

# Aspire Nursery School Parent Handbook

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## Receipt of Parent Handbook Notice

Fill out the receipt of notice and return it to Aspire Nursery School. This notice tells us that you have received the handbook and have reviewed its contents and understand the policies and procedures that are in place.

Dear Preschool Families,

We are looking forward to working with you and your child this year and helping them achieve their fullest potential. Our days and weeks will be filled with many educational experiences and opportunities to learn and grow. We are so excited you will be part of our school family this year!

We believe that a good teacher-parent relationship is necessary for a successful year. Throughout the year, we will communicate with you through notes, telephone calls, e-mail, report cards, the Remind app, and parent teacher conferences.

If you have any questions, you can contact the school at: 412-867-5035.

## Contact Information:

- School Phone: (412) 867-5035
- Teacher e-mails:  
Miss Sarah - sbacon@aspirenurseryschool.com  
Miss Jess - jschwarz@aspirenurseryschool.com
- Teachers are available after school from 2:30 PM – 3:00 PM to meet in person or take calls.
- After hour pre-arranged phone calls can easily be scheduled by contacting the classroom teacher
- Parents are welcome to schedule conference time with their student's teacher via email or phone call.

# Are you ready for the first day of school?

Please ensure your child has the following:

- A backpack large enough to hold a folder and all your fun projects (no backpacks with wheels, please.)
- Extra change of clothes (labeled with child's name)
- Diapers / Pullups / Underwear
- Wipes (this is a great help to have when cleaning little hands after art projects)
- Folder
- Small blanket and pillow for rest time
- Lunch box or lunch bag with child's name on the outside (Please do not simply place your child's food containers in their backpack, make sure it is in a lunch box or lunch bag)

## **Philosophy & Mission:**

It is the philosophy of Aspire Nursery School that children are encouraged to learn and grow by providing a foundation of developmentally appropriate experiences where all children can succeed in a safe and nurturing environment.

We believe that each child is a unique individual and that all children can learn. Our preschool programs provide inclusive settings which recognize children's varied abilities, interests, needs, and learning styles.

We believe children learn best through meaningful play. Our play-based, child centered program reflects the integration of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, self-help and aesthetic areas for the total development of the child. Meaningful play encourages curiosity, discovery and problem solving which allows individual growth and development of a positive self-image.

We recognize that parents are the child's first teachers. Children learn best when parents are involved in their educational program. The primary bridge between home and school is the involvement of family and community.

Our mission at Aspire Nursery School is to provide exceptional learning opportunities for children with varied abilities in a caring and supportive environment. Each child will gain the confidence needed for educational success. Our core belief is that every child's fullest potential deserves the opportunity to be realized.

## Curriculum:

Aspire Nursery School uses a collection of resources that provide a high-quality learning environment. This curriculum is approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and aligns with Pennsylvania's early learning standards. The curriculum (is):

- Real to the student
- Coherent to the student
- Concept-based
- Calls on students to use what they learn in interesting and important ways
- Involves the student in setting goals for their learning and assessing progress toward those goals
- Clearly focused on essential understandings and skills of the discipline that a professional would value
- Mentally and effectively engaging to the learner
- Provides guided choices
- Allows meaningful collaboration
- Focuses on products that matter to students
- Differentiated based on student needs

## Schedule:

- **Breakfast:** Providing opportunities to practice self-help skills and social skills. Children are sitting, eating, sharing, taking turns, asking, and answering appropriately, talking with peers and teachers, and cleaning up after themselves.
- **Free Play:** The entire class is open, and children choose the areas of play. This choice play time is important for young children to explore, experiment, and use their imagination. During free play time, children practice their skills at their own pace and learn how to play with others. Teachers facilitate as needed by modeling appropriate language and behavior.
- **Circle:** Circle time is organized around set of daily routines. It may include songs, stories, circle time helper, checking the weather, checking the calendar, group games, or talking time. During circle time, children learn to pay attention, follow directions, wait for turns, take turns, share ideas, ask, and answer questions appropriately.
- **Brain Break:** Gross motor movement break to allow kids to re-energize, refocus and give their brains a boost.
- **Story time:** Interactive stories where children participate in reading comprehension, language building, story sequencing and building/connecting ideas and experiences.
- **Large and Small Group Instruction:** Activities/lessons based on weekly themes and story time which provide opportunities to build on pre – k concepts in all areas of development. Areas in the classroom are set up to reflect various developmental skill areas. These areas include art, sensory, manipulatives, sorting, matching, fine motor, pre-writing, and early math skills. Each area is facilitated by teachers to help children practice their skills.
- **Lunch:** Providing opportunities to practice self-help skills and social skills. Children are sitting, eating, sharing, taking turns, asking, and answering appropriately, talking with peers and teachers, and cleaning up after themselves.
- **Rest Time**



- **Specials:** Specials, such as, music, yoga, gross motor-controlled activities, art, and recess will be provided for students to practice coordination, fine – motor skills and step commands.
- **Snack:** Providing opportunities to practice self-help skills and social skills. Children are sitting, eating, sharing, taking turns, asking, and answering appropriately, talking with peers and teachers, and cleaning up after themselves.
- **Dismissal**

Your child will have a daily log, important forms/newsletters, homework packets and artwork, weekly so please check folders daily!

## Remote Learning Schedule:

In the event of a government mandated school closure, remote learning will take place of in – person instruction. Our tentative schedule will include:

- Circle – time
- Story – time
- Lessons pertaining to weekly themes
- Independent work times
- Carry – over parent guidance

Weekly homework packets and online learning opportunities will be provided throughout the week. Per the tuition agreement, families will continue to pay in order to receive remote learning services. If the tuition agreement is broken, it is assumed that you will be unenrolling your child from our preschool program and your spot will be unavailable once schools reopen.

**Please know that the remote learning schedule only pertains to government mandated closures and is not applicable to snow days or utility service outages.**

## Sessions:

Aspire offers 3 sessions of Preschool

- 4 ½ Days (3-5 Year-olds)
  - Monday through Thursday 8:30am-2:30pm
  - Friday 8:30am-12:00pm
- 3 Days (3-5 Year-olds)
  - Monday through Wednesday 8:30am-2:30pm
- 2 Days (3-5 Year-olds)
  - Thursday through Friday 8:30am-2:30pm

# Academic Calendar:

## Aspire Nursery School 2020-2021 School Calendar

September '20						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October '20						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November '20						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December '20						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May '21						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



Half Day



First and Last Day of School



No School

## Drop Off & Pick Up

**Drop off: 8:30am**

**Pick up: 2:30pm**

**Half Day pick up: 12:00pm**

- Parents must provide transportation to and from school
- If your child will be picked up by a childcare service, please inform your teacher of the name of the childcare center.
- All changes to transportation must be made in advance in writing to ensure the safety of your child.
- All adults picking up your child must be on the parent provided approved pick-up list. Please make sure to fill this form out completely and notify Aspire of any changes.
- If your child is being dropped off late, please enter through the main doors and be sure to sign him/her in.
- Only adults who are authorized on the form on file in the School Director's office will be allowed to pick up a child. A parent may not prohibit a child's other parent from picking up their child unless this is supported by legal documents on file in the Director's office. If you have made arrangements to have a friend or another family member pick up your child, please be sure that you inform the teacher and/or Director. You will need to add this name to your list of persons authorized to pick-up the child from the facility on the I.D. and emergency form. He or she will also be required to show photo I.D. No adult will be allowed to pick up any child if the adult appears unable to safely drive and/or safely take care of the child.
- **Late Pick-Up Fee and Policy: If you are running late, please call the school number immediately to let us know. There is a late pick-up fee for children picked up after the end of class. If you are 10 minutes late, the fee is \$50.00 and the fee is \$5.00 for each additional minute, after. These late fees will be charged to your credit card, on file. Please try to arrive 5-10 minutes before the end of the program to ensure time to greet your child, speak with the teachers and allow staff to perform their work duties.**

## Tuition:

We offer a variety of payment plans to ensure tuition coverage throughout the academic school. Families can choose to pay the entire yearly tuition cost at the beginning of the academic year, three installments over the course of the academic school year or monthly for the 9 months your child is attending.

**Please understand that school cost is not on a month – to – month basis, so families are still obligated to pay the entire yearly tuition, regardless of mandated school closures, snow days and sickness/vacation.**

Your payment plan will provide you with a date, tuition will be due. If your tuition is not paid within 10 days according to your payment plan, a late tuition charge of \$50 will be charged to the credit card on file. (Unless otherwise authorized, this credit card will only be charged for late fees.)

If payment is not paid in full after the 10-day grace period, students will not be allowed to attend school until balance is paid off.

If a family needs to withdraw their child(ren) for any reason, 30 days written notice is required.

In the event of an extended absence, tuition must be paid if space is to be held for the child.

## **Mandated Closures/Snow Days:**

Aspire Nursery School staff will notify parents of any changes to our class times, such as early dismissals and holidays.

School cancelations and delays will be listed on local news stations such as WPXI or KDKA and a notification will be sent out on the Remind app.

Please note: It is the parent's responsibility to convey this information to the authorized individuals that pick-up your child.

If a mandated school closure or snow day should take place, a notification will be sent to you on the Remind app.

In the event of mandated closures or snow days, tuition will not be prorated for the time off nor will refunds be granted.

## **Attendance:**

- Regular, on-time attendance at school is vital to your child's success.
- After 3 days of consistent absence, the school will call your home to verify an illness.
- We understand that there may be instances when it is not possible to be here on time. However, please make every effort to have your child at school on time, so we can begin our day together. Tardy will be noted on report cards and habitual tardiness may affect your child's academic progress.
- If you will not be sending your child to school due to illness, please call the school and leave a message with the school office at: (412) 867-5035 or notify the classroom teacher on Remind or via email
- When your child returns to school, please send a note or e-mail excusing him or her.

## **Report Cards:**

Report cards will be sent home three times per year. We will notify you in advance so you can look in your child's folder for his/her report card.

Information will also be communicated in a newsletter for the report card dates and instructions.

Student progress will be reviewed with parents at parent/teacher conferences in the fall and spring.

## **Conferences:**

Parent conferences will be conducted twice per year. There is a fall and spring session planned. (Please see the academic calendar for exact dates)

Please check your child's folder for the dates and scheduling details.

Phone and email conferences can be scheduled by contact the child's classroom teacher.



## Medication:

Teachers are not permitted to administer medication to students. If your child requires medication, please schedule dosage outside of class time.

## Sick Policy:

### Is My Child Well Enough to Come to School Today?

While it is important to come to school every day, it should also be considered if your child is ready to learn.

Here are some questions to consider when deciding to send your child to school after an illness:

1. Has my child been vomit free for 24 hours?
2. Has my child been fever free without medicine for 24 hours?
3. If prescribed, has my child been on an antibiotic for more than 24 hours?
4. Is my child too tired to come?
5. Did my child sleep last night?
6. Has it been 48 hours since the diagnosis of a throat infection?
7. Has it been 48 hours since the diagnosis of a sinus infection?
8. Is my child's cough contained and not considered continuous?

If you answered **NO** to any of these questions, your child cannot come to school. This ensures your child is in an optimal state for participating in fun and learning! If a child shows signs of illness at school, parents will be notified and asked to pick up their child.

## Dress Code:

- Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that allows them to run and play.
- Please remember that during preschool many activities encourage children to participate in messy play, arts, and crafts.
- Children are provided with smocks to help protect clothing, however there is still the possibility that paint, and other things may get on your child's clothing.
- Due to hygienic reasons, students are required to wear socks in our gross motor room. If a student is not wearing socks, please pack a pair in their backpack or they will not be permitted to play on the equipment.
  - **SHOES:** Closed toe shoes with a rubber sole
  - **NO** = SANDALS OR OPEN TOE SHOES
  - **YES** = TENNIS SHOES/ SNEAKERS ARE FINE

## Backpacks:

- All students will need a functional backpack large enough to hold a 9x12 inch folder without folding or bending.
- **Backpacks with wheels are NOT allowed**; they are too cumbersome and impractical for young children to handle independently.
- Many backpacks look alike; please **label your child's backpack** with his/her name visible on the **outside**.
- PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD BRINGS A BACKPACK TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY
- Check your child's classroom file folders. Your child will have a daily log, important forms/newsletters, homework packets and artwork, weekly so please check folders, daily!
- Please send an extra change of clothes, labeled with your child's first and last name, to school enclosed in a labeled Ziploc bag in your child's backpack as soon as possible.

### **Please include the following items:**

- **Underwear**
- **Socks**
- **Shirt**
- **pants or shorts**

The change of clothes will be stored in your child's cubby. We will send the clothing home 3 times a year for you to send in new ones according to the seasons.

## **Rest Time:**

Per state law, regarding full day preschool programs, students are required to have a period of rest time for one hour. This will take place at noon, daily, following our lunch period. Please provide a small pillow and a blanket for your child, to remain at the school. Cots will be provided and will be assigned to each child to ensure health and prevention of spreading germs. Cots will be cleaned daily and blankets will be sent home twice per month to be washed.

## Food Policies:

### Snack:

- At Aspire Nursery School, we will provide a small healthy afternoon snack.
- If your child is on a special diet or has restrictions, we ask that you provide snack for your child.
- If you prefer to send in a snack from home, feel free to.

### Lunch and Breakfast:

- Parents are to provide lunches **AND** breakfast (breakfast is optional), with a drink included, for his/her child, daily.
- Aspire does have a refrigerator and a microwave for dairy products and items that need warmed.
- Please keep lunch items healthy and refrain from candy and pop products.
- Lunches and breakfast (optional) should be healthy with options
- Include a drink (juice box, water, milk)
- Refrain from candy

### Birthday:

- You may bring cupcakes, cookies, or individual treats to school for your child's birthday. The items will be distributed during the last 15 minutes of the school day.
- Parents are welcome to come in during this time to celebrate with your child.
- As a reminder, some families may not celebrate birthdays which may limit their child's participation in birthday celebrations.

## **Classroom Rules:**

- Toys from home are not permitted into the classroom. This is to prevent lost, stolen, or broken items. Teachers will not be responsible for toys brought to school.
- Candy and gum are not permitted.
- Teachers are not responsible for lost or broken jewelry.
- Children are encouraged to have friendly interactions with their peers.
- Children are encouraged and expected to listen their teacher. Learning experiences and safety instructions require “good listening”.
- Our classroom environment is to remain neat and tidy.
- Play in the classroom should be safe.
- Children are use inside voices while inside the school and walking feet in the hallways, classrooms and during transitions

# Behavior Management:

Aspire Preschool is a learning environment for children with many different learning styles. Staff facilitates activities throughout the day that provide for the introduction of and consistent use of basic rules and expectations, which include the ability to function within a preschool environment without causing harm to oneself or others. Aspire uses positive reinforcement and strategies to foster the growth of personal responsibility and empathetic behavior in each child. The classroom environmental design and activities provided are designed to offer children choices that are age appropriate as well as interesting and challenging. All discipline and guidance are based on an understanding of the individual needs and development of each child. We are maximizing the growth and development of the child while protecting the group and the individuals within it.

Aspire uses a color-coded behavior chart as a visual reminder for students. Every student has a clip with his/her name. The colors represent the behavior, demonstrated by the individual student.

After rules and expectations have been established in the classroom, the color chart will be enforced. The color chart consists of three colors.

**GREEN** – The student is making appropriate/good choices, following all the rules, being a good friend and participating throughout the day.

**Yellow** – The student is struggling with making appropriate/good choices and needs a visual reminder to be conscious and to start making better choices.

**Red** – The student is making poor choices and needs a visual reminder to be conscious and to start making better choices. A consequence (quiet five) is provided, once a student has been moved to red.

A 'quiet five' is when the student is removed from the environment. During the 'quiet five', the teacher/staff takes the opportunity to calm the student down, and to discuss what happened, what choices were made and what he/she should have done differently. A total of three verbal warnings need to be earned before a student moves to 'yellow' on the color chart. Every student has the opportunity to move back to 'green' after showing positive behavior and making better choices. Students do not have an opportunity to move to 'yellow' or 'green' after moving to 'red'.

At the end of the week, students have a chance to pick out a treasure from the treasure chest as a reward for good behavior.



# Appendix

## A. Policy on Confidentiality

1. All information provided by parents in the enrollment and scheduling process is considered confidential, with the exception of the Child's Developmental and Health History that contains a disclaimer for the information it contains. We will disclose information to the Department of Social Services and the Department of Education and other qualifying agencies (such as alternative payment programs) for legal eligibility and qualifying purposes for programs.
  - a. Information in the children's files is accessible to the credentialed staff and administration staff only and kept in locked cabinets at all times.
  - b. No information concerning a child's enrollment status may be released over the phone or to any person other than the child's parent or guardian, as listed on the application.
  - c. No child shall be released to an adult other than the parent without written permission and proper identification.
  - d. Adults other than parents authorized to pick up children must be listed on the Emergency and Identification Information card, kept in his or her classroom and on the Emergency and Identification Information form on file at the front desk.
  - e. Any additions to the Emergency pick up list for your child can be made by filling out the Change of Address/Phone/Pickup form and returning it to the front desk. Faxed and emailed changes to the pick up list must be followed up by a signed copy of Information Change form submitted to Front Desk the next day.
2. The Child's Developmental and Health History is part of the child's individual portfolio that is kept in the classroom. It is accessible to the staff at Learning Links so that they:
  - a. Know the children better
  - b. can establish individualized goals for curriculum planning and to encourage each child's development appropriately.
3. Strict professionalism concerning the discussion of confidential information is required from all staff members and parents.
  - a. Discussion of information regarding individual children is acceptable between adults only when such discussion is appropriate and conducive to meeting the needs and goals of each child.
  - b. Discussion of confidential information with unauthorized persons is never permitted.
4. Photographs and video of individual children will be used to record and document a child's progress in different developmental areas. This documentation becomes a part of your child's portfolio and will be shared during parent teacher conferences.
  - a. If a photo is to be used in publicity or on our website, parents will have an opportunity to approve or deny that specific request.

## B. Policy on Child Abuse

Anyone working with children in the state of Pennsylvania are mandated reporters under Act 31 mandated reporter law. This law requires any child care custodian who has knowledge of or observes a child in his or her professional capacity or within scope of his or her employment whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse, to report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to *Childline*. We are bound by this mandate.

## C. Policy Discrimination

Aspire Nursery School prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, medical disability, mental condition including genetic characteristics, marital status, sex, age, or sexual orientation, or other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. It also prohibits unlawful discrimination based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics.

## D. Policies on Disaster Preparedness

1. Aspire Nursery School is required to run a certain amount of disaster drills throughout the academic school year to prepare if an actual disaster should take place.
2. Aspire will conduct two tornado drills per year. Students and staff will proceed to the proper location and take a proactive seated position with hands/arms covering the head and face.
3. Aspire will conduct a monthly fire drill throughout the academic school year. Students and staff will exit the appropriate door. Teacher and/or staff will bring classroom attendance, fire safety binder, which includes medical and emergency pickup forms of each child.
4. Aspire will conduct a yearly armed intruder drill.

## E. Parent Responsibilities

1. A parent/guardian must sign the child in and out of the program each day. It is a requirement that the parent sign with a legible, full signature. Children will not be released to any person other than the designated parent/guardian unless specified in writing with advance notice.
2. The parent/guardian must contact the program if their child will be absent for the day.  
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3. The parent/guardian will provide and maintain at least one change of clothing and shoes, as well as an adequate supply of diapers, wipes, or Pull-Ups (if needed), for their child at the program.
4. The parent/guardian will abide by all the aforementioned rules and regulations in this handbook for Aspire Nursery School.

## Aspire Nursery School Receipt of Parent Handbook Notice

I understand that upon enrolling my child at Aspire Nursery School, it is my responsibility to be familiar with all policies and procedures that were outlined in the parent handbook.

At any point and time, I can request clarification of policies/procedures from the school administration, verbally or written.

Please initial the next to the following statements:

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand how to obtain clarifying information regarding the Parent Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by the policies and procedures within the parent handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that Aspire Nursery School reserves the right to change, adapt, or remove policies and procedures as it deems necessary. Any changes will be communicated via written notice.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Name (print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature & Date