

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF WEST SEATTLE



Family Handbook

Updated for September 2016

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WELCOME

We are 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. 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 the office.

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.

The Community School of West Seattle got its start in 1999 when our founder, Sarah Airhart, created “Messy Play Day” for toddlers and their parents/caregivers. In September of 2000 a small pre-school class started with 12 families and in 2003 the Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade were added. In August 2013 the K-2 class left CSWS and become an independent K-5. Since September 2013 CSWS serves only pre-school children age 3 to 5 years old. We currently serve over 100 families in and around West Seattle.

Our Mission

Built on the foundation of mutual respect the Community School of West Seattle provides and promotes a well-balanced and comprehensive approach to early learning.

Our Values

Childhood is for Being a Child

The early years, birth to eight years old, are a time of intense discovery. Play is the vital work of childhood as young children learn by doing. We believe the more opportunities children have for hands on, sensory-based experiences, the more they learn about their world. Our multi-age approach allows children to work with, learn from, and support each other.

Excellence in Early Learning

Children learn all the time and are intrinsically motivated to do so. Our trained staff work in classrooms designed for the developmental needs of the children they serve. Teachers offer respectful engagement, intentional discovery, and purposeful experiences so that children can grasp the concepts that form the basis of all learning. We strive to develop each student socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically so that every child will gain a sense of self and life-long confidence.

Our Community

Families are an integral part of the experience at CSWS. Social and educational offerings are provided throughout the year and parents are actively engaged in many aspects of the school's operations. We live and practice our Anti-Bias foundation everyday by giving children the tools to advocate for themselves and others. Each individual is respected while learning to be a member of a community. We are passionate about the profession of early learning and are involved in the greater early childhood community; attending trainings, modeling our approach to other teachers and practicing community outreach.

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. We model behaviors and language for our children, families, community and staff that values and respects the broad diversity of our community. We actively resist and challenge biases and stereotypes and work towards creating a cohesive community in the classroom and school.

EVERY Family is Visible. Here are some examples of how we actively resist and challenge biases and stereotypes in the classroom: 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 and on and on.....

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. When a child has a teacher, 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. Whenever conversation happens around skin color we include all the colors of skin, not just the ones in the room. 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 respectively reflect diversity. Everything about our school comes from this place.

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.

**All nuts, weapons, costumes, and toys
need to stay at home.**

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.

Application Fee: The Application Fee is **\$200 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 and 4 year olds (up to age 5), who have turned 3 by August 31st of the year they start. We do not continue **or start** preschool for children who are eligible for kindergarten.

TUITION AND PAYMENT POLICIES

Tuition at CSWS is an ANNUAL amount which covers attendance from September through August.

You are responsible for your annual tuition regardless of attendance. However, if 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.

- Tuition is due in **FULL EVERY MONTH** for the total 12 months even if you do not attend during the summer. Full tuition is due when school is closed, as specified on the school calendar, or when you are on vacation. Please make arrangements to pay your tuition on time
- 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**.
- Before and 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 before or after school care fees.
- Payments can be made in cash, checks/money order payable to CSWS or automatic withdrawal (ACH), see ACH form for details. Checks may be postdated 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 in advance with the Office Manager otherwise you will be charged the late fee.
- **Please write your child's FIRST AND LAST name on the check** or money order. Tuition goes in the blue TUITION BOX located in the entry area.
- If you are having a hard time paying your tuition PLEASE talk to the Office Manager about alternative payment options. We accept DSHS payments and City of Seattle Voucher payments. We offer some sliding fee spaces in each class. Please ask for the scholarship application if needed.
- A LATE FEE of \$25 is added after the 5th unless you have made prior arrangements with the Office Manager.
- The sibling discount is 10% off the regular tuition for each child (not applicable to Messy Play Day, Before/After School Care or other fees).
- When the school is closed for vacation, tuition is STILL DUE by the 1st. You can mail it or postdate a check and leave it before we close or you can drop it off during the break.
- SNOW DAYS: Please call the school after 7am when there is snow to see if we will be open. There is no tuition credit for inclement weather.
- A late pick up fee of \$15 will apply if more than 15 minutes late. If you are more than 30 minutes late, you will be charged the after school care rate.
- **NO CREDIT** or refund is given for time you are away on vacation or other days you miss. Exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis.
- See the current tuition sheet and calendar for this year's rates and school closure dates.
- Tuition and tuition policies are reviewed and set annually by the Board of Trustees, typically not more than 5-8% per year.

FAMILY ACCESS

Once your child is fully enrolled we welcome your visits. We do ask that you schedule your visit with either your child's teacher or with the office as we try to limit disruptions to the classrooms.

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

- **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

NO PERSONAL ITEMS FROM HOME (except clothes and diapers)

As part of the learning experience, all children use the materials in the classroom. Everything belongs to school. We have an ample supply of equipment and materials for the group. Please **DO NOT BRING TOYS FROM HOME**. 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. If you cannot work through the struggle in the morning we can help you when you get here!

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....
- Children **MAY NOT** sign in for themselves. It is state law that the parent or guardian signs them in and out.
- 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. A late pick up fee of \$15 may apply if more than 15 minutes late (unless you contact the school that you are running late due to an unexpected occurrence such as traffic) or if consistently late to pick up your child. If more than 30 minutes late, you will be charged the after school care rate.

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 of 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 most trainings, 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 for 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 or 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. Please remove all eggs, nits and lice before returning to school. For scabies, return after treatment.

Children will be readmitted to school when they no longer have the above symptoms, are 'back to themselves' and have been **fever-free for 24 hours**. We will also call for your child to be picked up if they have been given cold/fever medication and it has worn off and their symptoms have returned.

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. Our EMERGENT and PROJECT BASED CURRICULUM allows us to maintain flexibility. There is nothing about our day that is rigid or cannot 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	Math	Discussions	Singing and dancing
Art/craft/creation	Problem solving	Science	Counting/sorting
Letters	Hand washing	Snuggling	Writing
Physical active play	Building	Movement/dancing	Animals
Music/singing	Emotions	Reading/stories	FUN!

We schedule a ‘quiet time’ after lunch. If your child wants to lie down they can in the comfy areas. There are quiet activities set-up on the floor for small groups or individuals to work on.

SNACKS

Parents are no longer required to provide snack on a monthly bases, it is included in your yearly tuition. We take special care to meet all the dietary needs of the various children in the classroom.

We always serve a fresh fruit or vegetable and a grain based snack such as tortilla chips or veggie chips every day.

A sample weeks snacks might include the following:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Carrots Hummus Pretzel Sticks	Plums Veggie Booty	Apple Slices Popcorn	Pear Slices Tortilla Chips Salsa	Bananas Lentil Curls

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 Admin staff, on-line from the King County Department of Health and on our website www.communityschoolwestattle.org

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 peanut nut or tree nut butters.

If your child is staying the full day, they will need to **bring a lunch from home every day.** Lunch is served between 12 and 1pm. 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 sandwich 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 NUT FREE)
- A whole piece of fruit or fruit cut up
- Cut up veggies
- A 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. However it is a primary reason children need pre-school, to learn how to deal with these situations in a socially acceptable way and that is what we are here to help them learn how to do.

Our focus is on the work of Jane Nelson and POSITIVE DISCIPLINE. All of our staff are trained in these techniques and this style of behavior. The focus is on building a relationship with each child and working WITH them to achieve what they need. We have several books in the parent library that are available for you to check out and we offer a 7 week series each year on Parenting with Positive Discipline. You can also visit www.PositiveDiscipline.org for more information on this work.

At CSWS discipline is not something 'done' to a child, rather it is incorporated into how we communicate, respect and treat our children every day. 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 and possibly come up with a formal action plan. We may need to meet more than once and we need to stay in communication throughout 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. We believe it is a family's right and responsibility to share their religious values/beliefs with their child not the schools. And as a predominantly white/Christian community it is vital that we not assume our dominance but instead work to create a place of inquiry about all the various ways people do and do not celebrate. We want your 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. We make a particular effort to introduce customs and cultures that most children may not be aware of. However these experiences are only done when a child or family shares them with us or when as teachers we feel it is important to interject to stop bias or stereotyping.

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. We do welcome your child's favorite fruit or vegetable in lue of a sweet treat.

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.

COMMERCIALISM

The Community School of West Seattle is a neutral haven from all the corporate madness surrounding most holidays, special occasions and childhood in general! You may have noticed that nothing in this school represents commercialism-like children's television, Disney or other movie/media generated toys and books.

There is a time and a place for TV-but school is not it. *We are actively working to engage young minds in critical thinking, imagination and the development of self-their own ideas, their own thoughts and their own stories. These are things that make childhood magical and these are things we protect at CSWS.*

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.

Children are closely supervised AT ALL TIMES on trips and we always 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. Please read the Pet Policy located in the Parent Library for information on which animals we currently have in the school and possible health concerns related to them.

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 delicate 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 as it goes against our licensing requirements. We hope that you will feel comfortable discussing any of your concerns with us.

MEDICATION/REMEDIES

- **CSWS CAN NOT administer the following over the counter medications/remedies as it is against licensing rules:**

- 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 office or on line from King County Health website. This form must also be signed by your child's doctor.

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 either a MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION, ATHMA PLAN, EMERGENCY PLAN FOR MEDICATION, or ALLERGY REPORT 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. 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 form 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-depending 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 AND an Asthma Plan, Emergency Plan for Medication and/or an Allergy report depending on your child's condition.

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

Asthma:

- An individual emergency treatment plan and log 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 the severity of your child's reaction. If your child has an Epi-pen at home we MUST have one here at school too, in the original prescription box. 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 of our plan on a monthly basis, either in the classroom or 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

Stay in Place Precautions

If a situation is happening in our neighborhood that involves police activity we will use our discretion as to what precautions to take. If we hear a helicopter or lots of sirens we check the West Seattle Blog, the local police department, and with Roxhill Elementary to see what and where the situation might be. We will usually lock the doors from the inside and continue the daily activities. If the situation is particularly close or volatile we will not

allow children outside and keep the doors and windows locked. These are our Stay in Place precautions and are similar to the Seattle Public Schools. Because of the locations of the classrooms being out of the public view we would most likely be able to continue with regular activities. If however we needed to take further precautions we would have all the students come to the studio and dining room where they are out of sight from the public and away from any windows.

We will try to contact you through an email or a post on the West Seattle Blog **but our first priority is to the safety and care of the children.** PLEASE DO NOT CALL US during such a situation. You can trust that we will be busy with the children and ensuring everyone's safety.

PARENT/TEACHER CHECK-INS, CONFERENCES & CLASS MEETINGS

Please see this year's calendar for dates.

We offer several different ways for you to find out about what is happening here at school with your child specifically, and the classroom community as a whole. These are very important times for us to connect with you about your child's experience and yours! It is one of the few times we get to talk without your child in the room! **Parent/Teacher check-ins** happen with you individually to 'check-in' and see how things are going and answer any specific questions you may have about your own child and their experience, or yours, and last around 10 minutes. **Parent/Teacher Conferences** are a little more formal and last about 20 minutes. This is a time for the teachers to share with you where your child is and what they are working on. They might share ideas and strategies for you all to work on to help your child get the most out of their pre-school experience. 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.

CONCERNS YOU MAY HAVE OR WE MAY HAVE WITH YOUR CHILD

We take care to not judge or compare the children against each other. Each child is on their own path. 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. If red flags appear for us we will schedule a time to discuss those with you in an exploratory manner. We are not in a position to diagnose your child and we have no interest in doing so. What we are interested in is making sure we are serving your particular child to the best of our abilities and making sure that they have all the resources available to them to grow and succeed in life. If you have any concerns about your child's development please feel free to **talk to the teachers or the Admen staff at any time during the year.**

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, and they can quickly touch base verbally with you about any news they might need to share. This is also a good time to schedule a check in with your child's teacher.
- 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.
- Each classrooms has a newsletter that goes out weekly, 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 and what they do all day.
- The school has a monthly 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. You will also receive a calendar in your parent pocket
- 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. These are all available in white binders on the book shelf in the parent area at the front of the school.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

If you have an issue or concern with anything related to CSWS, **PLEASE** contact the Admin staff right away to share it. We really want to hear your concerns. 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. You will receive a Family Survey each year during Jan/March.

If you do have an issue or concern that you have not brought to the Admin staff's 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 Admin staff. 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 Admin staff 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**
You can also email the board at board@communityschool.org.

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
- Inability or unwillingness to follow an Action/Strategy Plan with your child's teacher or the Admin staff
- 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.
- Inability to pay tuition. We will work with you on a payment plan or scholarship assistance if your financial situation changes. However, if the payment plan is not followed, it may result in termination of services.

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 mandated by law to report to the police and 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 Admin staff. They may have resources that can help you.

➤ **If you need help you can anonymously call the Crisis line at: 206-461-3222**

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 strives to embrace 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*
- ✓ *Nondiscrimination and Anti-Bias Statement*
- ✓ *Policy & Procedures*
- ✓ *Enrollment and admission requirements*
- ✓ *Tuition and Payment Procedures*
- ✓ *Family Access/Open Door Policy (Free Access)*
- ✓ *Sign In and Out Procedures*
- ✓ *Health Policies and Practices*
- ✓ *Snacks and Lunch*
- ✓ *Approach to discipline*
- ✓ *Policy regarding Holiday Activities*
- ✓ *Field Trips and Transportation*
- ✓ *Animals*
- ✓ *Toilet Learning/Diaper Changing*
- ✓ *Medication and Medical Emergencies*
- ✓ *Disaster and Emergency Preparedness*
- ✓ *Parent Communication*
- ✓ *Grievance Policy*
- ✓ *Termination Policy*
- ✓ *Child Abuse Reporting Requirements*

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 THE COPY OF THIS FORM THAT IS IN YOUR REGISTRATION PAPERWORK AFTER YOU HAVE READ THE September 2016 PARENT HANDBOOK. WE NEED IT TO COMPLETE YOUR CHILD'S FILE.