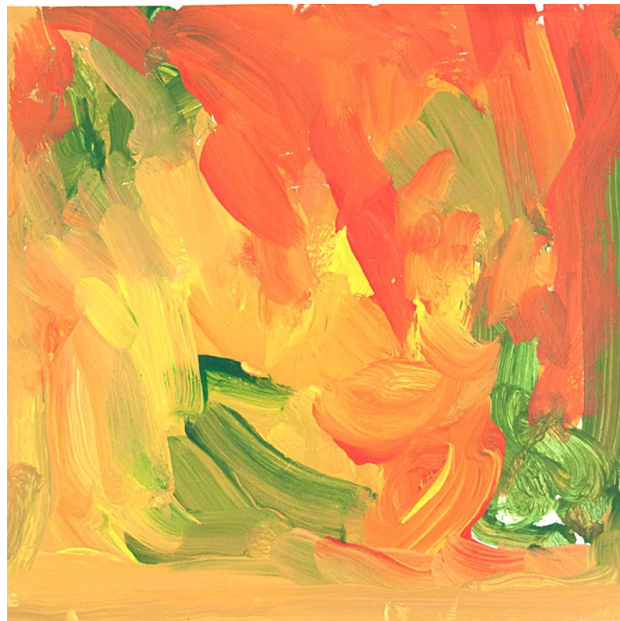


# The Meher Schools Parent Handbook 2013–2014



Graciél, age 4, Children's Art Card Project (see page 24)

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I.

*Administration and  
Financial Policies*

The Meher Schools  
999 Leland Dr.  
Lafayette, CA 94549

## Quick Reference Information

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

Registrar Parent Contact Hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 12–5, and Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30–2:30

Phone: (925) 938-9958

Fax: (925) 938-9184

Elementary Aftercare (Room 10) Phone, 3–6:30 p.m.: (925) 938-4880

Administrators:

Principal: Ellen Evans—[ellen@meherschools.org](mailto:ellen@meherschools.org)

Vice Principal/Safety Officer: Ivy Summers—[ivy@meherschools.org](mailto:ivy@meherschools.org)

Preschool Director: Susie Kohl—[susie@springtide.org](mailto:susie@springtide.org)

Registrar: Dana Evans—[dana@meherschools.org](mailto:dana@meherschools.org)

Tax I.D.: 38-3678484

Community Care License Number (Preschool): 073405648

# Legally Required Forms: Emergency, Health, and Pick-up Information

Certain information is required by law to be maintained in the school office. Parents are required to provide this information annually and to keep it updated throughout the year. This includes:

- Information/Emergency Form
- Health Interview (preschool only)
- Immunization and Physical Exam Reports
- Parents' Rights and Personal Rights Forms (preschool only)
- Admission and Financial Policy Agreement (new preschool students)
- Registration and Financial Agreement Form
- Medical Alert Action Plan Updates

These forms are sent out yearly to parents at the time of registration for the upcoming year. According to California law, children may not attend school unless these records are complete and in our files. These records are reviewed annually by state agencies.

It is necessary that you turn all forms in on time. We determine the number of staff members we need to care for your children during the year as well as during special daycare weeks and future sessions based on the information you provide. When forms are late, we are unable to plan appropriately in the best interest of your children.

## Information/Emergency Form—Changes and Updates

The Office must be notified immediately, in writing, of any changes in the information you provided on your Information/Emergency Form. This form is copied and placed in binders throughout the school. Teachers refer to them when they need to reach parents. *It is critically important that we be able to reach you quickly in case of an emergency.*

To inform us of changes of address, phone numbers, or people authorized to pick up your child, complete a Change of Information/Emergency form, which is available in the Office and online in the Parent Resource Center.

Please be *sure* we have your current phone numbers (home, work, and cell)! It is also important to let us know which numbers to call first.

In the event your child needs to be picked up and we cannot reach you, we will contact someone on your Information/Emergency form and ask that person to come for your child. Please make sure there is someone on your list who can pick up your child in the event of a disaster. In the event we cannot reach you, it is essential that you have selected several people whom the school can contact and that you keep this list updated.

## Health Updates

It is extremely important that we have current information regarding your child's health. If there are any changes or updates regarding your child's health, please alert the school immediately, using the pink Medical Alert form available in the Office. (See part II, "Health Information.")



## Medical Alert: Life-Threatening Illness or Allergy

If your child has a life-threatening illness or allergy, we ask that you give us, in addition to the pink Medical Alert form, a single typewritten page with a detailed description of your child's symptoms and action plan. We request that you attach a small picture of your child, approximately 2" x 3". You will also need a signed Medication Permission Form. This information is copied and distributed to staff who are responsible for your child's daily care. It is important to keep this information and medicines updated and to report any changes in your child's health status. All medications prescribed by a physician must have the prescription attached.

## Temporary Pick-up Permission

If someone is picking up your child who is not listed on your Information/Emergency Form, please do the following:

**Preschool.** Each preschool room has a form next to the sign-in sheet for parents to indicate pick-up changes and permissions. You may also obtain a lavender Preschool Pick-Up Information form in the Office. We will forward it to your child's teacher.

**Elementary.** Please fill out a green Elementary Pick-Up Information form, which is available in the Office and in the front of the rollbook.

Please leave the form in the Office Drop Box or slip it under the Office door (our "mail slot") if you're here before or after office hours. Our Office staff will inform the appropriate staff members. Do *not* put the form in the box outside the Office door. It is not a mailbox. It is used for blank forms only.

**Be certain to tell anyone who is picking up your child to go to the Office for a temporary identification badge.** They will need to show their driver's license. We will not release your child to anyone who does not have identification and who does not have written permission from you to pick up your child.

*See also (Chapter V, "Dropping Off and Picking Up Your Child").*

## Temporary Childcare Arrangements When You Go Out of Town

The school office must be notified in writing if you will be out of town at a time when school is in session and someone else will be responsible for the care of your child. The Office will then communicate this information to the child's teacher(s) and to daycare personnel. A Temporary Childcare Arrangements form is available from the Office and online in the Parent Resource Center.

# Registration, Enrollment, and Tuition— Questions; Program and Schedule Changes

## Questions about Registration, Enrollment, Schedules, Tuition

Questions regarding registration, program enrollment, schedules, and tuition should be directed to our Registrar. The Registrar is available to meet or talk with parents by phone Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays between noon and 5 p.m. and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30. You may call her at 938-9958, or, if you come to the Office, please ask the receptionist to buzz her and she will be happy to meet with you.

At any other time, the most effective means of communicating with her is by using the Registrar Request Form, which is available in the Office and online in the Parent Resource Center. If you fill out this form, she will research your question and call you with the answer. Since we have several hundred families, any number of whom may have questions on any given day, she may not be able to get back to you the same day. If at all possible, please anticipate your needs and allow a day or so for her to look into your question and get back to you. If you are unable to come to the Office during office hours (8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.), you may call and leave a message with the receptionist. Please state your question as clearly as possible.

## Changing Your Child's Schedule

**Temporary.** Whenever possible, please inform us several days in advance when you need to make temporary changes in your child's schedule. We will try but may not always be able to accommodate your request.

**Preschool.** If you need to change your preschool child's schedule temporarily (e.g., extend his hours for a day or bring him very early for a week), please fill out a Temporary Change of Schedule form, which is available in the Office. The Registrar will forward it to your child's teacher and contact you if it is approved.

**K–5.** To change an elementary student's daycare schedule temporarily, fill out a Registrar Request Form. The Registrar will notify you and the daycare staff if your request is approved.

**Permanent.** If you wish to change your child's schedule permanently, you may obtain a Permanent Change of Schedule form in the Office. Please fill this out and return it to the Registrar. *Requests must be in the Office no later than two weeks before the beginning of the following month to be considered for that month.* The Registrar will let you know as soon as possible if we are able to accommodate your request. The change, if approved, will go into effect on the first day of the following month.

If you wish to extend your aftercare hours, we will need plenty of lead time to rearrange staff coverage. There is no guarantee that we will be able to find coverage. If we are unable to accommodate your needs at the time you apply, your name will be placed on a waiting list. If you reduce the number of hours your child is in daycare, there is no guarantee that they can be added again later.

# The Meher Schools

## Registration and Financial Policies

### 2013–2014

Our Tax I.D. No. is **38-3678484**. It is included on each statement.

**You are asked to save your monthly statements for your tax records.**

Please *do not* return them with your payment.

Please review these policies carefully. Enrollment is dependent upon your agreeing to all policies in this document, which you signed when you registered your child for this school year.

**The Meher Schools** has a preschool division, the **White Pony School**, and an elementary division, the **Meher School**.

The **White Pony School** offers care and supervision of preschool-age children and is licensed by the Department of Social Services. This department and its Community Care Licensing Division have the authority to interview children or staff and to inspect and audit child or facility records without prior consent.

### General Policies

1. Tuition for September through June is calculated on a yearly basis, and may be paid in full in September or divided into 10 equal monthly payments. Tuition and full-time daycare for December and other months that have extended holidays are the same as for any other month. Tuition does not include special daycare weeks during holidays. There is an extra charge for these added elective daycare weeks in winter and spring.
2. Tuition is billed on the first of each month. You may pay your bill on the first of the month. Bills are mailed by the 7th of each month. Payment is considered delinquent if not received by the 21st of the month. All payments received are applied to the oldest outstanding invoices first.

**Charges in June, the last month of the school year, are a full month's tuition for both elementary and preschool.** The only exception to this full-fee arrangement is for the elementary daycare program in June. The preschool program extends to the third week of June (see the school calendar). However, since the elementary program ends earlier in the month, June monthly daycare for elementary students is prorated to one-half payment for the month, and special elementary June daycare fees are assessed to those who sign up for daycare in the latter part of June.

3. There is a separate fee for each summer session. Each summer session enrollment must be paid in full. Summer sessions cannot be prorated or divided.
4. If a student is removed from school for a vacation during the September–June year, regular tuition is still assessed for the full year.

5. We understand that there may be circumstances when a child will be withdrawn mid year: a parent's job loss, unexpected family move, other family emergency. In these special circumstances, notification of withdrawal from school or programs must be given to the Registrar in writing at least two weeks before the month of withdrawal. If notification is given after the two weeks prior to a month of withdrawal, tuition for the following month will be charged even if the child does not attend that month. No refund will be given for any month (or partial month) the child attended school.
6. Children enroll in preschool for two, three or five days a week. Once a child's schedule is confirmed, changes of schedule and the number of days of the week a child attends in preschool may be made **only once for the school year and only if space allows**. This also applies to the days of the week a child attends. The change must be made at least two weeks before the beginning of any month. If a change is requested later than two weeks before the beginning of the school year in September, and the change is approved, it will not be implemented until October.
7. If any hourly childcare is used during any given month, there is an administrative fee of \$50 a month for each child in addition to the regular hourly rate.
8. The Elementary School Textbook and Materials Fee may be paid in two payments: The first half is due September 1 and the second half by December 1. The fee may also be paid in full on September 1. There are no refunds for this fee. The Preschool Materials Fee is paid at the beginning of the school year. A \$10 Emergency Fund fee is included in the materials fees.
9. If tuition payments are more than 30 days in arrears, the student's name may be dropped from registration until the account is paid in full.
10. The school will give 30 days' advance notice for changes in the fee schedule.

## Parent Cooperation with School Policies, Procedures, and Administrative Requests

In order to assure the effective operation of The Meher Schools, parents of students are expected to cooperate with school policies, procedures, and reasonable requests made by the administration in the operation of the school. Therefore it is a condition of attending the schools that parents of students must cooperate with such policies, procedures, and requests.

## Before- and Aftercare Policies

The preschool and elementary school daycare programs (before- and aftercare) are open from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Daycare program hours for which you will be billed are any time before and after the hours listed below:

- Preschool 9–12
  - Kindergarten 8:30–2
  - Grade 1 8–2
  - Grades 2–5 8–2:30
1. In order for daycare to be used on any given day, a student must have attended the regular program on that day. Child care services are *not* available on a “drop-in” basis.

2. Only one change from monthly daycare to hourly or vice versa may be made per school year. This request must be in the Office by the 15th of the month in order to be considered for the following month.
3. For those who need to use a high number of daycare hours on a regular basis, monthly daycare, available only to students who attend five days a week, is offered at a lower hourly rate than hourly daycare. Please refer to your fee schedule to determine which plan is better for your needs. If you choose monthly daycare paid on a flat-fee basis, it is important to give us your exact hours as closely as possible so that we may arrange adequate staff coverage. Additional hours will not be automatically granted once school has begun and staff has been set. Our student teacher ratio must be maintained. If it requires reorganizing staff coverage a request for change may not be immediately available.
4. Summer sessions are flexible, and you are allowed different enrollments than you selected during the school year. The enrollments do not need to be the same in both sessions, and you do not need to sign up for both sessions.
5. If a student is not signed out of aftercare, charges for a full afternoon of child care will be assessed.
6. If a student is picked up after our closing time of 6:30 p.m., a late fee of \$10 for each 15-minute increment after 6:30 is assessed for each of the two teachers present. Since our Child Safety Policy requires that no child be left alone with one teacher, two teachers are required to stay after their workday when you are late. This means a fee of \$20 for each 15-minute increment or portion thereof. For example, if you are 20 minutes late, arriving at 6:50 p.m., \$40 would be due. Twenty dollars would go to one teacher and \$20 to the other. Late fees should be paid *directly* to the teachers as compensation for staying past normal work hours to care for a late child. *Please offer payment promptly so that teachers do not have to ask.* (We reserve the right to double or triple this charge if we feel it necessary to discourage habitual lateness.)
7. Students who normally use childcare services are welcome to register for Special Daycare during the winter and spring breaks and during periods between sessions. A flat fee is charged, and payment must be made in advance for such registration for this special daycare to be complete. No refunds will be given for changes during these special daycare weeks. There are no reductions in regular fees for months that have special daycare sessions. **These charges are in addition to regular fees.**

## A Note about Invoices and Statements

The paperwork you receive with your invoice (new charges) and statement (account balance) is for your use, e.g., for tax purposes or when filling out dependent-care paperwork for us to sign. Please do not return it to the school when you turn in your check for your child's tuition.

When writing your tuition check, please be sure to write your child's first and last names and the word "tuition" or "childcare" on the front of the check.

## Donations

Many parents have asked if we can receive donations. While we do not solicit donations, we certainly accept and appreciate those that are freely given. Many important projects have been possible because of generous donations. We are a non-profit, tax-exempt educational institution. Donations to The Meher Schools are tax-deductible.

## 2013–2014 Meher Schools Fee Schedule

Tuition/Materials/Book Fees	2013-14 Ten Monthly Installments	2013-14 September–June Tuition & Fees
<b>Preschool (9 a.m. to 12 noon)</b>		
5 days/week (1 child)	\$545	\$5,450
5 days/week (Preschool 2+ children)	\$505	\$5,050
3 days/week	\$435	\$4,350
2 days/week	\$360	\$3,600
<b>Preschool Materials Fee (annual)</b>		\$200
<b>Elementary</b>		
Kindergarten half-day (8:40 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.)	\$610	\$6,100
Kindergarten full-day (1 child) (8:40 a.m. to 2 p.m.)	\$697	\$6,970
Kindergarten full-day (Elementary, 2+ children)	\$657	\$6,570
Grades 1–5 (1 child)	\$697	\$6,970
Grades 1–5 (Elementary 2+ children)	\$657	\$6,570
<b>Elementary Textbook/Materials Fees (annual)</b>		
Kindergarten		\$250
Grades 1–4		\$400
Grade 5 (includes graduation fee)		\$550
<b>Full Time Daycare*</b>		
<b>Preschool Full Time Flat Rates (monthly)</b>		
1 child	\$430	\$4,300
Preschool Full Time, 2+ children	\$320	\$3,200
<b>Elementary Full Time Flat Rates (monthly)</b>		
1 child	\$300 Sept–May \$150 June	\$2,850
Elementary Full Time, 2+ children	\$240 Sept–May \$120 June	\$2,280
<b>Hourly Daycare*</b>		
<b>Preschool Hourly Rates</b>		
Admin Fee (monthly when hourly daycare is used)	\$50	
Hourly, 1 child	\$6.50/hr	
Hourly, 2+ children	\$4.75/hr	
<b>Elementary Hourly Rates</b>		
Admin Fee (monthly when hourly daycare is used)	\$50	
Hourly, 1 child	\$6.25/hr	
Hourly, 2+ children	\$4.75/hr	

\* Monthly and hourly daycare fees and admin fees do not cover extra daycare weeks. A separate flat fee will be charged for those weeks.

## II.

# *Health Information*

## Health Guidelines

Guidelines from the California Department of Health Services and licensing requirements restrict us from admitting a child to school if he or she is ill. If a teacher feels that your child is too ill to stay at school, you will be notified and asked that the child be picked up immediately. A health check is conducted in preschool classrooms every morning. *It is essential that working parents arrange well in advance to have one or more back-up caregivers in case they are unable to stay home from work or can't leave work to pick up a child.* (See Part I, "Legally Required Forms.")

It is important that you be aware of school health guidelines and reporting requirements from the Department of Health. It is also important that you be thoroughly familiar with the information detailing symptoms that restrict a child from school and when a child may return to school after an illness. For these reasons, we have created these health and illness guidelines. Please read these guidelines carefully. It is recommended that you keep these pages handy to refer to as illnesses occur.

***Please keep us well informed about all aspects of your child's health.***

On the Information/Emergency Form, you'll find a section for special health notes. If your child has allergic reactions to any foods or other substances, bee stings, etc., or has other health problems, these must be noted on his or her Information/Emergency Form as well as on the attached pink Medical Alert form. For your child's safety, if there is a life-threatening medical alert, we also ask that you give us a typed page of instructions with a picture of your child attached. This page should contain a clear description of symptoms, progression of symptoms, and appropriate treatment for different stages of the reaction.

This information is kept on file in the Office and is also communicated to your child's teacher(s). Please be certain to communicate any changes in your child's medical information to the Registrar and update your Information/Emergency form. The Registrar is responsible for disseminating the information to all pertinent staff members. We may ask you for even more detailed information, which will help us to better care for your child. *We also ask that you keep this information updated throughout the year.* It is helpful for us to know about anything that might affect your child's well-being or performance at school.

## Special Health Needs and Referrals

Please let the school office and your child's teacher know if your child requires glasses or has a hearing loss or any other physical condition that requires special attention. It is helpful to your child if new information is shared with the school as it becomes available. Let us know of any allergies so that we don't mistake those symptoms (sneezing, wheezing, watery eyes) for symptoms of contagion.

It is in your child's best interest to have a yearly check-up, especially if he or she is under seven years old. A physical examination is required by state law before entering preschool, kindergarten, and first grade. If your child has persistent health problems and you would like a referral to a physician or other health professional, please contact the Principal or Vice Principal.

If your child has had a speech and language evaluation or any other outside assessment or evaluation, please be sure that the Office has a copy of the report for our files. This information should



also be shared with your child's teacher and the Principal and, if your child is in preschool, with the Preschool Director.

## Medications at School

*It is against the law for schools to administer medications to children without legal permission from parents and physicians.* Your signature is required by law in order for us to administer medications. If your child is in need of medication at school, please complete a Medication Permission form, which may be obtained from the Office (or from a preschool teacher).

When you bring medication to school, you must personally hand it to an appropriate staff person (Office staff member for elementary students, classroom teacher for preschoolers). If the Registrar is out of the Office when you come, please leave the medication and forms in her box or on her desk with a note. Please do not give them to a receptionist. We are required to have the container with the prescription on it. If the medication is to be administered both at school and at home, you can ask your physician to have the prescription divided between two containers, one that can be left at school, the other at home.

Please note that *it is against California state law to send medication of any kind to school with your child.* Never leave medication in your child's basket, backpack, or lunchbox. This includes items such as cough drops. Children might innocently offer these to friends. (The only exception to this rule is fourth and fifth grade children who need inhalers for asthma. In this case, you may sign a release form in the Office to give permission for an inhaler to be kept in your child's backpack for easy access.)

Please note that non-prescription medicines such as Tylenol and cough medicine cannot be authorized on an "as-needed" basis; they can only be given with written permission for the duration of an illness. If an illness is chronic, as-needed non-prescription medication may be kept in the Office for the school year with parent and doctor signatures. Forms must be renewed and medicine checked for expiration dates every year.

### *Preschool*

If your preschool child must be given medicine at school, please write instructions on the Permission to Give Medication form that's posted on the classroom refrigerator, and sign your name. *The form must be signed each day that your child requires medication.* If you forget to sign and we can't get in touch with you, we won't be able to give your child the medication.

It is difficult to administer medicines at school. We can only give medicines twice a day—once at 12:45 p.m. and once at 3 p.m. Physicians often accommodate the needs of children in daycare by prescribing medicines that require only one or two doses a day. Children may be in different classrooms in the afternoon. Please check with your child's teacher as to the current method for informing afternoon staff. Please notify the teacher if your child is taking any medication at home since it might have an effect on his or her behavior or appetite.

### *Elementary School*

If your child needs prescription medication and requires that a dose be given at school, please pick up a Medication Permission Form from the Office. Please be sure to complete it carefully and sign it. Return the form with the medication to the Office. The prescription must be on the container. Sometimes doctors will make two prescriptions for parents who need to have

medications at home and at school. If you need to deliver medication and sign forms before the Office opens at 8:30 a.m., you may knock on the back door and someone will let you in. For elementary students who have life-threatening medical conditions, we ask that you provide us with two sets of medication: one for the classroom and one for the Office.

## Injuries at School

For any serious injury, we will follow your instructions on your child's Information/Emergency form. *It is critical that you keep your Information/Emergency form updated.*

For elementary students, Band-Aids, ice packs, and comfort for minor mishaps are available in the Office and in the Aftercare room. Please let us know if your child requires a follow-up visit to the doctor and about the outcome of the visit.

In the preschool, look in your child's folder for "Owie Notes" reporting minor injuries. Teachers will call you if your child may need to see a physician or to let you know about an incident that causes a child upset. In the event of an emergency, we will call 911. If you do make a doctor's visit to follow up on an injury that occurred at the school, please let your child's teacher know about it.

## Illness, Absence, and Homework

**Informing the school of absences.** If your child is going to be absent from school for any reason, please phone the Office in the morning between 8:30 and 9. The Office will notify the classroom teacher.

Please let us know the nature of your child's illness when you call. It is especially important to let us know if your child has any contagious illness. We are required to report certain illnesses—such as measles, hepatitis, meningitis, and streptococcal infections—to the health department.

**Requesting homework for elementary students.** Please request homework when you call the Office in the morning. In order for the message to reach the teacher in a timely fashion, all homework requests must be made before 10:15. If you don't call in the morning, there isn't enough time to communicate the request to teachers and for them to gather the homework and bring it to the Office. The classroom teacher will provide a homework packet giving instructions and assignments. These packets may be picked up from the Office Pick-up Box after 2:30 p.m.

## Health Screenings

The Meher Schools periodically offers hearing, speech and language, and vision screenings and sensory-motor evaluations. You'll be notified when these are scheduled.

## Student Accident Insurance

The school carries student accident insurance for each child. This insurance provides coverage if your child is uninsured, and it provides supplemental coverage to 100 percent if your child is already insured. If your child is injured on the school grounds and requires medical or dental treatment, please contact the Office if you wish to have information about this insurance. The school must be notified and forms must be filled out within 72 hours of the accident.

# California Department of Health Services

## Illness Guidelines

*(Please keep on hand for reference during the year)*

All young children must experience a variety of illnesses in order to develop strong immune systems that will help them fight off serious infections later in life.

California Department of Health Services guidelines and licensing requirements require that children be restricted from attending school while ill. Please keep your child home from school in the morning if you feel that he or she looks unwell, has a fever, refuses food, has a significant cough, has sudden onset of vomiting or diarrhea, appears listless, or has had these symptoms in the last 24 hours. If you are unsure whether your child should be at school, please ask a teacher.

The absence of fever does *not* guarantee a child's "wellness"—strep throat and ear infections are only rarely accompanied by fever.

### Symptoms That Restrict a Child from Attending School

Contagion— overt signs	Non-healing sores (impetigo, Herpes simplex), head lice, conjunctivitis, etc.
Cough	Persistent, painful, interfering with appetite or activity; sudden wheezing or shortness of breath
Ears and throat	Sudden pain, especially associated with poor appetite
Eyes	Colored discharge ("pink eye") or persistent redness or pain in one eye (may indicate serious eye injury)
Fever	Oral temperature over 99.6°; rectal above 100.4°
Headache	Persistent, despite lying down; often precedes other symptoms of infection
Head lice	Lice or lice eggs ("nits") on the scalp.
Injury	To head or extremities, where behavior or function is obviously abnormal; initial loss of consciousness with a fall usually indicates a concussion
Nasal discharge	Thick, yellow or green, suddenly appearing <i>after</i> at least seven days of "innocent" cold symptoms
Persistent discomfort	Itching, abdominal pain, or headache, severe enough to prevent a child from participating in school activities
Rash	Generalized, suddenly appearing, especially if associated with irritability or "cold" symptoms (especially a sore throat)
Stomach	More than one episode of vomiting; debilitating stomach pain; sudden onset of diarrhea
Urination	Painful or burning, even if not contagious (the child's discomfort may be distressing to other students and/or staff)

## Returning to School after an Illness

Children should return to school when the rhythms of eating and sleeping and disposition are returning to normal and when they're able to participate in the normal daily routine of the class. Occasional ("controllable") cough, nasal discharge, and infrequent loose stools are not disqualifying conditions.

Generally, a child is ready to return to class

- *After 24 hours without a fever or vomiting*
- After rapid clinical improvement from a bacterial illness because of antibiotic therapy, such as for strep throat or an ear infection
- After signs of noticeable improvement, with or without specific medication.

**According to county health department guidelines, a child should not return to school following an illness until he or she has had a full day of normal health (including a full day of normal temperature) and normal activity at home.** If you bring your child back to school before this prescribed time, you will be called to pick the child up and take him or her home. If this presents problems at work, please be certain to have a childcare person ready to cover you in such circumstances.

Please note the details listed below for recovery from certain specific illnesses.

Relapses in childhood illnesses are frequent. You may be asked to take your child home if significant symptoms reoccur. It's helpful to keep in mind that if a child doesn't "look right," generally he or she isn't well and therefore should delay returning to school.

Any specific restriction of diet or activity following an illness should be discussed with your child's teacher.

## Recovery Indicators for Specific Illnesses

Bronchitis, pneumonia, "croup"	Cough no longer interfering with routine daily activities
Chicken pox	Dark centers ("scabs") in all lesions with no new lesions appearing (usually 6–7 days after rash appears); if a child has been vaccinated against chickenpox, a "secondary" infection will be much more mild and brief, and a return to school in 2–5 days is okay
Conjunctivitis ("pink eye")	Eyes no longer red or draining or on antibiotics for 24–48 hours (relapses occur frequently)
Coxsackie virus ("hand, foot, and mouth disease")	Rash and blisters on hands, feet, mouth, and legs must be dried up; child must stay home until he has had one day of normal health and activity at home
Diarrhea	Disposition and energy level returning to normal; pain absent (child should be on a modified diet until fewer than three stools per day)
Giardia	Health department requires exclusion until medication is complete and a negative stool test is obtained

Head lice	When child is lice- and nit-free. Please see guidelines posted on your child's classroom door for details.
Impetigo	All lesions drying with firm scab and no new lesions appearing
Poison oak	Child need not be excluded from school
Scabies	When rash is fading
Sore throat or ear infection	Child no longer in pain; appetite and sleep becoming normal; if on medication, please give <i>full course</i> of medication as recommended by physician if doses remain after child returns to school
Significant injury	According to specific guidelines of your physician; please inform school <i>in writing</i> of activity restrictions
Viral illness with rash (roseola, German measles, etc.)	24 hours without fever, with rash fading

## Notice of Pesticide Spraying

The Healthy Schools Act of 2000 requires all California public and private preschools and child daycare facilities to notify parents and guardians of pesticides they expect to apply during the year. We may use the following pesticide in our school this year: Microcate 3% CS. We will post signs 24 hours before and 72 hours after the application of any pesticide. To be notified individually when we're going to apply pesticide, complete the form on the next page.

You can find more information regarding this pesticides and pesticide use reduction at the Department of Pesticide Regulation's website, [www.cdpr.ca.gov](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov). If you have any questions, please contact our Vice Principal and Safety Officer, Ivy Summers, at [ivy@meherschools.org](mailto:ivy@meherschools.org) or by calling the school.

## Lead Safety for Renovations, Repairs, and Painting

The Meher Schools is an EPA-certified Lead-Safe Firm. Our facilities manager, Tim Tacker, has completed Lead Renovator Training and is a certified EPA Lead Renovator.

If there is lead-based paint on our walls, it is under many layers of latex paint. As a rule, the school does not disturb painted surfaces. From time to time, it's necessary to do repairs or painting that might disturb existing lead paint. When we do, we observe all relevant EPA regulations.

We'll notify parents when any time planned maintenance work that's covered under EPA regulations might disturb underlying lead paint.

Learn more in the EPA's publication *The Lead-Safe Certified Guide to Renovate Right*, which is available at [www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovaterightbrochure.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovaterightbrochure.pdf).

## Emergency Preparedness Plan

The Meher Schools annually updates its Emergency Preparedness Plan, which details school-wide procedures for disaster drills and disasters. A copy of the plan is kept in the Office for review by members of the school community.

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# Pesticide Application Notification

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The Healthy Schools Act of 2000 (as amended by Assembly Bill 2865, Chapter 865, Statutes of 2006) requires that all schools and child daycare centers provide parents or guardians of children who are enrolled at a facility with annual written notice of expected pesticide use at the school or daycare center. The notification identifies the active ingredient or ingredients in each pesticide product. Visit the Department of Pesticide Regulation's School Integrated Pest Management Website ([www.schoolipm.info](http://www.schoolipm.info)) for further information on pesticides and their alternatives.

Parents or guardians may request prior notification of individual pesticide applications at The Meher Schools. People listed in this registry will be notified at least 72 hours before pesticides are applied. If you would like to be notified every time a pesticide is applied, please complete the form below and return it to the Office.

If you have questions, please contact Ivy Summers, Vice Principal and school Safety Officer, at [ivy@meherschools.org](mailto:ivy@meherschools.org) or by calling the Office.

The Meher Schools

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## *Request for Individual Pesticide Application Notification* The Meher Schools

I understand that, upon request, The Meher Schools will provide information about individual pesticide application at least 72 hours before application. I would like to be notified before each pesticide application at the school.

Please print neatly:

Name of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Student(s) Names \_\_\_\_\_

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### III.

## *General Interest Information*

# Welcome to the Office!

**Location:** Room 6 (Tier 2)

**Office hours:** Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

**Phone:** (925) 938-9958

The phone is answered in the Office Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. After 5 p.m., it is answered in Room 5.

**Registrar:** Dana Evans

The Registrar’s parent contact hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from noon till 5 p.m., and Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 a.m. 2:30 p.m. Please ask for her if she is not in the Office during these hours. The receptionist will buzz her and she will come to the Office to meet with you. You may also fill out a Registrar Request Form.

We’ve tried to organize the Office in a way that makes it “parent-friendly.” While there’s almost always someone available to answer your questions, most business that’s conducted in the Office consists of dropping off forms or checks, picking up forms, picking up materials left for parents by a teacher or the Office, and purchasing greeting cards created by the Art Card Project. In most cases these are things parents can do without assistance. (If you need help, though, please ask!)

**Dropping things off.** If you just need to drop off a check, a form, a note for a staff member, etc., please place it in the “wall pocket” labeled Office Drop Box, which is located on the wall to your immediate left as you enter the Office. We’ll make sure it gets to the right person. If the Office is closed, you can slip it under the door.

**Picking up materials from the administration or a teacher.** If you’re coming to pick up something we’ve called you about, like a form to be signed or homework for a sick child, you’ll find it in the wall pocket underneath the Office Drop Box labeled Pick-Up Box. (Once you’ve signed the form or supplied information we’ve requested, please leave it in the Office Drop Box.)

**Picking up forms and informational handouts.** On the cabinet to the left of the printer is what we call the Parent Section. Here you’ll probably find the document you’re looking for—for example, the school calendar, forms for replacing a lost ID button, updating your child’s emergency information, and informing us of temporary changes in your childcare arrangements, plus back issues of *Wednesday Messages* and materials that were attached to it. These are in folders that are arranged alphabetically. If you need a pen, paper clip, scratch paper, or a Post-It, you’ll find these in the tall cabinet to the left of the folders.

**Art Card Project binders.** On the top shelf of the open cabinet to the left of the printer, you’ll find binders that contain copies of all the art cards produced in the current school year. The cards are arranged alphabetically. Please don’t remove cards from the sleeves in the binders. These are displayed for reference; other parents may want to order them too. In the front of each binder are forms for ordering cards and information about how to do it. Any card produced to date can be ordered. You can attach a check to the completed form and place it in the Office Drop Box. If you’re paying in cash and need change, please see the receptionist. To the right of the art card binders is a basket of cards. These are extras that can be purchased.



☞ We can always use volunteers in the Office. Volunteers serve as receptionists and help with special projects. If you'd like to help, please let us know by checking the appropriate box on the Parent Participation form in your fall packet or by leaving the Principal a note—in the Office Drop Box!

## Identification Buttons

For the safety of your children, all teachers and parents are asked to wear name buttons. Buttons for parents of new children are included in their fall packets. Visitors should come to Room 6 (the Office) to get a visitor's button. If you lose your button, please come to the Office and fill out a Button Request Form.

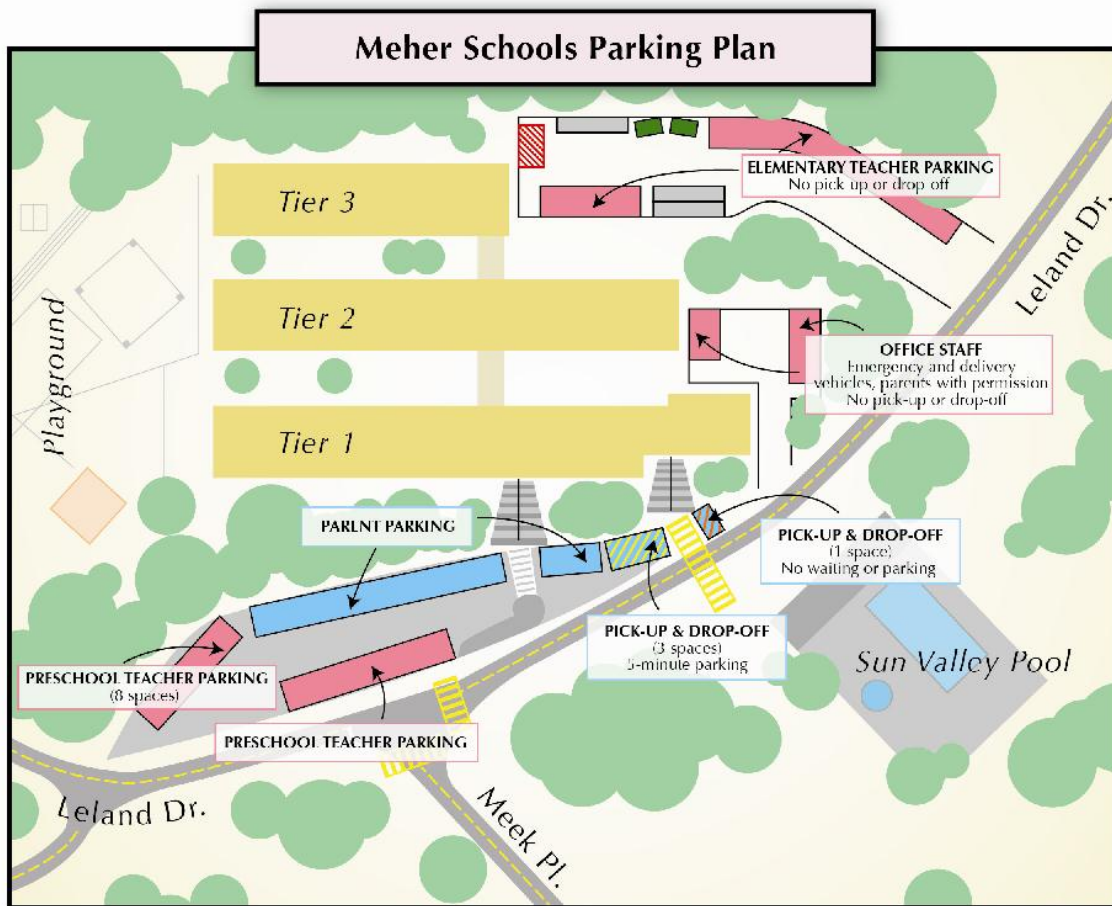
## Parking Guidelines

Our parking plan was created to make dropping off and picking up children less of a challenge. The plan includes designated parking spaces for parents and preschool teachers in the lower lot and reserving the upper (third tier) lot for elementary teachers. There's a space in the lower lot for parents who are dropping off or picking up children without parking and three for those who will be on campus for five minutes or less. The Office (second-tier) lot is reserved for staff and delivery and emergency vehicles. For safety reasons, please do not use the narrow driveway leading to this lot as a walkway onto campus.

Parents are asked to honor the parking plan at all times, except that after 4 p.m., elementary parents may park in the upper lot when picking up their children. Also, during the winter, after dark, parents are welcome to use the Office lot as well.

If you have questions about the parking plan, please contact the Office. Thank you for your cooperation!

**Important reminders.** It is important that you watch for children at all times, especially when backing up. Please remember that it is not only illegal but also unsafe to leave young children unattended in parked cars while you run to drop off or pick up other children. Also, please do not leave your purse or other valuables in the car.



## Clothing and Footwear

**Layered clothing.** The weather is changeable. It is helpful to send labeled clothes such as sweaters to accommodate the shifts in temperature. Days that begin chilly sometimes end up warm, and warm days may suddenly turn cold. It is best to be prepared for all possibilities.

**Appropriate footwear.** Slippery sandals, party shoes, flip-flops, and cowboy boots are slippery and can be hazardous in wet weather and on climbing structures, nature walks, playground games, and P.E. Appropriate footwear geared to your child's safety and comfort is necessary.

## Backpacks

Many children carry their belongings in backpacks. Since children are not asked to carry heavy books back and forth, we ask you to consider using a regular backpack rather than one on rollers, which are unnecessary. (We provide book bags for students in kindergarten and first grade.) Roller backpacks are cumbersome, and people trip over them in the halls. There is limited space to store them in the classrooms. The backpack should, however, be large enough to hold a binder. You might consider a book bag instead.

## Lunches

Children in the preschool and elementary school bring lunches prepared at home. Most parents find plastic or cloth lunch boxes to be the most practical. Metal boxes rust quickly, and paper bags are more than likely to be torn by lunch time. Oversized lunch boxes are very difficult to store and are unnecessary. Be sure your child's lunch box is clearly labeled with his or her name and room number.

Children of all ages enjoy sandwiches, fruit, sliced vegetables, and juice or milk. Please be sure to provide a source of protein. A frozen juice pack or water in the lunch box that defrosts by lunch time both provides a cold drink and keeps perishables fresh until eaten. Please do not send food that requires heating in an oven or microwave or that requires boiling water. Please do not send soft drinks.

Several children have life-threatening allergies to peanuts. For this reason, we ask that you avoid sending foods containing peanuts to school. This will be a great help in keeping our children safe.

Although the school provides preschool children with a morning and afternoon snack, parents of elementary school children are asked to pack a piece of fruit with cheese or other protein for morning snack and for an after-school snack if the children stay for aftercare or Explorations classes. Although we do serve a substantial snack in aftercare, we find that older children get very hungry in the afternoons. Please be sure to pack enough food for morning snack and for lunch, and check with your child to be certain that he or she has enough food during the day. Growing children can get hungry.

## School Supplies

Consumable supplies (such as binders, binder paper, art paper, pencils, colored pencils, crayons, rulers, erasers, etc.) plus calculators and dictionaries are provided by the school for grades in which they are used. Please note that we supply only one binder per student each year.

## Toys from Home

Our school policy is that toys should not be brought to school. We cannot be responsible for personal items brought to or left at school.

Younger children especially often wish to bring toys to school, and we find that some parents have a difficult time persuading them to leave special toys at home. Toys brought from home create many problems. They cause conflicts on the playground and often get lost or broken. This can be upsetting to children and to parents. We rely on parents to be aware of what children bring in their pockets or backpacks to school. It is awkward for teachers to insist that a child part with a toy if a parent has allowed him or her to bring it. We also ask that children not bring money, candy, make-up, or other treasures from home.

Students in Grades 1–5 are permitted to bring their own baseball gloves for personal use only during recess and P.E. Baseball gloves may not be shared, and the school is not responsible for damage or loss. No other personal sports equipment is permitted.

Preschool children may bring stuffed animals to school for napping, but these are kept with bedding and are not played with at other times.

## Cell Phones and Other Electronics at School

Children are not permitted to use cell phones in our programs except by special arrangement between parents and the administration, as in the case of a life-threatening medical alert. The school is not liable for any loss or damage to any electronic device brought to school.

Students who have cell phones for after-school off-campus activities must keep them turned off and in their backpacks while at school. **If a cell phone is seen or heard, it will be taken and kept in the Office for the parents to pick up.**

Students in grades 2–5 may turn on their cell phones at the front steps at 2:30 only, in case their parents contact them about changes in pick-up plans. Students may not play games on their phones at any time.

Students are not permitted to bring electronic devices to school. This includes iPods, MP3 players, tablet computers, e-readers, and videogame devices.

## Therapeutic Tools

Therapeutic items such as weighted geckos, sit-and-move cushions, and other sensory tools that are used in the classroom should remain in the classroom during the school day and be put in the children's bags during aftercare. Even though these items are not toys, we would like them to stay in the classroom during the day and not on the playground, in order to make sure that they are not ruined or lost.

## Birthdays and Special Holidays

We like to honor each child's birthday. Each classroom has a different and lovely way to honor birthdays. Some celebrate all birthdays for the month on one day. Please check with your child's teacher to find out what works best in your child's classroom.

Because of many dietary restrictions, we ask that you do not send treats to celebrate your child's birthday. We have many children who are severely allergic and others who do not do well with sugar. Our children have become accustomed to our "no birthday treats" policy.

Sometimes families have special holidays that they like to celebrate with the children at school. Please talk with your child's teacher to arrange these celebrations.

## Field Trips (Grades 3–5)

Students in Grades 3–5 go on several field trips each year. Teachers will provide information about field trips as early in the year as possible. Permission slips are sent home as attachments to *Wednesday Messages* about a month before each trip. Parents may apply to chaperone, and a lottery will be held to select chaperones if needed. Students are not permitted to bring electronic devices of any kind on field trips.

## The School Library

Elementary school children visit the school library each week. Children in kindergarten through fifth grade may check out books for classroom use, and children in first through fifth grades may take books home with signed parental permission. The Library offers a broad

range of both fiction and non-fiction reading material, from beginning readers to young adult. Children are introduced to library skills, and several classes use the facilities for research projects. We encourage children to treat books with care and respect and to return them when due.

## Lost & Found

Please check frequently for lost items. Please be sure to label all clothing and personal belongings. Labeled items are more likely to be returned if they become separated from their owners. Unclaimed items in Lost & Found are donated to the Toy & Clothing Boutique or other charitable organizations periodically.

Items such as keys, jewelry, glasses, cell phones, and money are usually brought to the Office and kept in the Office until claimed.

**Preschool.** There is a Lost & Found cabinet in the hallway near Room 3 and a basket outside Room 1. Also, look for missing items in the coat-hook area of your child's classroom. If your child goes to Room 1 at the end of the day, please check there as well.

**Kindergarten.** Lost & Found for these rooms is located in the second tier hallway in the plastic bin next to the table with the rollsheets book.

**Grades 1–5.** Lost & Found on the third tier is in the cabinet between the rows of open shelves.

## Parenting Resources

Our Library also holds a small collection of books on parenting that may be checked out by parents of children enrolled in the school. Also, one may check out and view the two-hour video from the Office on "The Nurtured Heart Approach," a workshop presented by Howard Glasser. The Principal also maintains a library of helpful books on all aspects of child development that parents can borrow.

## Tutoring

Please ask your child's teacher or the Principal about after-school tutoring for your child.

## Children's Art Card Project

Every year hundreds of our students' paintings and drawings are transformed into lovely greeting cards and made available for sale. Proceeds from the Children's Art Card Project support our many projects to beautify the school. Our all-volunteer card-making team delivers a new batch of cards to the Office almost every week of the school year. The names of the children whose cards are included are published in *Wednesday Messages*. You'll find your child's card in the Art Card Project binder in the Office.

If we haven't made a card from your child's art by May 1 and you'd like us to, please contact the Office.

## Teacher Biographies

Staff members have created two albums of personal biographies. The albums are available for viewing in the Office. We encourage you to spend some time enjoying them. We hope that by reading about your children's teachers, where they grew up, what they studied in school, where they received their training, and what their special interests are, you might feel more comfortable approaching them for casual conversation. We welcome these conversations and the chance to get to know one another. Teachers (and other staff) wear green name buttons.

## Meher Schools Leadership Team Structure

At The Meher Schools, we understand the importance of modeling the behaviors that we expect our students to learn. Of central importance at our school is our focus on collaboration rather than competition. The most evident demonstration of this is in the classrooms, where we practice team teaching. It is also natural that the administration of the school be based on collaborative teams.

This team structure provides a leadership model based on mutual respect, shared responsibility, and accountability. Each team member comes with different experiences and a different lens that provides a more reliable foundation for decision making. By learning to work together in this way, the administration of the school sets the tone and the environment for the school.

All teams are charged with: 1.) Aligning the school programs with the school vision and purpose, 2.) Supporting the achievement of student learning outcomes, or ESLRs, 3.) supporting the Western Association for Schools and Colleges accreditation process, 4.) communicating back to their specific groups.

These are the teams:

**Strategic Leadership Team (SLT):** Composed of the Board of Directors, Principal, Vice Principal, and Chief Financial Officer, the SLT is a policy-making and strategic-planning team. It sets tuitions, reviews the budget, approves salaries, and ensures that resources are used to achieve the student learning outcomes.

**Administrative Leadership Team (ALT):** Composed of the Principal, Vice Principal, Preschool Director, Assistant Preschool Director, Registrar, CFO, Personnel Coordinator, Elementary Aftercare Director, and a board representative, the ALT provides a broad forum for problem solving at the school level and reviewing the overall operation of the school. Its members represent all areas of the school.

**Administrative Team (AT):** Composed of the Principal, Vice Principal, Preschool Director, and Assistant Preschool Director, the AT is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the school at a more detailed level and provides a venue for full collaboration between the preschool and the elementary programs.

**Preschool Leadership Team (PLT):** Composed of the Principal, Preschool Director, Assistant Preschool Director, five preschool team leads, representing each of the five preschool classes, and the Registrar and a board member as non-voting participants, PLT members work together on all issues pertaining to the preschool.

**Elementary Leadership Team (ELT):** Composed of the Principal, Vice Principal, and three representatives from grade-level classrooms, ELT members work together on all issues pertaining to the elementary school.

We encourage parents to first contact their child's teachers or an administrator regarding any concerns or ideas they might have. The issue or idea can also be brought to a team for discussion by contacting any member of that team.

## IV.

# *Communication and Parent Participation*



# Communication

Good two-way communication between the administration and parents and teachers and parents is a high priority for us, as we know it is for you.

## School-to-Parent Communication

### Wednesday Messages *and* eNotes

*Wednesday Messages* is a weekly newsletter that is our primary source of regular communication with families. *There are times that important information is conveyed only through Wednesday Messages.* To make this an effective means of communication, it is essential that all families read the newsletter every week.

- Every elementary student is given a copy of *Wednesday Messages* to take home. If your child doesn't remember to deliver your copy, please remind him or her to do so.
- A copy of the newsletter is placed in each preschooler's folder on Wednesday mornings.

Extra copies and back issues are available in the Office.

If two newsletters are needed for parents living in separate homes, please phone the school office and leave a message for the editor.

*eNotes.* We sometimes supplement *Wednesday Messages* with *eNotes*, which we e-mail to parents. When we send out *eNotes*, it is often to communicate timely information that is not being imparted in any other way or reminders about impending deadlines. We also distribute the *Parent Handbook*, calendars, fee schedules, and other documents as *eNotes* attachments. Please add *eNotes* to your e-mail contact list so our mailings won't end up in your spam folder, and please be sure we have your current e-mail address.

### *Parent Resource Center*

Created in response to requests from our parents, the Meher School Schools Parent Resource Center is a one-stop online destination for office forms, handbooks, calendars, fee schedules, and other materials you would otherwise need to come to the Office for. Here you'll also find a list of current deadlines, the current year's *Wednesday Messages*, and an archive of "Tips for Parents." We suggest placing a link to it on your computer desktop or Apple or Android smartphone—you'll find that it comes in quite handy! The address is <https://sites.google.com/a/meherschools.org/the-meher-schools/>.

### *Preschool Folders*

In each preschool room there is a crate that holds a folder for each child. In it you will find special messages from teachers, notices from the Office, and your child's daily work, plus *Wednesday Messages*. Please check your child's folder every day.

## *Elementary Parent-Teacher Conferences and Progress Reports*

Two parent-teacher conferences and three written progress reports (report cards) are scheduled during the school year. Parents are notified through *Wednesday Messages* of the dates for conferences and invited to schedule a conference time. Of course, parents are encouraged to stay in close touch with their children's teachers throughout the year.

### *Back-to-School Night*

Each fall elementary teachers welcome parents to visit their classrooms and learn more about the curriculum during a weekday evening Back-to-School Night. We try to have these events as early in the school year as possible, in September or early October. Exact dates and times for the gathering for your child's classroom will be published in *Wednesday Messages*.

## Parent-to-School Communication

It is important that teachers be informed about events in their students' lives that could affect their happiness and sense of well-being. (Please see "Keeping Teachers Updated on Changes in Children's Lives," on the next page.) Here are some examples of things you will want to share with your child's teacher:

- Your child has had a difficult morning or is anxious about coming to school.
- Your child's eating patterns have changed.
- There will be or has been a birth in the family.
- There is or has been an illness, hospitalization, or death in the family.
- There has been or will be a separation or divorce in the family.
- You or your spouse will be traveling.
- You are having visitors for an extended period.
- You are remodeling your house or moving.
- You are working longer hours.
- There are special health-related needs, such as wearing a hat while outdoors, restricted water play, etc. (However, if a child is too sick to go outside, he or she should remain at home for the day.)

Here are examples of things to tell the Office as well as your child's teacher:

- Your child will be absent due to illness or vacation. Please let us know the nature of any illness when you call. Please request homework at that time.
- Someone not listed on your Information/Emergency form will pick up your child. We cannot release your child to anyone who is not on this form without your permission. (See Part 1, "Administration and Financial Policies.")
- You (or someone else) will pick your child up at an unusual time.
- There is new medical information we need to know about, such as a newly discovered allergy.

## Talking to Teachers and Staff

**Preschool.** We encourage you to stay in contact with your child’s teacher on a regular basis. Please be certain to make personal contact with one of your child’s teachers—by actually handing off your child and saying hello or goodbye each time you pick up or drop off your child—so that we’re aware the child has arrived or is about to leave. However, this time is also a busy one, so it is rarely possible for teachers to speak at length with parents.

For parents who bring children to school during beforecare prior to the arrival of the regular contact teachers and who pick children up after these teachers have left, communication can be more challenging. One solution is to leave a note on the Special Information and Pick-up sheet. You might also call the Office and leave a message asking your child’s teacher to call you. It is difficult for teachers to take calls in the classroom while their focus is on the children. If you leave a number where you can be reached, they can call you at a time when they are free to talk. You may request a meeting with your child’s teacher.

The Preschool Director is also happy to speak with you on the phone or to meet to discuss classroom concerns or developmental issues. She is available Mondays and Tuesdays from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m., Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 till 11, and Thursdays from 9 till noon. You may leave a message in the Office requesting that she call you. You are also welcome to arrange to speak with the Principal.

At the preschool age level there are many ways of getting to know children and observe their growth. Along with daily observation, teachers sometimes find it helpful to use formal and informal assessment tools in the classroom.

**Elementary.** Early in the year, you will find attached to your *Wednesday Messages* a letter from your child’s teachers outlining the best ways to contact them. This varies from teacher to teacher, even within a single classroom. This includes e-mail, but some teachers, like some parents, prefer to be contacted other ways. You can always leave a note for a teacher in the Office Drop Box, which we’ll be happy to forward to her. It is helpful to include the topic you wish to discuss and your phone number and times that are convenient for her to contact you. (Please note that, unless they tell you otherwise, it may not be easy for your child’s teachers to speak with parents at the beginning of the day.)

## Keeping Teachers Updated on Changes in Children’s Lives

It’s helpful for staff who interact with a child to be aware of current issues in the child’s life. Moving to a new house, a divorce or remarriage, the loss of a pet, and other life events may impact a child’s behavior at school. Teachers are better able to support children when they’re aware of life changes they’re dealing with. We encourage parents to share this type of information with their child’s teachers to the extent that they feel comfortable. We ask parents to provide updated information about the family on forms each fall, but life changes can occur at all times of the year.

Information may be communicated in person, over the phone, or through e-mail. Members of a teaching team may share relevant information from parent e-mails with other staff members who interact with that child.

If you choose to share information you consider confidential with one staff member and do not want shared it with other staff, please mark the e-mail “confidential.” For example, if a parent

will be undergoing surgery but has not yet told the child, the parent might ask a teacher to keep the information confidential for the time being.

For confidential information, please be mindful that e-mail is not the most secure or private means of communication. Discussing sensitive topics in person might be preferable. Confidential legal documents shared with the school are kept in a locked cabinet.

As “mandated reporters,” school staff are required by law to share certain types of information with authorities for the sake of the child’s welfare. Please see Ivy Summers, Vice Principal and Safety Officer, if you have questions about this topic.



If you have questions or issues to discuss, please don’t hesitate to phone or to make an appointment. Our Office staff, as well as the Preschool Director, Vice Principal, and Principal, are readily available to help. Safety-related concerns should be directed to the Vice Principal, who is also the school Safety Officer.

The Principal also welcomes communication through e-mail messages. If you are inclined to use e-mail and wish to exchange or give information or set up an appointment to speak with her, please feel free to contact her at [ellen@meherschools.org](mailto:ellen@meherschools.org).

## Parent Participation

There are many ways Meher Schools parents can contribute to their children’s education.

### Preschool—Volunteering, Substituting

If you have some free time and would like to volunteer in your child’s classroom, please fill out the Parent Participation form that is included in your packet. Then you might talk with your child’s teacher about arranging an activity that you would enjoy—making potpourri, cooking ethnic food, or doing an art project, for example. Volunteers are especially welcome around holiday times. Parents sometimes donate food for cooking projects.

Some parents discover that they enjoy working with young children and sign up to be substitutes for our preschool program. When needed, substitutes are called in the morning to see if they are available that day. One benefit of substituting is a flexible schedule. If you’re interested in substituting, please note this on the Parent Participation form.

### Elementary School—Supporting Academic Growth

Parents often ask how they might best participate at school. We have found that the most helpful participation is offered by fully supporting your child’s academic progress. Studies show that when parents take an active interest in their child’s learning, when they regard learning as fun, and when school work is a priority in the family, the child reflects that interest by higher achievement, greater enjoyment, and more involvement in his or her own learning.

Here are some ways to support your child’s education at home:

- Read to or with your child every day for at least 15 minutes.

- Set aside a regular time each day for homework.
- See that homework is completed in a pleasant and attractive way and that it is brought to school the following morning.
- Offer praise and enthusiasm for work well done, for effort, and for increasing levels of achievement. Be positive and supportive.
- Participate in the activities suggested in “Science-Home Activities,” “Home-School Connection,” “Math-Home News,” and math games that are assigned as homework.
- Help your child organize his or her binder.
- Check out from the Office or borrow from the Principal the two-hour video on “The Nurtured Heart Approach,” a workshop presented by Howard Glasser.

## Classroom Observations

**Elementary school.** We encourage you to make an appointment through the Registrar to observe in your child’s classroom sometime during the school year. Observations are best scheduled after the first few weeks of school so that routines are established.

**Preschool.** Preschool parents are permitted to enter their children’s classrooms at any time.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Although parents are not required to participate, for those who like to be involved in the school through volunteering, there are many ways to participate throughout the year. There are opportunities for those who are able to make a regular commitment, such as serving as a receptionist in the Office, and for those who can help occasionally or on a one-time basis, such as working with us on special projects. We have nightly cleaning teams and gardening, maintenance, and painting teams that meet every Saturday and always welcome additional hands. Seven Circles Garden volunteers meet Sunday mornings, and children who are old enough to contribute are welcome to join their parents. During the spring and summer, we need help with costumes for the fifth grade and summer drama program plays.

Each year, a Parent Participation form is enclosed with your child’s registration materials. The form is accompanied by a list of school activities in which parents participate. Your completed form will allow us to contact you when we need help in the areas of interest that you indicate.

During the year, you may also find out about schoolwide activities or activities in your child’s classroom that require volunteers or by reading classroom bulletin boards and checking your child’s homework folder or through *Wednesday Messages*.

In short, whatever your interests or skills, chances are we have a volunteer opportunity for you! Included in your fall packet is a Parent Participation form, which lists some of the possibilities. If any of these appeals to you, please use this form to let us know. Or, if you find at other times of the year that you’re available, you can drop Ellen Evans a note at any time.

V.

*Dropping Off and Picking Up  
Your Child*

# Signing In, Signing Out

Procedures for dropping children off in the morning and picking them up after school vary depending on the grade a child is in and the time of day. *It is essential that these procedures be followed.* Rollsheets tell us which children are on campus at any given time (a safety issue) and are used to calculate daycare charges.

These important points are explored in the sections that follow:

- **Preschoolers** must be signed in and out regardless of whether they are in daycare. Parents who do not sign the rollsheets according to the very specific guidelines spelled out by our licensing agency will be asked to return to school and do so.
- **Kindergartners** must be signed in and out regardless of whether they are in daycare.
- Students in **Grades 1–5** who do not use before- or aftercare are not signed in or out. If they do use daycare, their parents must sign them in (beforecare) and/or out (aftercare).
- Children at all grade levels who are not enrolled in aftercare and whose parents do not pick them up promptly at the end of the academic day are checked into aftercare, and their parents are billed accordingly. *There is **no grace period** for tardiness.*
- The parents of K–5 students enrolled in after-school **Explorations** classes are charged aftercare fees if their children remain on campus between the end of the academic day and the beginning of the class, or if they remain on campus after class. In that case, they are charged for all the hours between the end of the academic day and when they are picked up.
- Parents who have not picked their children up from aftercare by 6:30 are assessed a **late fee**, payable on the spot to aftercare teachers.
- Only you or someone you name on your **Information/Emergency Form** is allowed to sign your child out from school.

*If you have any questions about these procedures, please ask a teacher.*

*See also “Daycare (Beforecare and Aftercare)” and “Financial Policies” (in the “Administration and Financial Policies” section).*

## People Authorized to Pick Up Your Child

Children can be released only to their parents or others listed as authorized on the Information/Emergency Form. People on your daily pick-up list have permission to pick up your child on a regular (daily) basis.

Parents often find that they need to add names to the list of people who pick their children up regularly or need to have someone not on their list pick up their children on a permanent or one-time basis. Please review these guidelines, noting especially the procedure for calling the Office when requesting a one-time change, which has been revised to include e-mail confirmation of your phone request on some occasions.

### *Permanent Additions*

To add someone to the list of people who pick up your child regularly, you’ll need to sign and submit a Changes to Information/Emergency Form. Because this form requires a signature, this

isn't something that can be done over the phone. Please fill out a Button Request Form for the person you're adding at the same time you fill out this form. Otherwise the person you add will need to come to the Office when picking up your child until he or she gets a button.

### *One-Time Changes*

**K-5:** If you want someone who isn't on your regular pick-up list to pick your child up, please fill out an Elementary Pick-Up Information form and give it to the receptionist. This small, green form is available from the receptionist. If you arrive before the Office opens, you'll find the form in the plastic "pocket" on the Office door. Please fill it out and slip it under the door.

**Preschool.** If you want someone who isn't on your regular pick-up list to pick your child up, please fill out the special form that's located next to the rollsheets in his or her classroom.

**Calling the Office.** If for some reason you're not able to let us know in the ways outlined above about one-time changes, an alternative is to call the Office. The Office staff will need to verify your identity, either over the phone or through e-mail. Please be aware that you may need to send a confirmation e-mail from the e-mail address we have on file for you. We know that this extra step is something of an inconvenience, but it's part of our continued effort to ensure the safety of children entrusted to our care. Thank you for understanding.

See "Temporary Pick-up Information" in the "Administration and Financial Policies" section.

## The Importance of Signing Your Child Out

If you're the parent of a preschooler or kindergartner, or a child in Grades 1-5 who stays for aftercare, *it is very important that you remember to sign your child out.* If a child is not signed out and is not present when roll is taken, we initiate procedures we have in place for when a student is missing. This can include filing a missing-child report with the sheriff's department.

Also, parents who fail to sign their children out are billed for aftercare from the end of the academic day until 6:30 p.m., when aftercare closes. *This fee is not reversible.*

## The Importance of Arriving on Time

We encourage parents to begin early the practice of having their children at school on time. Children who arrive late miss a critical part of the day and know they're missing some of their favorite activities. Punctuality is a critical habit to cultivate that will be important throughout their educational careers. It is very helpful when parents respect and model this behavior for their children. Kindergartners who arrive after 8:40 and students in Grades 1-5 who arrive after 8:20 are marked tardy.

## Preschool

The preschool day begins at 9 a.m. and ends at noon. Parents who drop their children off before that time will be charged for daycare. Those who arrive earlier and stay with their children until 9 will not. Children who are not picked up promptly at noon are signed into aftercare and their parents billed accordingly.



■ *Please be mindful that it is a legal requirement that you sign your child in and out. The rollsheet is a legal record. It enables us to keep track of your child while he or she is in our care.*

■ *State law requires that whoever drops off or picks up a preschool child must sign his or her full legal signature and the exact time the child arrives and leaves. On the rollsheets are boxes in half-hour increments in which to write pick-up and drop-off times.*

■ *If you do not sign in or out with your full legal signature, or if you sign on the wrong line, the teachers are required by law to call you to come back to the school to do so.*

The Registrar will clarify sign-in/sign-out procedures the first day your child attends school. Any time you have a question about these procedures, please ask one of your child's teachers.

### *Arrival—Signing Your Child In*

When you arrive, sign your child in on the rollsheet on the clipboard that will be in Room 1 (before 8 a.m.) or your child's classroom (after 8). *You must sign in and out on the rollsheets following the procedure below to satisfy licensing requirements.*

**Arriving between 7 and 8 a.m. (beforecare and Breakfast Program).** Please take your child to Room 5 and sign in on the rollsheet there. Place your child's lunch and belongings in his or her classroom. Preschool and elementary children share this time together in Room 1. They play with toys, read (or look at) books, or help the teachers prepare for the day.

The Breakfast Program is available only to children arriving before 7:30 a.m. Pre-registration is required.

**Arriving between 8 and 9 a.m. (beforecare).** Please take your child to his or her assigned classroom (or to the adjacent play yard if children are outside), sign in on the rollsheet in that room, and place your child's lunch and belongings in the room.

### **Preschool Sign-in Procedure**

- **Write** the *exact time* you arrive in the correct time box.
- **Circle** your *arrival time*.
- If you do *not* use daycare, be certain to **place the circled time** *inside the 9–12 box to the left of the asterisk*.
- **Sign** your *full name* to the left of the arrival time.

### *Departing—Signing Your Child Out*

The preschool day ends at noon, before lunch is served. Please arrive on time to pick up your child. Sign out on the rollsheet on the clipboard, which is usually found near the door of the classroom where you pick up your child. Remember to check your child's folder and retrieve his or her belongings. Please be certain to let a teacher know that you are leaving. Please do not linger with your child, as daycare begins promptly at 12.

Preschoolers who remain after noon are signed into aftercare, in which case their parents are billed accordingly. Similarly, if you neglect to sign out, you will be charged for a full afternoon

of aftercare. *This fee is not reversible.* Also, you will be asked to return to school to fill out the roll sheet correctly, per our licensing requirements.

Here are likely places to find your preschooler in the afternoon:

- 12 to 1 p.m. Assigned classroom or adjacent play yard
- 1 to 2 p.m. Rester room or nap room  
(rooms are assigned at the beginning of the school year)
- 2 to 3 p.m. Nap Room, afternoon play room, or play yard
- 3 to 5:45 p.m. Room 1 or adjacent play yard (all children from Rooms 1 and 2)  
Room 5 or adjacent play yard (all children from Rooms 3, 4, and 5)
- 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. Room 1 or adjacent play yard—all preschoolers

Our aftercare program ends promptly at 6:30 p.m. Please allow enough time to gather your child’s belongings and leave by 6:30. (See “Before- and Aftercare Policies” in the “Administration and Financial Policies” section of this handbook.)

### *Rollsheet Example: Preschool*

This sample rollsheet shows the correct way to sign your child in and out in various situations. A sample sign-in/sign-out sheet is also clipped to the top of the rollsheets. *If you have any questions, please ask a teacher.*

Preschool													
	In * Out												
	7-7:30	7:30-8	8-8:30	8:30-9	9-12	12-12:30	12:30-1	1-1:30	1:30-2	2-2:30	2:30-3	>>>	6-6:30
M			Mary Smith		9:00 (12:00)		Mary Smith						
Tu		7:35	Mary Smith		12:00		Mary Smith						
W	7:21	Mary Smith			12:00		Mary Smith						
Th	Mary Smith		8:17		*					2:12	Mary Smith		
F			Mary Smith		9:00*						Mary Smith		6:15

**Monday:** Child arrives at 9 a.m. (no beforecare), is taken home at noon (no aftercare).

**Tuesday:** Child arrives between 7:30 and 8 a.m. (beforecare, no Breakfast Program), is taken home at noon (no aftercare).

**Wednesday:** Child arrives between 7 and 7:30 a.m. for Breakfast Program and beforecare, is taken home at noon.

**Thursday:** Child arrives between 8 and 8:30 a.m. (beforecare) and is taken home between 2 and 2:30 p.m. (aftercare).

**Friday:** Child arrives at 9 a.m. and is taken home at 6:15 p.m.

# Elementary School

## Kindergarten

The kindergarten academic day begins at 8:40 a.m. and ends at 2 p.m. Those who are dropped off before 8:30 will be charged for beforecare. Those who are not picked up promptly at 2 are checked into aftercare, and their parents are billed accordingly. *This is not a reversible fee.*

Parents of kindergartners sign in and out on the rollsheets when they drop off and pick up their children. Unlike in preschool, however, in elementary school you only need to sign your initials. It is important that you sign in and out to help teachers track your children and know which children are to be signed in to aftercare at the end of the day.

### *Arrival—Signing Your Kindergartner In*

**Arriving between 7 and 8 a.m. (beforecare and Breakfast Program).** Please take your child to Room 5 and sign in on the kindergarten rollsheet. Then take the child's lunch and personal belongings to his or her assigned kindergarten classroom.

The Breakfast Program is available only to children arriving before 7:30 a.m. Pre-registration is required.

**Arriving between 8 and 8:40 a.m.—kindergarten.** Please sign in on the rollsheet in the gazebo behind Room 8, place your child's belongings in the hallway outside his or her classroom, and take him or her to the play yard behind Rooms 7 and 8.

**Note:** If your kindergartner **arrives between 8:30 and 8:40**, you must sign in, but you will not be charged for daycare.

Please arrive by 8:30 and say goodbye to your kindergartner so he or she has a few minutes to adjust to being at school before class begins at 8:40.

### *Departure—Signing Your Kindergartner Out*

For kindergartners the school day ends and aftercare begins at 2 p.m. sharp. *There is no grace period.* Students who are not picked up on time are checked into aftercare and their parents billed accordingly. Room 7 or 8 kindergartners are picked up at the back door of Room 7 or 8. To contact 7 and 8 aftercare teachers by phone, call the Office: 938-9958.

**Please note:** If you arrive between 2 and 2:15, please do not enter your child's classroom until the teachers have finished taking roll and the rollsheet binders are taken to the gazebo behind Room 8. Please wait out of sight of the children. Entering the aftercare classroom or looking in the window while roll is being taken is very distracting to students and teachers, and this makes it difficult to take roll accurately.

**Leaving between 2 and 5:30 p.m.** Look for your child in the kindergarten play yard behind Rooms 7 and 8 or in Room 7. Be sure to sign out your child on the rollsheets. The kindergarten rollsheets are in the gazebo behind Room 8 until 4:15, then in Room 7 until 5:30.

**Leaving between 5:30 and 6:30.** Children in Rooms 7 and 8 and the kindergarten rollsheets migrate to Room 10 at 5. Please pick up your child and sign him or her out there.

**Explorations classes.** If your child is enrolled in an Explorations class that begins more than 15 minutes after the end of the school day—i.e., later than 2:15 for kindergartners—you'll be charged for aftercare until the time you sign your child out. We don't deduct Explorations hours because we're still responsible for your child while he or she is with us. If you don't wish to be charged for aftercare, you may take your child off campus at the end of the academic day, bring him or her back for the class, then pick him or her up immediately after the class ends.

After class, Explorations teachers walk their students to Room 7 to meet their parents or to check them (back) into aftercare. Children must be picked up in Room 7 after Explorations classes and signed out in the rollbook at the time they're picked up. If you're late, you'll be charged for aftercare from the time school lets out (2 p.m.) until you pick your child up. (See page 43.)

### *Rollsheet Example: Kindergarten*

This sample rollsheet shows the correct way to sign your child in and out in various situations. A sample sign-in/sign-out sheet is also included in the roll book. *If you have any questions, please ask a teacher.*

Kindergarten														
	7-7:30	7:30-8	8-8:30	In * Out	8:30-2	2-2:30	2:30-3	3-3:30	3:30-4	4-4:30	4:30-5	5-5:30	5:30-6	6-6:60
M				BS * Bf										
Tu		Bf		* Bf										
W	Bf			* Bf										
Th			Bf	*					Bf					
F				Bf *										Bf

**Monday:** Child arrives at 8:30 a.m. (no beforecare), is taken home at 2 p.m. (no aftercare).

**Tuesday:** Child arrives between 7:30 and 8 a.m. (beforecare, no Breakfast Program), is taken home at 2 p.m. (no aftercare).

**Wednesday:** Child arrives between 7 and 7:30 a.m. for Breakfast Program and beforecare, is taken home at 2 p.m. (no aftercare).

**Thursday:** Child arrives between 8 and 8:30 a.m. (beforecare) and is taken home between 4 and 4:30 p.m. (aftercare).

**Friday:** Child arrives at 8:30 a.m. and is taken home at 6:15 p.m. (aftercare).

## Grades 1–5

The school day for students in Grades 1–5 begins at 8:20. Parents of children in these grades sign their children *in* only if they arrive before 8 and *out* only if they use aftercare or (in some cases) are enrolled in an Explorations class (see page 43). *Parents whose children arrive between 8 and 8:20 are not charged for beforecare.*

Children who are not picked up promptly at the end of the academic day (2 o'clock for first graders, 2:30 for second through fifth graders) are signed into aftercare and their parents billed

accordingly. *This fee is not reversible.*

### *Arrival—Dropping Off Your First through Fifth Grader*

**Arriving between 7 and 7:45 a.m. (beforecare and Breakfast Program).** Please have your child place his or her belongings along the central hallway between Tiers 1 and 2, then take him or her to Room 1 and sign in on the rollsheets there.

Breakfast is served in Room 5 for those students who are pre-registered in the Breakfast Program. The Breakfast Program is available only to children arriving before 7:30.

**Arriving between 7:45 and 8 a.m. (beforecare).** Please sign the rollsheet on the shelves outside the Library (Room 18) and have your child place his or her belongings in the Tier 3 hallway (Grades 1, 2, 3—outside the Library, Grades 4 and 5—on the shelves). Then have your child join other daycare children on the playground. Parents must sign their children in in the rollbook; children may not sign themselves in.

**Arriving between 8 and 8:20 a.m.** Beforecare ends at 8 a.m. so there is no need to sign your child in if your child arrives after that time.

### *Departure—Picking Up Your First through Fifth Grader*

**First grade.** The school day ends at 2 p.m. for first grade children. Those who don't stay for aftercare should be picked up at the front door of their classroom at 2 p.m. Those who do stay for aftercare are escorted by a teacher to the benches on the playground at 2 for roll call and checked into daycare.

**Second through fifth grades.** The school day ends at 2:30 p.m. for students in Grades 2–5. At 2:30 those students who are not staying for aftercare walk with a teacher to the front steps to be picked up by their parents. At 2:45 all children who haven't been picked up at the steps are escorted to the playground and checked into aftercare. If children are staying for aftercare, they report to the benches on the playground.

### *Aftercare*

The Elementary Aftercare Center is Room 10, which is open for various activities from about 3 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. The Room 10 phone number is 938-4880. (See the “Daycare” section (part VI) for information about our before- and aftercare program.)

When you arrive during aftercare to pick up your child, he or she may be in Room 10, in the Library, or on the playground. Aftercare teachers have walkie-talkies and can help you locate your child. Between 2 and 3 p.m., the rollbook is at the benches on the playground with a teacher. Between 3 and 6:30, it is in Room 10.

If a child is here when aftercare begins, the Aftercare Supervisor signs him or her into daycare by placing a checkmark next to his or her name. This checkmark should not be confused with signing out your child—*your initials are required in the appropriate sign-out space on the rollsheet.* Please initial the day and time you are signing your child out—and be sure a teacher knows you are taking your child home. Children's backpacks, lunches, jackets, and other belongings are stored on the third tier shelves.

Students enrolled in aftercare may not sign themselves out to meet their parents at the steps or in a parking area. Parents or an authorized pick-up person must sign them out. (The exception is children who have been authorized by the Office, in writing, to ride their bicycles or walk home.)

**Note:** Summer schedules vary. Information will be sent to you if you register for summer school.

### *Explorations Classes*

If your child is enrolled in an Explorations class that begins more than 15 minutes after the end of the school day—i.e., later than 2:15 for first graders and 2:45 for second through fifth graders—you’ll be charged for aftercare until the time you sign your child out. We don’t deduct Explorations hours because we’re still responsible for your child while he or she is with us. If you don’t wish to be charged for aftercare, you may take your child off campus at the end of the academic day, bring him or her back for the class, then pick him or her up immediately after the class ends.

After class, Explorations teachers walk their students to Room 10 to meet their parents or to check them (back) into aftercare. Children must be picked up in Room 10 after Explorations classes and signed out in the rollbook at the time they’re picked up. If you’re late, you’ll be charged for aftercare from the time school lets out (2 or 2:30) until you pick your child up.

### *Rollsheet Example: First Grade*

This sample rollsheet shows the correct way to sign your child in and out in various situations. A sample sign-in/sign-out sheet is also included in the roll book. *If you have any questions, please ask a teacher.*

Grade 1												
	7-7:30	7:30-8	In * Out 8-2	2-2:30	2:30-3	3-3:30	3:30-4	4-4:30	4:30-5	5-5:30	5:30-6	6-6:30
M			*									
Tu		<i>JK</i>	*									
W	<i>JK</i>		*									
Th			*					<i>JK</i>				
F			*									<i>JK</i>

**Monday:** Child arrives at 8:20 a.m. (no beforecare), is taken home at 2 p.m. (no aftercare)—*no sign-in or sign-out.*

**Tuesday:** Child arrives between 7:30 and 8 a.m. (beforecare, no Breakfast Program), is taken home at 2 p.m. (no aftercare)—*no sign-out.*

**Wednesday:** Child arrives between 7 and 7:30 a.m. (Breakfast Program and beforecare), is taken home at 2 p.m.—*no sign-out.*

**Thursday:** Child arrives between 8 and 8:20 a.m. and is taken home between 4 and 4:30 p.m. (aftercare).

**Friday:** Child arrives at 8:20 a.m. and is taken home at 6:15 p.m. (aftercare).



### Rollsheet Example: Grades 2–5

This sample rollsheet shows the correct way to sign your child in and out in various situations. A sample sign-in/sign-out sheet is included in the roll book. *If you have any questions, please ask a teacher.*

Grades 2–5											
	7–7:30	7:30–8	In * Out 8–2:30	2:30–3	3–3:30	3:30–4	4–4:30	4:30–5	5–5:30	5:30–6	6–6:30
M			*								
Tu		DE	*								
W	DE		*								
Th			*				DE				
F			*								DE

**Monday:** Child arrives at 8:20 a.m. (no beforecare), is taken home at 2:30 p.m. (no aftercare).

**Tuesday:** Child arrives between 7:30 and 8 a.m. (beforecare, no Breakfast Program), is taken home at 2:30 p.m. (no aftercare).

**Wednesday:** Child arrives between 7 and 7:30 a.m. for Breakfast Program and beforecare, is taken home at 2:30 p.m.

**Thursday:** Child arrives between 8 and 8:20 a.m. and is taken home between 4 and 4:30 p.m. (aftercare).

**Friday:** Child arrives at 8:20 a.m. and is taken home at 6:15 p.m. (aftercare).

## Supervising Your Child After Signing Out

Under the terms of our insurance policy, only children who are in our care should be on campus while school is in session. Our staff is no longer responsible for students once they've been signed out, so parents need to keep their children with them while they sign them out and gather their belongings, then take them off campus.

The exception to this is the Children's Garden in front of the school (below Rooms 3–5). Parents and children are welcome to enjoy this garden after school. It's a good place for parents to wait with their kindergarten and first grade children for older siblings who are dismissed at 2:30.

*Parents must closely supervise their children in this garden.*

## Late Pick-Up and Late Fees

Please call the school if you find that you're going to be unexpectedly late. Your children worry about you, and so do we. The school telephone is answered in the Office until it closes at 5 p.m. Between 5 and 6:30, it's answered in Room 5. The aftercare (Room 10) phone number for Grades 1–5 is 938-4880.

If you know you'll arriving after school closes at 6:30, *please make arrangements to have your child picked up before 6:30*—and please call to let us know. (Parents find it helpful to have a back-up person to pick up their child in case they are unavoidably delayed. This person's name must be added to the Information/Emergency Form and/or the Office notified.)

Our closing time is 6:30 p.m. We expect children to be picked up by that time. This means that parents need to come a few minutes *before 6:30* to gather their children and their belongings in order to depart by 6:30. Parents who have not picked their children up from aftercare by 6:30 are assessed a late fee, payable on the spot to the aftercare teachers. (See “Administration and Financial Policies” in part 1.)



# VI.

## *Daycare* *(Beforecare and Aftercare)*

- Breakfast Program
- Explorations and Chorus

# Daycare at The Meher Schools

The Meher Schools offers extended daycare programs for the children of working parents. Beforecare begins at 7 a.m. and aftercare ends at 6:30 p.m. Parents who must leave their children very early in the morning have the option of enrolling them in the Breakfast Program. Aftercare begins at the end of the academic day—noon for preschoolers, 2 p.m. for kindergartners and first graders, and 2:30 for children in Grades 2–5—and ends at 6:30. Parents may sign up for any portion of the daycare hours on an hourly or monthly-fee basis.

When signing up for daycare, please estimate the hours you will most likely be using. Try to estimate the earliest and latest possible times of arrival.

**Important.** *Please be sure to read “Dropping Off and Picking Up Your Child” (part V) for an explanation of the procedures for signing children into and out of daycare. See also “Before- and Aftercare Policies” in “Administration and Financial Policies” (part I).*

## Monthly Full-Time Daycare

Parents who enroll their children in full-time daycare pay a flat monthly fee for as many or few hours of daycare as they use. (See the fee schedule in your fall packet.)

**Schedule changes.** Even if you are signed up for monthly daycare, if you wish to have your child stay longer on a regular basis, it is necessary to submit a request to the Office with at the very least a few days’ lead time so we can make any staffing changes that would be required to accommodate your needs. We will let you know as soon as we have made arrangements for your extended hours.

## Hourly Daycare

Parents who enroll their children in hourly daycare are billed according to the number of daycare hours they use in a given month.

**Schedule changes.** Due to staffing issues, although we will try, we may not be able to accommodate schedule changes in hourly daycare. In the preschool, it is critical that we maintain the appropriate student-teacher ratio to meet Community Care Licensing standards. We also need to staff Rester Rooms and Nap Rooms appropriately and to be certain we have a sufficient number of cots. Any changes of this type take time.

## Changing from Monthly to Hourly or Hourly to Monthly

Parents can change from monthly to hourly or hourly to monthly daycare once each school year. During the summer, they can choose to change each session.

# Beforecare

Beforecare begins at 7 a.m. Some children who are enrolled in beforecare eat breakfast at home before coming to school, and some participate in the Breakfast Program (next section). Children of all ages who arrive before 8 a.m. must be escorted to their beforecare rooms and signed in by their parents.

**Preschoolers.** Beforecare for White Pony students takes place in Room 5. After breakfast, at about 7:50, the children are taken by teachers to their respective classrooms to continue with beforecare. In good weather, they often play outdoors. In their rooms, they play with toys from cupboards that are closed once the regular school program begins, or with activities laid out on tables for them, or in dress-up areas.

**Kindergartners.** Kindergarten children begin beforecare in Room 5 with the preschoolers. After breakfast they are taken by a teacher to the kindergarten yard (if the weather is good) or to Room 7 or 8, where they play until 8:40, when the bell rings for the children to line up outside their own classrooms.

**First through fifth graders.** Beforecare for students in these grades takes place in Room 5. At 8 they are escorted by a teacher to the Big Playground (or to the Library if it's raining), where they remain until their academic day begins at 8:20. Children who arrive before 8 must be escorted by their parents and signed in. Those who arrive after 8 may be dropped off; they are signed in by their teachers when the bell rings and the school day begins.

## The Breakfast Program

### *A Service to Working Parents*

Available by pre-registration only, the Breakfast Program is offered as a service to those parents who must leave their children very early in the morning.

### *Limited Space*

Because we have limited space, we ask that you *do not* stay with your child after the first day he or she attends.

### *Promptness Is Essential*

Please do not come late. We have a very brief window of time between 7:30 and 7:50 for children to eat and teachers to clean the room for the rest of beforecare and the school day. If children consistently arrive after 7:30, we will ask their parents to withdraw them from the program.

The Breakfast Program begins at 7 a.m. Children who participate in this program must arrive before 7:30.

The Breakfast Program is a cooperative program. Parents are assigned supplies to bring for breakfast. These groceries, furnished by participating parents, are used to prepare a hot breakfast

each morning for about 40 children. Groceries cost an average of about \$5–\$7 a week per child. Participating parents agree to bring the food they are assigned to bring *even if their child will be absent from school that day*.

Children in the Breakfast Program take turns setting chairs and being helpful. As they finish their breakfast, they clear their places and may then play inside the room. Just before 8, K–5 students play in the yard briefly.

It can be tempting for parents to linger and visit with other parents. If you wish to do this, please find another place to chat. It is distracting to teachers and children as both space and time are limited. We wish to emphasize, however, that the Breakfast Program is offered as a service to parents who are unable to prepare breakfast at home.

If your needs change and you want to sign up for or withdraw from the Breakfast Program, please notify the Office.

## Aftercare

Aftercare begins promptly when the academic day ends (noon for preschoolers, 2 p.m. for kindergartners and first graders, 2:30 for second through fifth graders) and ends at 6:30. Please note that children who are not picked up promptly at the end of the academic day are automatically checked into aftercare and their parents billed accordingly.

Aftercare is designed to be an engaging, safe, and happy time. It provides children with many opportunities for learning. Aftercare is a time when children learn and practice socially acceptable behavior, compassion, kindness, helpfulness, creative problem solving, good sportsmanship, and (for elementary students) good study habits and organizational skills.

### *Late Fee*

Our closing time is 6:30 p.m. We expect children to be picked up in time for our programs to close by that time. This means that parents need to come a few minutes *before* 6:30 to gather their children and their belongings in order to depart by closing. If teachers are required to stay after our 6:30 closing time because a parent or designated person is late picking up a child, a late fee is charged for every 15-minute increment (or portion thereof) beginning at 6:30. This fee is to be paid on the spot, directly to the aftercare teachers. See “*Late Pick-up and Late Fees*” in “*Administration and Financial Policies*” (part I).

## Preschool

The afternoon program follows the natural rhythms of a child’s day. Aftercare begins with lunch at noon, followed by a short play period, then a diaper change or potty work, then a nap or rest. Children in Rester Rooms listen to stories. After nap or rest, there is another diaper/potty time, and then the children play outside or with toys from daycare cupboards inside. A school-provided snack is served at 3:15, usually in the gazebo behind Room 3 or in Room 1. After snack, children flow outside and inside for activities and games and, in some rooms, sometimes an afternoon circle of song, drama, or music. At 5:45 the remaining children go to Room 1 to wait for their parents to pick them up. (See “The Preschool Day” for a more detailed discussion of the afternoon routine.)

## Kindergarten

After roll call at 2 p.m., kindergartners are encouraged to eat snacks they have brought from home. After snack they are free to play in the yard or play games or do art or craft projects in Room 7. At 3:40 they clean up Room 7 and the play yard and move their belongings to Room 7, where they have a snack provided by the school. This is followed by games or a quiet story time inside and then a short period of free play. Clean-up is at 4:50. At 5 o'clock, kindergartners remaining in aftercare go either to Room 1 or Room 10 (you will be notified ahead of time).

## Grades 1–5

In elementary aftercare, children are free to play on the Big Playground, engage in a variety of activities in Room 10, or use the Library. Occasionally there are G- and PG-rated movies (and popcorn) in Room 17, structured games on the grassy field above the school, gardening activities, story time in the Library, and special art projects. All activities are supervised by our aftercare staff, who keep in constant contact with one another via walkie-talkie.

**Room 10.** Room 10 is the Aftercare Room. It is open to aftercare students in Grades 1–5 from 3 until 6:30 p.m. for quiet games, art and craft projects, and socializing. A school-provided snack is served in Room 10 or the yard behind it at 3:30. At the end of the day, the children clean the room—sweep the floor, wash tables, stack chairs, empty trash—to prepare the room for the next day. There is a telephone in the Aftercare Room that students can use to call or receive calls from their parents: 938-4880.

**The Library and Homework Club.** As a service to working parents, our library is open between 2:30 and 4:30 five days a week for Homework Club. Homework Club offers a time and space for students in Grades 1 through 5 to complete daily homework while they are still fresh and full of energy.

Homework Club staff check homework for completion but cannot guarantee that all homework is completed correctly. We suggest that parents review homework with their children daily, to stay informed about what children are learning, and to demonstrate that they consider the work important. Parents may assist their children with any problems that need to be re-done.

Some students “drop in” to Homework Club as they wish, while other students are signed up by their parents or teachers and attend daily. If you want your child to be required to go to Homework Club, please leave a message for our Librarian, Thea Montandon, in the Office. If children are signed up for other activities between 2:30 and 4:30, they would not attend Homework Club on that day, and would complete their assignments at home.

Students may also visit the Library to read books or work on projects between 2:30 and 4:30.

## After-School Programs: Explorations and Chorus

Explorations is our after-school enrichment program. During the academic year (September to June), the Explorations program offers a full range of after-school enrichment classes. Classes are offered in several sessions over the course of the year. Offerings in recent years have included such classes as touch-typing, woodworking, theater arts, music, dance, puppetry, videography, tennis, origami, and arts and crafts. Most classes are four weeks long.

Chorus, one of our most popular offerings, is a year-long class. It is available to children in kindergarten through fifth grade. The White Horse Youth Chorale is by invitation, and our graduates may also join this chorus.

Information about and registration forms for these classes is sent home with *Wednesday Messages*.

■ If your child is not signed up for daycare, you will not be charged for daycare *if* 1) the Explorations class begins within 15 minutes of when school lets out *and* 2) you pick your child up immediately after the Explorations class ends. Also, if you do not pick your child up at the end of the Explorations class, he or she will be checked into daycare and you will be billed accordingly.

*However*, if a class starts later than that (i.e., 2:15 first graders and 2:45 for second through fifth graders) and you do not pick your child up immediately after school and bring him or her back for the Explorations class, we become responsible for your child's care and thus must sign him or her into daycare and bill you accordingly—including the time he or she is in the Explorations class.

## VII.

### *The Preschool Day*

# New Preschoolers—The First Days

We feel beginnings are important! So we would like to share some ideas that can make the important and exciting “first day of school” comfortable and happy for both parents and preschoolers.

One way we have found to smooth this transition is for parents to accompany their children on the first day of school. On the first day your child attends, we ask that you bring your child to the Office a little before 9 a.m. so the Principal can meet your child if she is available and the Registrar can walk you and your child to the classroom. To ease the transition into a new life, either one or both parents stay with the child on this first day until noon. Please take your child home for lunch, even if your usual schedule will extend beyond 12.

When you stay with your child in the classroom, it helps activate positive associations with this new environment. Your presence helps acquaint you and your child with the routine of preschool. The time you spend in the classroom on this first day also provides an opportunity for parents to meet teachers and for teachers to help orient parents and children about how the classroom works. Parents will feel easier about leaving their children in the hands of teachers once they understand the patterns of the preschool day. When you feel at ease, it helps your child to feel at ease.

Children, like adults, can sometimes feel overwhelmed by new, unfamiliar surroundings and routines. If your child will be in daycare, during your child’s first week of school (especially for children without prior school experience), we recommend that, if possible, you begin with short days (9–12), gradually lengthening to longer hours. After the first morning, you may want to discuss with a teacher what scheduling arrangements will work best for you and your child to assist the transition to this new environment.

One of your child’s teachers will try to reach you by phone a few days before your start date to see if you have questions and to learn more about your child. You are also welcome and encouraged to visit your child’s preschool play yard on weekends before your start date to increase your child’s familiarity with school. If window blinds are up, please peek into the room to see what it looks like. Be sure to take your child only to the yard adjacent to his room to avoid connecting him to the wrong playground.

*Before school starts in the fall, new preschool parents sign up for a 60-minute orientation by the Preschool Director. Her talk covers points not addressed in the handbook and is an opportunity for parents to ask questions.*

## Dropping Off and Picking Up Your Child

The official preschool day begins at 9 a.m. and ends at noon. Daycare is available beginning at 7 a.m. and ending promptly at 6:30 p.m. The time before 9 a.m. is considered “beforecare,” and the time after 12 noon is considered “Aftercare.” (See “Daycare (Beforecare and Aftercare)” (part VI) for additional details.)

■ *It is a legal requirement that you sign your child in and out. The rollsheets are a legal record.*



■ *If you forget to sign your child in, or if you don't sign correctly, the teachers are required by law to call you to come back to the school immediately to do so.*

■ *Parents who fail to sign their children out are billed for aftercare from noon until 6:30 p.m., when aftercare closes. This fee is **not reversible**.*

See part V of this handbook, “Dropping Off and Picking Up Your Child,” for details.

## Being on Time

The preschool program begins at 9 a.m. It is important that we greet children at that time. Of course, you may come early and stay with your children until 9. *Always let a teacher know your child has arrived.* It is always best to connect with a teacher and allow your child to also make that connection with you. *For many children, this means literally handing your child to the teacher so your child feels comfortable and supported.*

*Preschool is not a “drop-in” program. Children will not be permitted to attend if they arrive after 9:30 a.m. unless there is an emergency or medical appointment. If you do have an emergency or medical appointment and want to bring your child to school late, please call the Office between 8:30 and 9 a.m. to inform us so the teacher knows to anticipate the child’s arrival.*

## Morning Farewells

Your child’s teacher will be happy to help you and your child say goodbye. Planning a little routine in advance, such as “I’ll give you a hug, then blow you a kiss at the window,” often helps. Parents who come before 9 a.m. often find time to read a story or sit in a relaxed way with their children. We find this helps make a nice beginning for the day.

In the yard behind Rooms 1 and 2, teachers ring a bell at 9 a.m. Children line up to greet the teacher. Teachers are happy to connect with you and love to hear about events in your child’s life. Check in with teachers before the children line up. This creates a natural, positive transition for the child, freeing the child to connect with his or her teachers and to feel in harmony with classroom activities from the beginning of the day. If you refrain from lingering, it helps your child to transition successfully. (You can also speak with teachers at the end of the day or arrange to communicate via phone or e-mail.)

Teachers in Rooms 3, 4, and 5 stagger their Circle times to allow a flow of children in and out of classrooms to the yard behind these rooms. Please assist them by honoring the 9 a.m. start time and saying good-bye to your child at that time. This is the beginning of the preschool day, and children need to shift their focus from parents to teachers. Again, please be certain that your child has made direct physical contact with a teacher and that the teacher is aware of your child’s presence in the yard or classroom before saying goodbye.

Please talk to your child’s teacher if you have a special reason for wanting to stay after 9 a.m.

# The Official Preschool Day: 9–12

The preschool day officially begins at 9 a.m. and ends at noon.

It is helpful for you to understand your child's day. Here is a description of each segment of your child's morning schedule. By design, although there is some structure in the afternoon, the morning program is more structured. In the morning, children and teachers are fresh, and certain types of learning occur more naturally. The schedule of each room contains many of the same basic elements: Morning Circle, Work Period, Potty Work and Toileting, Snack, Free Play, and Outdoor Play.

## Morning Circle

The preschool program begins at 9 a.m. Often we have a brief play period, and then children in each room go to their circles at specified times. Morning Circle is a time for teachers to greet and acknowledge each child and gather the class together in a feeling of unity.

Since this is often the only meeting of the entire group during the day, stories, pictures, songs, information, plays, finger poems, games, and dances are presented, often focusing on the current theme of study. It is, above all, a time for drawing together in a spirit of wonder and fun.

Circle can also be a time to take care of "class business" in order to prepare children for the day. Teachers may use Circle as an opportunity to let children share special experiences or to discuss positive ways to handle conflicts. Teachers also use this time to demonstrate new materials and clarify classroom expectations.

Morning Circle begins the day and sets the tone for what follows. We have observed that children who miss all or part of Morning Circle tend to feel "out of sync" in some way all day. That is why we put an emphasis on punctuality in our preschool.

## Work Period

Work Period is a time for children to choose individual activities. The activities vary. Practical Life tasks (see below), cutting and pasting, special theme-related activities, and open-ended art activities are available. Depending on the interests of the children and teachers, classrooms may feature cooking, woodworking, or handcrafts. Classroom projects emerge out of the interests and experiences of children and teachers. Sometimes books are the stimulus for a project.

Teachers often structure some classroom learning around a theme. Children participate by offering ideas for themes and helping the teachers select them. These themes might feature animals, plants, community helpers, cultural studies, or fairy tales. The activities of Circle and Work Period incorporate ideas from the theme. Teachers also observe the responses and interests of individual children and of the group in order to maximize children's excitement about discussions and activities. Theme concepts stimulate children to expand their thinking, and children's ideas stimulate teachers and help provide the direction learning will take.

Our work time focuses on activities suggested by Maria Montessori. Dr. Montessori stressed the importance of an ordered environment to help children focus and develop the ability to concentrate. Though there are many different types of Montessori activities, we emphasize Practical Life activities. These are tasks with a given set of steps, such as pouring with water or

dry grains, sweeping, using scoops and funnels and spoons—in general, helping children become responsible for the care of their environment, themselves, and their little companions. The environment is designed to support children’s growth toward independence and success and making choices. Children learn independence by putting their work and toys away, by cleaning up after snack, by learning self-help and care, and by making choices in activities.

The arts play a major role in our work with children. Children are given opportunities to express themselves through art, music, dance, and handicrafts and to develop an appreciation for beauty in all its forms.

Teachers try to inspire children’s responsiveness to beautiful imagery and to encourage their confidence and creativity in exploring a wide variety of activities. Children’s creations (paintings, dances, songs, crafts) are responded to with deep appreciation and respect.

## Potty Work and Toileting

The “potty work” schedule varies from room to room. Establishing a regular and rhythmic routine with potty training is important, as it is with all activities for young children. Children who need reminding are invited to use the potty and wash their hands for snack. Those who are not fully trained are assisted, and those who still use diapers are given fresh diapers. Children wash their hands whenever their diapers are changed or they use the potty.

For some children and parents, potty training is easy and relatively quick. For others, it takes longer. Our goal is to support children and parents in a patient, understanding way in the steps from using diapers to using the toilet. Usually children become potty trained at home before they become potty trained at school.

Sometimes parents either automatically assume that their children are ready to wear underpants at school or simply wish (understandably) to push things along a bit and send them to school in underpants before they are ready. This results in a hard time for child and teacher—accidents throughout the day, having to leave play to change clothes. Please talk to a teacher before sending a child to school without a diaper. Observation over the years has shown us that pushing is almost never helpful. However, it is also important to gently encourage children to use the potty and to establish routines in order for potty training to be successful.

We invite parents to let a child make the choice about when to wear underpants to school after he or she has been doing so at home. When children feel confident that they are in control, accidents seem less traumatic. Be sure to tell your child’s teacher when this change occurs. One can support children by letting them know that there are diapers in their personal baskets in case they feel they are not quite ready to go the whole day in underpants after all.

## Snack

Snack times are pleasant, with an emphasis on conversation, manners, and social interactions. Snack is served twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. In some classes, morning snack may be a group event, or children may be free to eat snack individually during work period. Snack is usually prepared by teachers ahead of time but is sometimes part of a food-preparation activity. Before preparing or eating any food, the children wash their hands. Children clean up after themselves.

Because some of our children have life-threatening allergies, we cannot allow parents to bring food for birthdays or other holiday events. Ingredients in cooking projects and all snack foods are

carefully screened. In some classrooms we may ask parents to refrain from sending peanut butter.

Snack usually consists of one or more of the following: rice cakes, fresh or dried fruit, vegetables, rice crackers, soy butter, baked chips, juice, Oatios, or foods we have prepared. *Alternative snacks may be given to children with food allergies or other food restrictions. Please talk to your child's teacher if this is necessary.*

Food served at school is high-quality, nutritious, and as unprocessed as possible.

## Free Play

After snack, we enter a period of Free Play. Work Period cupboards are closed, and new cupboards with fresh activities are opened. During Free Play time, children have the chance to socialize in pairs and small groups. Children enjoy activities such as playing dress-up in the doll corner, constructing train tracks and buildings, or pretending to be puppy dogs. Children also have the opportunity to play alone or snuggle up for a quiet time in the book corner.

Children are also free to go outside into our play yards after their snack, where they may engage in expansive play—running, jumping, climbing, and playing with balls. Our outdoor areas are filled with a variety of activities that include sand play, block building, fantasy play, books, and art exploration. We also have fun with water when the weather permits.

## Noon: The End of the Official Preschool Day

The preschool day ends at noon, before lunch is served. Please arrive on time to pick up your preschooler. Please do not linger with your child as daycare starts at noon. Preschoolers who remain after 12 p.m. must be signed into aftercare, and their parents are billed accordingly. Please be sure to sign out *with your full name* on the rollsheets in your child's classroom (see page V-5), and pick up personal belongings there.

## Aftercare: 12–6:30

### Lunch Time

Aftercare begins with lunch at noon. Our lunch-time routines are consistent and enjoyable. Children wash their hands, put out their own lunches, which they bring from home, on a paper placemat, and sit down for a grace that is sung before eating. Children are encouraged to eat their “protein first.” They are asked to sit at the table until they are finished and then clear their places and wipe down the table. Once in a while, as a special occasion, parents are welcome to join their children for lunch.

Usually children take delight in opening their lunches and discovering what foods their parents have prepared for them. It is challenging to prepare nutritious, balanced, and appealing lunches five days a week. Children of all ages enjoy sandwiches, fruit, sliced vegetables, and juice or milk in their lunches. We are unable to heat foods so please send items that are appealing at room temperatures. A frozen juice pack in the lunch box that defrosts by lunch time both provides a cold drink and keeps meats fresh until eaten. Please do not send soft drinks for your child to have at school.

Communicating with your child about lunches is important. It is helpful to offer choices. When children are faced with foods they don't like, teachers are placed in a difficult position. Portions are also important. We find it helpful when you send an amount of food that suits your child's appetite in size and content and when you send foods that your child can handle, such as bite-sized sandwiches. Children who stay all day need extra food they can eat at the end of the day. If there is something in his lunch that your child does not like, we suggest to him that he politely ask not to be given it again. Sometimes we will help a child write a note home about a food he doesn't like in case he forgets his reactions after a busy day.

Children three and under have a very difficult time opening a lunch box with the type of clasp that must be pried open. Their fingers are not strong enough. Clasps that snap open and shut (either metal or plastic) are much easier for them to handle. Plastic or cloth lunch boxes seem preferable to metal ones. They are long-lasting, rust-proof, and easy to clean. Because of space limitations, we ask that you not send Igloos or large lunch packs.

With lunch, as with dressing, toileting, and other self-care skills, we emphasize the satisfaction of independence. Each step is a separate skill that can be mastered with patience, guidance, and practice: opening lunch boxes; setting lunch out on the placemat; opening thermoses, bags, boxes, and prepared-food packages; packing leftovers back into lunch boxes and returning them to shelves; sponging the table; sweeping the floor—each skill is a new opportunity for mastery.

Any time we eat in preschool, wonderful opportunities for learning occur. Opportunities include the chance to practice table manners—saying “please” and “thank you,” chewing with closed mouths, speaking in a gentle, pleasant voice. Lunch is a time for conversation. It is a time when teachers can chat with the small group of children sitting at their tables.

## After Lunch

The afternoon program follows the natural rhythms of a child's day. After lunch there is a brief period of outdoor play (weather permitting) and then a nap or rest, depending on what you selected as the most helpful regular pattern for your child (see “Nap/Rest Time,” below). After nap and rest there is a snack. The remainder of the day is spent in play, with group activities such as stories, art projects, games, music, and dancing.

### *Nap/Rest Time*

**Nap time.** At 1 p.m. we put children who require a nap to sleep. During this time, teachers rub children's backs and quiet them. Nap time lasts until about 3 p.m.

Children who nap need to bring their bedding to school on Mondays. Due to space limitations, we ask that bedding be limited to a blanket for the top, a sheet or blanket for the bottom, and a small pillow. A soft nap-time comfort object may also be included. All bedding should be contained in a labeled pillowcase. State law requires that bedding be laundered once a week. We ask that you take your child's bedding home on Friday and return it Monday morning. It will be left out for you in the nap room.

As your child's sleep needs change, we can experiment with offering shorter sleep times as a prelude to becoming a rester.

**Rest time.** Children who have outgrown the need to nap may be moved to the Rester Room with the consent of the teachers in charge. Resters lie on mats without blankets and listen quietly to stories for 30 to 45 minutes. After they get up, they have another hour of quiet play before the

nappers awaken. You will know when your child is ready to give up the nap when it becomes increasingly difficult for him or her to fall asleep at night.

**From napper to rester.** If you would like to change your child from a napper to a rester, please talk to his teacher and follow up by filling out a Preschool Nap to Rest Change Form, which you can request from the Office. Please give us a few days' notice to arrange for adequate staffing. If the Resting Room is full, we might not be able to accommodate your child immediately.

If you have special concerns about nap or rest time, please let us know.

### *After Nap/Rest Time—Snack, Free Play, Circle*

After nap time, afternoon snack is served. Between 3 and 5 p.m., aftercare consists mainly of free play, with many activities to choose from. There are choices between indoor and outdoor play. During this busy time, loosely structured activities such as ball games, art activities, music, and special toys help focus children and provide a wonderful chance to play and explore friendships in a relaxed way.

## Clothing and Supplies

### The Well-Equipped Preschooler

Preparing your child for preschool can be a little like getting ready for summer camp. Here are a few tips on outfitting your child for the demands of a busy day in preschool.

Teachers will show you where to leave your child's belongings. Personal items go into your child's personal baskets. Lunches go on designated shelves.

#### *Clothing*

The motto of preschoolers could be "Let me do it." We suggest that all clothing be planned with independence in mind.

**Clothes for "potty work."** Since young preschoolers are usually working on toileting, clothing that can be removed with ease is helpful. Overalls, pants with belts, and sunsuits that button in the back are very difficult for preschoolers to manage.

**Practical clothing.** Practical attire designed for running, jumping, climbing, painting, and playing is very helpful. Paint, mud, fruit juice, and chalk are all part of preschool life. Every effort is made to protect clothing. However, we suggest that your child wear washable, sturdy play clothes to make it easy to launder them when spills do happen.

**Practical shoes.** We recommend that tennis shoes or other rubber-soled shoes be worn to school or be kept in your child's basket. Leather-soled sandals, party shoes, flip-flops, and cowboy boots are slippery and can be hazardous in wet weather and on nature walks or climbing structures. Often children in "slippery shoes" cannot go on walks because they are not able to keep up with the others. Heavy cowboy boots can also hurt other children. Backless shoes and sandals should not be worn at school.

**Weather-appropriate clothing.** The White Pony School is located on a hill that is usually a few degrees cooler than surrounding regions. A sweater or jacket for the changeable weather of fall

and spring is important. Please provide a sun hat and/or sunscreen for sunny seasons. Each season has its own special clothing needs:

*Spring.* Mornings and late afternoons are often chilly. Please keep a sweater, jacket, or sweatshirt and a pair of long pants in your child's basket.

*Summer.* Shorts and sundresses are usually best. Occasionally we have overcast, chilly, windy days so it is helpful to leave a sweater, jacket, or sweatshirt and a pair of long pants in your child's basket. Water play is a feature of the summer. Children may bring bathing suits or shorts to wear and a towel for water play. It is a help to label these items. You will receive a letter from your child's class about sunblock. Sunglasses can be brought to school but are easily mislaid.

*Fall and winter.* Layers that can be easily removed or added are best. It is most helpful to both children and teachers if the layers are pieces that the children can manage without help. A coat with a hood works better than a coat and hat.

*Rainy weather.* During rainy seasons, we like to take the children outside, though we do not often take them into the rain. We recommend rain boots that can be worn all day, just like shoes. Rubbers that must be pulled on over shoes are difficult to manage. A raincoat with a hood is helpful. Please do not bring umbrellas.

Please make it part of your pick-up and drop-off routines to re-supply your child's clothing and diaper baskets. Your child's teacher will show you where baskets are located.

## Labeling Clothing and Personal Items

Preschoolers sometimes have trouble identifying their own clothing. Labeling all items with your child's name makes it possible for staff members to return them to you. Please remember that this includes jackets and shoes.

## Personal Storage Baskets/Extra Clothing

Each child has a basket in which to store frequently needed extra clothing. We depend on your keeping the following items in this basket at all times:

- One complete change of clothing appropriate to the season (or two or three changes, if your child is in the early stage of potty training)
- A sweater or a sweatshirt
- Two or three sets of underwear and socks
- A spare pair of shoes

Wet clothing will be left in a plastic bag in your child's basket. If your child needs extra clothing and does not have any available, we will attempt to provide an item from extras on hand. Please wash and return loaned item to the classroom as soon as possible.

## Diapers and Wipes

Parents of children who are still in diapers are asked to supply diapers for their children. We use a communal supply of wipes. Please bring one box of non-scented wipes. When our supply runs low, we will request another box from each child's parents. *Please check your child's basket daily to ensure a plentiful supply of diapers dry clothing.*

## Nap Supplies

Our recommendations for nap blankets:

- Two light-weight crib-sized blankets (or a blanket and crib sheet)
- A pillowcase in which to store blankets (clearly labeled with child's first and last names)

Other possibilities to store with nap items:

- A small cuddly stuffed animal (with no rattle inside or moving parts)
- A small crib-sized pillow

In planning for nap items, please bear in mind that our storage space is limited. It is not possible for us to store fluffy comforters, large bed pillows, and large stuffed animals.

## Toys from Home

We do not allow children to bring toys from home. Toys and other paraphernalia can cause arguments and competition. The best practice is to leave a toy in the car rather than bring it into the classroom. If an item does come in with you, please take it home or put it in the cubby. Stuffed animals brought for nap time are kept with the child's bedding at other times of the day.

## Books from Home

Preschool children are encouraged to bring books to share. Books related to the class theme are wonderful for Circle Time, and good quality books provide entertainment at rest time (if your child is a rester). Children look forward to staying for rest time when they have a special book. Please remember to write your child's name in any book he or she brings to school.

