsletter to update you on school business-events, financial status, opportunities to volunteer and any changes to any policies or procedures. Also some great quotes and interesting articles!
- Parent Conferences are another way we communicate your child's experience at school.
- Our web site **www.CommunitySchoolWestSeattle.org** has the school calendar posted.
- We are always available to schedule a meeting after class if you have special areas of concerns or questions that need our immediate attention. Just let us know and we will schedule a time.
- This handbook that you are reading right now, is our chance to share with you many of the policies and procedures that you might need to know about.
- Other policies available to you include the health, pet, disaster, pesticide and school policies and procedures. They are all available in white binders on the book shelf in the parent area at the front of the school. You are welcome to read them here or request a copy for your records.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

If you have an issue or concern with anything related to CSWS, **PLEASE** contact the director right away to share it. We really want to hear your concerns. It may be that we have not explained something to you. Your concern may not have been brought to our attention before and may help us provide a better program for yourself and others. It may provide the opportunity for growth of all involved-and no one should be denied that opportunity! We are a 'community' school and we want your feedback.

If you do have an issue or concern that you have not brought to the directors attention yet, we would ask that you please not discuss it with other parents or staff (unless it's #1 below), as this can create a climate of mistrust and hurt feelings.

If you have a grievance please follow this procedure:

1. If you feel comfortable, share your issue with the person you have the issue with.
2. Share it with the director. You can write it, email it, make a phone call or sit down in person.
3. If after discussing it with the teacher and/or director you do not feel resolved, **please make another attempt** to share your feelings.
4. If you feel dissatisfied write a letter to the board of trustees. The trustees meet once a month and they will discuss your grievance at the next scheduled meeting. They will respond to you with-in 15 days of the meeting either by phone or letter. Send your letter to: **CSWS Board of Trustees. 9450 22nd Ave SW. Seattle. 98106**

TERMINATION OF SERVICES

The following are conditions that would be reason for the director to ask you to leave:

- Child or adult behavioral problems that cannot be resolved or cause immediate harm
- You do not support the philosophy or approach of the school and it becomes clear that this is interfering with other families and your child's experience here
- Inability to respect staff, children, other parents/guardians and follow the policies of the center. This policy applies to parents/guardians and children and includes picking up your child late on a regular basis.

We will discuss our concerns with you and put them in writing. Depending on the issue we will give you an opportunity to change the behaviors in question. However CSWS reserves the right to terminate services without notice.

If you should want to leave CSWS please let us know as soon as you can. No tuition will be reimbursed. We would appreciate the opportunity to hear the reasons why CSWS did not work for you. A letter or email would be fine. This kind of feedback helps us reflect on our own experience and understand yours a little better. It helps us to establish if there is a pattern to a particular issue or a program component that is not working and it allows us the opportunity to grow.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW

As a place committed to the safety and well being of all children we are required to report to the police or CPS (Child Protective Services) any suspicion or evidence of child abuse, including physical, emotional, sexual, neglect or exploitation. We may not be able to discuss the issue with you depending on the advice from the police or CPS. If you need help with issues related to child abuse and/or neglect please don't be afraid to talk to the director. She may have resources that can help you.

➤ **If you need help you can anonymously call the Crisis line at: 461-3222**

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ENRICHED ENVIRONMENT

From *Magic Trees of the Mind* by Marian Diamond and Janet Hopson

- Includes a steady source of positive emotional support
- Provides a nutritious diet with enough protein, vitamins, minerals, and calories
- Stimulates all the senses (but not necessarily all at once!)
- Has an atmosphere free of undue pressure and stress but suffused with a degree of pleasurable intensity
- Presents a series of novel challenges that are neither too easy nor too difficult for the child at his or her stage of development
- Allows for social interaction for a significant percentage of activities
- Promotes the development of a broad range of skills and interests that are mental, physical, aesthetic, social and emotional
- Gives the child an opportunity to choose many of his or her own activities
- Gives the child a chance to assess the results of his or her efforts and to modify them
- Offers an enjoyable atmosphere that promotes exploration and the fun of learning
- Above all, allows the child to be an active participant rather than a passive observer

The Community School of West Seattle embraces these characteristics.

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgements:

Child's

Name _____

Upon enrollment of my child/children, I received written information on the following center policies and operational procedures AND I have read the parent handbook.

- ✓ *Philosophy*
- ✓ *Policy & Procedures*
- ✓ *The snack- no milk or meat is served*
- ✓ *Animal practices and locations*
- ✓ *Use/non-use of pesticides*
- ✓ *Location of required posted information*
- ✓ *Enrollment and admission requirements*
- ✓ *Tuition Rates and Payment Procedures*
- ✓ *Class times including School Closures*
- ✓ *Open Door Policy (Free Access)*
- ✓ *Sign In and Out Procedures*
- ✓ *Child Abuse Reporting Requirements*
- ✓ *Approach to discipline*
- ✓ *Nondiscrimination and Anti-Bias Statement*
- ✓ *Policy regarding Holiday Activities*
- ✓ *Transportation and Field Trips*
- ✓ *Sick Child Procedures*
- ✓ *Medication Policies and Practices including remedies*
- ✓ *Disaster Plan*
- ✓ *Toilet Learning*

If you have questions write them here and return the form. The director will answer them for you or direct you to the place to find the information you need. After your questions have been answered we will ask you to sign this form.

If you do NOT have questions please sign and return this form-you can always ask some later 😊
I have received, read, understand, and agree to adhere to the policies contained in the parent handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM WHEN YOU HAVE READ THIS HANDBOOK. WE NEED IT TO COMPLETE YOUR CHILD'S FILE.