



# School Handbook 2022-23



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## Section 1: Introduction

Dear Parents, Guardians and Families,

Welcome to the Washington University Nursery School (WUNS) preschool program. Our goal is to provide a welcoming, safe and developmentally appropriate environment for every child.

This handbook is designed to ensure that your family has a rewarding experience with the program. In the handbook we have tried to anticipate many of your questions about the program. The purpose of this handbook is to outline the program's policies and procedures. We strive to work closely with parents in a partnership that will facilitate the transitions between home and school. Communications and a sense of trust between parents and teachers are vital.

Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and education for children and to ensure that parents are valued and respected. To accomplish this, we depend on parents to be responsible and active child care consumers. We expect parents to read this handbook, follow the policies and procedures outlined, provide us with all the necessary information, and be open and honest with us regarding your feedback about the program. We welcome your comments, questions, concerns and suggestions about your child's experience and the program. We understand that nothing is more important than your child's early education and care experiences.

Given the nature of an ever-changing quality early education and care program, this handbook is a "living" document. You will be notified of formal policy changes during the year via a written policy notice through email. In addition, the handbook will be updated as needed.

Come and talk with me should you have any suggestions, questions or concerns.

*Nikki Scheele*  
*Director*

### **Welcome**

At Washington University Nursery School, we believe that every child is a unique individual with his or her own pattern and timetable for social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth.

We believe in learning through play; we provide fun, child-centered activities that effectively engage students. We encourage creativity in all areas with a special focus on the arts to enhance language and thinking. Above all, our goals are that children will develop a genuine pleasure in learning, that they develop confidence in their ability to learn and to accomplish challenging tasks and that they gain experience and skills in interacting with others.

## **Philosophy**

Washington University Nursery School teachers are attentive to individual needs, serving as catalysts to spark each child's interests and desire to experiment and explore. Our school provides a safe, nurturing environment that encourages growth and independence in all developmental areas.

The philosophy of the nursery school is that children learn most effectively through play. Our approach is "hands-on," where children act upon what they are learning and feeling. We consider the process more important than the product. Teachers provide the opportunity for children to interact with their environment in ways that are meaningful to them. For each class, teachers develop a curriculum that reflects the interests and abilities of the children in the classroom. In addition, all children actively participate with specialists in science, art, music and Spanish. As trends in the field of early education change, we evaluate what is new and determine if it would be enriching for our program.

## **Vision Statement**

Washington University Nursery School:

- Values children for their wonder and curiosity, their ideas and creativity, and their delight in play.
- Values families for their traditions and goals, their commitment to home, work, play, community, and their dreams for their children.
- Values teachers for their vision, their job in children's play and achievements, their flexibility and skill, and their commitment and compassion. We support and respect what we learn from each other.

## **History**

The Washington University Nursery School was founded in 1947 as a cooperative venture of faculty and Washington University in St. Louis. The primary purpose of the nursery school is to provide the highest quality preschool program for children 2 years and 7 months to 5 years of age. Today about 80 percent of the children are from families of Washington University in St. Louis faculty, staff and students, and the remaining are from families in the community.

Children come from a variety of countries, cultures and economic backgrounds. The school maintains the high standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, by which it is accredited. It is licensed by the State of Missouri.

The Nursery School also serves as a site for research in child development. Washington University undergraduate and graduate students are employed to assist in the classrooms. The classroom teachers, as well as the nursery school's director, supervise them. The student workers' presence enables children to receive additional individual attention.

The Nursery School is located on the Washington University campus. It is composed of three classrooms, which are designed to offer children a variety of choices in their play. Two additional all-purpose rooms are equipped with a library and a variety of indoor gross motor play materials. A large outdoor play area gives children the opportunity to run, bike, swing, climb, slide and play in the sand.

## **Staff**

The staff at the Nursery School respects and appreciates the talents and personalities of each child and his or her family. A teacher's individual talents are also encouraged as she or he develops his or her own personal approach in the classroom. This makes for a vibrant, growing community of children, families and teachers.

In general, teachers hold a Bachelor or Master degree in early childhood or elementary education and/or teaching. All have extensive early childhood teaching experience. (<https://nurseryschool.wustl.edu/about/staff/>)

Professional development is an ongoing process at WUNS. The school pays fees for workshops and conferences during the year. In addition, there are two teacher in-service days and monthly staff meetings. All teachers are certified in CPR and First Aid.

## **Facility**

The center is located in lower level of the Millbrook 2 Apartment Building on the Danforth campus of Washington University in St. Louis.

## **Accreditation and Licensing**

Washington University Nursery School has been accredited by the National Association of Young children since 2005. The standards and criteria held by the Association are separated into ten categories, or the ten **Standards of Excellence**, as described below:

1. Relationships
2. Curriculum
3. Teaching
4. Assessment of Child Progress
5. Health
6. Teachers
7. Families
8. Community Relationships
9. Physical Environment
10. Leaderships and Management

WUNS is also licensed by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS).

## **Code of Ethical Conduct**

For an updated NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct please go to [naeyc.org](http://naeyc.org). Copies of the Code of Ethical Conduct are also available in the preschool office and all staff will receive an updated copy.

## **Equity and Inclusion/Non-discrimination policy**

As an accredited program, educators uphold principles of the NAEYC “Code of Ethical Conduct”. We work to uproot our own personal biases to bring to the surface any underlying belief systems that may get in the way of our ability to work effectively with individuals who may differ from us . We proactively affirm and include all children and their families based on age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, religion, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, physical or mental disability, gender, perceived gender, gender identity or political ideas.

Our curriculum exposes children to both the visible and non-visible diversity present within our world. Teachers facilitate children’s development of self-awareness and positive social identities, expression of comfort and joy with human diversity, recognition of unfairness and how to take action with others or alone against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions. Educators also implement additional anti-biased and age-appropriate approaches into their teaching practices with young children.

We believe that this commitment to diversity and inclusion involves ongoing courageous conversations and active engagement from children, parents, teachers, and administrators.

## **Curriculum**

At Washington University Nursery School, we believe that children are unique individuals with their own patterns and timetables for social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development. We support and encourage their development through our child-centered, process-oriented, play-based curriculum built on Constructivist theories and practices. Guided by the teachings of educational theorists including Piaget, Dewey, Vygotsky, DeVries, and others, we create a learning environment that addresses the developmental needs of the whole child by:

- Structuring classroom experiences around ideas and topics that are relevant to the students, with the understanding that knowledge is constructed through language, discussion, experimentation, and manipulation of objects that are meaningful to them.
- Offering learning experiences that appeal to multiple senses and that provide hands-on activities using materials that encourage exploration, investigation, and learning.

- Allowing each child to interact with the environment at his/her own pace, and creating opportunities for children to explore individually, with a partner, or with a larger group of peers.
- Asking open-ended questions, allowing students the time to thoughtfully form responses, listening respectfully to their answers, and gently guiding them toward the answers they seek as they develop enhanced reasoning skills.
- Respecting students' ideas, encouraging independent thinking, and empowering students to become problem solvers.
- Using the wonderful resource of our diverse, multi-cultural population to highlight the similarities and differences between individuals, families, and cultures, celebrating the unique environment that is Washington University Nursery School.
- Year-round assessment of children's development allows teachers to individualize learning plans.

The Washington University Nursery School's open curriculum framework is presented to children in ways that are developmentally appropriate and based on our philosophy that children learn most effectively through play. Using a learning center approach, each teaching team offers experiences in art, writing, science, dramatic play, blocks, manipulatives, and literacy. Teacher planning takes into account the social, emotional, intellectual, and physical developmental needs of the child.

## Section 2: Program/Classroom Information

### Hours of Operation

WUNS is open from 9:00 am to 3:15 pm. We currently operate three classrooms for children ages 30 months – 5 years. Parents have a variety of options from which to choose, based on availability. All classes meet five days per week with the following schedule choices:

Full-Day: 9:00 am – 3:15 pm

Half-Day: 9:00 am – 11:45 am or 12:30 pm to 3:15 pm

The school calendar runs from early September to mid-May. WUNS does not have a before and after care program.

### Tuition 2022 – 2023

Tuition can be paid by the year, by the semester, or by the month. Monthly payments are due on the first day of each month.

Half-day Session:     \$555 per month  
                                    \$4995 per year

Full-day Session:     \$1220 per month  
                                    \$10,980 per year



\*In the event a classroom must temporarily close due to COVID-19, tuition is still due for that time period. If the school is forced to close for an extended period of time, tuition will not be collected during the extended closure.

## **Classrooms**

Our classes focus on social development and learning through play. Each year's class builds on the previous year's program in curriculum experiences and activities offered. The classrooms are set up to invite exploration and foster a lifelong love of learning. Our staff is deeply committed to the young child and the importance of early childhood education.

**Two's/Young Three's:** Children must turn 3 by February 1 of that school year. The focus of this class is on social development and learning through play. Separating from parents, learning to take direction, and being nurtured by people outside of immediate family are important milestones for this age. The building of trust and growing peer awareness are enhanced by a safe environment that provides a foundation for learning.

**Three's/Young Four's:** The emphasis in this class is to encourage further socialization by reinforcing how a child's choices affect their relationships and environment. There are greater expectations for participation and appropriate play practices. This class fosters independence, creativity, cognitive growth, and motor coordination. Children are introduced to phonemic awareness, patterning, number sequencing with value recognition and following both verbal and visual directions.

**Four's/Young Five's:** The intent of this class is to further support the development of social awareness, emotional intelligence, and Kindergarten readiness skills. Critical thinking, science, sequencing, sorting and classification, matching, number values, phonemic awareness, problem solving, storytelling and following multi-step directions are all incorporated in our curriculum. Children develop their gross and fine motor skills while working in large and small groups. Through play and collaborative group work, children come to appreciate the value of cooperation and contribution. The children are encouraged to take risks, helping them discover how the process of learning is often more valuable than the outcome. Mastering appropriate academic skills and fostering social emotional growth are the cornerstones of this program.

## **Section 3: Home-School Communication and Assessment**

### **Parent School Partnership**

When joined by a common set of beliefs and purposes, a school and its parents form a powerful team with far-reaching positive effects on children and the entire school community. As a result, WUNS relies on its parents to understand and embrace the School's philosophy and values, and fully support its curriculum, teachers/staff, and administration.

Working together, parents and school professionals exert a strong influence on children's development and help them to mature by modeling healthy adult working relationships based on honesty, trust, civility, and mutual respect. The teachers, staff, and administration of WUNS share our parents' commitment to their children and join them in partnership dedicated to the growth of each child.

This partnership begins with timely, honest and open communication between home and school, and is premised on an assumption of goodwill and a shared interest in what is best for each individual child. Parents can best support this climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher. If a satisfactory conclusion is not reached, the parent should then contact the Director to assist in conflict resolution. If the Director is not able to negotiate the differences or difficulties, the Director will elicit support from his/her supervisor at the University.

Out of respect for the individual needs and privacy of each family, the Nursery School places a high value on confidentiality and expects individual families to honor the same. Efforts to lobby other parents are contrary to the spirit of the Parent School Partnership. By enrolling their child(ren) in WUNS, parents agree to support the School's vision, follow its rules and policies, and abide by its decisions. Just as parents can expect the Nursery School to share timely information and concerns with families concerning their child, so too the Nursery School expects parents to approach issues and concerns in a spirit of mutual goodwill, using proper channels, and in a manner that gives everyone the benefit of the doubt and leads to collaborative and constructive solutions.

While parents may not agree with every decision, in most cases, the parents and Nursery School will find enough common ground to continue a mutually respectful and productive relationship. However, when it is clear that a constructive, positive relationship cannot be maintained, the School reserves the right to deny continued attendance or re-enrollment.

## **Orientation**

Before the school year begins, each family will receive information in August that includes an orientation day for families. This visiting day gives the child and parent(s) an opportunity to visit the classroom and meet the teachers and classmates. This visit is one hour. It will allow time for the child to enjoy free play and also gives parent(s) a brief overview of what to expect during the school year. The next day, a child will attend school on his/her own. The class is divided in half, attending on two different days. This schedule allows the children and teachers to interact with a small group before the entire class attends at the end of the first week.

## **Parent-Staff Communication**

Communication is ongoing throughout the year. Newsletters, the school website and emails give you information on current themes, activities and upcoming events. Phone calls and/or emails by classroom teachers to discuss your child's adjustment, observations and/or concerns are common. If you feel you need to speak to a teacher or the director, please email or call the office. Teachers can be reached by phone or email after the school day is over.

Learning and curricular themes, specialist schedules and activities will be posted weekly on the WUNS classroom website. This is a great way to talk with your child about his/her day or week. You may find if you ask your child, "What did you do today?", you might hear, "Nothing". If you know about specific activities that occurred, you can ask more direct questions: "Can you tell me about the picture you painted today?" Because the curriculum is planned in advance, some changes based on spontaneous learning opportunities, children's interests and needs can be expected.

We encourage you to provide WUNS with an e-mail address. This can facilitate timely communication and notification of special classroom and WUNS events. The teachers may also use email to send newsletters and weekly project work descriptions to you.

## **Parent Resources**

WUNS provides families with books on a wide variety of topics for families to use. These resources are available in school lending library. Please ask the director about any questions that your family may have about the resource library.

On WUNS website there are articles and links that provide insights into early childhood education, strategies for understanding and supporting children's development, and community resources that families have found helpful.

## **Program Evaluation**

The Nursery School conducts evaluations through parent input (informal visits/conferences and a formal parent survey), licensing requirements and NAEYC accreditation standards.

## **Assessment**

Assessment is an ongoing process at WUNS. Teachers interact with children in their play, conversations and observations both in the classrooms and during outdoor play. Teachers keep daily or weekly notes on each child, writing about strengths and weaknesses in all areas of their development. Assessment includes checklists, timelines and examples of the children's writings and pictures. Teaching teams meet weekly to discuss each child and plan activities in their program to enhance needed skills for children.

Child assessment is a vital and necessary component of all high-quality early childhood programs. Assessment is important to understand and support young children's development. Assessment is also essential to document and evaluate how effectively programs are meeting young children's educational needs, and to inform of program improvement.

Children do not just grow in size. They develop, evolve, and mature, mastering ever more complex understanding of the people, objects, and challenges in their environment. There is a general pattern or sequence for development that is true of most children. However, the

rate, character, and quality of development vary from child to child. Culture influences development in different ways, and the goals for children differ from culture to culture.

Quality assessment looks not only at what is happening within the child, but also to the care that the child requires in order to thrive. For a child to develop and learn in a healthy and normal way, it is important not only to meet the basic needs for protection, food and health care, but also to meet the basic needs for interaction and stimulation, affection, security, and learning through exploration and discovery.

All staff is trained in the use of assessment in an early childhood program which includes the purpose and value of assessment and appropriate assessment tools. WUNS staff work closely during staff meetings to have a continuing process of evaluating the effectiveness of the assessment's tools and program.

Families with concerns or questions about the assessment process and/or their child's written assessment are encouraged to contact their child's teacher and Director to discuss further.

## **Assessment Results**

The information gained during all screenings and assessments will be used to develop curriculum, parent education, and evidence for referral.

- Lead teachers use the information gathered during the assessment process, identifying children's interests and needs and use this in planning a curriculum that best meets the needs of all children. When appropriate the information is used in planning for individual student needs.
- If there is an indication of a developmental delay the teachers will use the information gathered for referral for further diagnostic screenings and assessments. As needed the Local Education Agency will be involved in further diagnostic screenings and assessments. Confidentiality – All information gathered about a child is kept confidential. Records are kept in a secure area with limited access except by authorized personnel.
- Information obtained and collected by the program will be shared with other staff only on a "need to know" basis.
- College workers/students are not included in discussions of children and assessment/screening results unless the information is relevant to their work in the classroom
- Parents and guardians may ask to view screening and assessment results through asking the classroom teacher or the director.
- All information compiled during screenings and assessments will be used to promote the healthy developmental growth of the child. As appropriate the classroom teacher, the parents, and other essential personnel will be involved in making goals for the child or a referral in cases of developmental delays.
- No information shall be shared with an outside agency without the written consent from the parent or legal guardian.
- On request, regulatory authorities (Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services) shall have access to confidential materials.

## **Assessment and Parent-Teacher Conferences**

The school has two Parent Conferences during the school year. The fall conference is an informal, getting-to-know-the-child-and-family discussion that includes a written conference summary. The spring conference includes a more detailed, written developmental assessment. A parent-teacher conference can be scheduled at any time during the year as needed and by request of parents and/or teachers.

## **Section 4: Discipline**

The staff and director at WUNS work to maintain a very positive and nurturing environment for each child. Classroom limits are necessary to provide a sense of order and allow teachers to spend as much time as possible providing a stimulating environment for each child. Our rule of thumb is that children keep themselves safe, keep friends safe, and the toys at school safe.

The staff is trained to anticipate potentially problematic situations; they remind children of appropriate behavior and redirect or intervene when necessary. In most cases, teachers can stop or re-direct behavior before something negative occurs. If not, teachers will first consult the injured party to make sure they are emotionally and physically okay. Then, they will turn their attention to the child who might need more support in “keeping their friends safe” or, more likely, “keeping their bodies safe” with others. Reflection over what has occurred will lead to discovering other behavior options and resolving things with the peer.

Encouragement and pride in self is the basis of our discipline policy. Our aim is to have the children manage their own actions and reactions. The teachers and staff will help children learn and develop skills that they need to display appropriate behavior. This is done through:

- Positive reinforcement.
- Anticipating unhealthy social interaction.
- Re-direction: guiding a child toward appropriate, socially positive activities.
- Naming and validating child’s feelings
- Expressing disappointment or disapproval in a respectful and constructive manner.
- Simple, logical and immediate consequences.

When inappropriate behavior is a continuing problem, the school will work with parents to understand the issue and make appropriate recommendations. It is our goal to make school a positive, rewarding and enjoyable experience for each child. We realize, however, that we cannot meet the needs of all children and parents.

## **Use of Corporal Punishment and Harsh Language**

The use of corporal punishment is forbidden at WUNS. The discipline philosophy of the Nursery School is to help children develop a positive self-image. We hope to encourage children to be self-directed, exhibit self-control, and become problem-solvers. A philosophy

based on providing a positive, supportive environment that focuses on prevention and the teaching of appropriate behaviors guides the staff in their interactions with children. Children are re-directed and given choices to encourage appropriate behaviors. The use of threats and derogatory language by staff is not accepted behavior in handling children that misbehave.

### **Referral Process for Children with Special Needs/Challenging Behavior**

It is the policy at the Nursery School that after school is underway and teachers have had time to observe children in the classroom, a teacher who feels help is needed in understanding the behavior of a child in the classroom will ask the director to come and observe. After reviewing our observations, we schedule an appointment with the parents to discuss the school behavior. In the course of that meeting, we may request that a community professional evaluate the child in the classroom. This observation may result in a request for further evaluation. If needed, community facilities that better serve the child's needs may be recommended to the parents.

### **WUNS Expulsion and Suspension Policy**

WUNS guidance for prevention of expulsion and suspension:

In an effort to prevent expulsion and suspension of children, the Nursery School has adopted the following, in policy and practice and in a consistent and non – discriminatory manner:

- Use developmentally appropriate practices that provide for stimulating and interactive learning environments, diversity, age appropriate expectations, small group activities, teachable moments and knowledge of research based evidence and best practices in child development, early learning and education.
- Invest in professional development, training and education to ensure educators have the competencies to support children's social and emotional health.
- Develop and implement classroom schedules that meet the needs of the children.
- Adapt learning environments to promote healthy social interactions with others.
- Develop healthy and nurturing relationships with children.
- Develop strong partnerships and relationships with parents.
- Develop and implement classroom expectations that are developmentally appropriate, clear and consistent.
- Provide family engagement opportunities.
- Ensure fairness and equity.

Prior to the expulsion of any child from this program, the staff and director will follow these guidelines:

- Identify and engage mental and behavioral health consultants and community resources after obtaining parent permission.
- Reduce the number of days or amount of time in care for a specified amount of time.
- Conference with parents to discuss positive behavior interventions and development of goals.

- Document efforts to prevent and reduce expulsion.
- Provide reasonable accommodations.

### Transition Procedures

If an expulsion must occur, WUNS will assist the child and family in transitioning to another program by identifying and engaging mental/ behavioral health consultants and community resources to assist in determining the most appropriate placement for the child.

## Section 5: Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

### **Children's health records and other records**

All children are required to have a completed physician's examination form, a physical exam and all immunizations up to date at the time of enrollment. Immunizations are to be kept up to date thereafter following the Missouri guidelines schedule. Record of a physical is required every year.

Immunizations are an important public health policy effecting children. As a matter of state law, children in the program must:

- Be fully immunized, or
- Be in the process of becoming fully immunized according to the approved schedule, or
- Have a physician's statement that immunization are not needed for medical reasons

Any under immunized child will be immediately excluded from the program if a vaccine preventable disease to which the child is susceptible occurs in the program.

Your child's file is kept in a file cabinet in the WUNS office. This office is locked unless center personnel are present. Your child's file is considered confidential and only a limited number of individuals have access to view it. Parents may request to view their child's file at any time. Please contact the classroom teacher or the WUNS Director to make arrangements to view the file.

The Director will have access to review the file so that medical and family information is correct and up to date. Lead teachers have access to review files to see what individual/special needs your child has. This information will help with planning and goal setting for your child.

When the program is being reviewed for relicensing, the licensing representative has access to the files that are required by the state. These forms would include but are not limited to: child enrollment, medical forms, and special instruction plans for allergies if one is appropriate. All educational files are kept confidential and have limited access.

## Illness

The Nursery School makes a great effort to provide a healthy environment for your children. We work diligently on forming healthy habits such as washing hands before eating or handling food, and after toileting. Our dishes and cups are put through a dishwasher/sanitizer to sterilize them and to prevent the spread of germs. The rooms are thoroughly cleaned daily and checked for safety. However, despite everyone's best efforts, children and adults will get sick. It is an expected part of life. If children become ill at school, they will be cared for in the office until a parent can pick them up.

**COVID-19** has caused the Nursery School to implement new health screenings, policies and procedures. It is imperative that parents are familiar with and adhere to them.

Parents are requested to keep their child home in the event of the diseases or symptoms noted below. If a symptom persists (such as rash or cough), or if a communicable disease is confirmed (COVID, measles, chicken pox, etc.), returning to school may require a statement from the child's physician declaring that the condition is no longer contagious.

PLEASE CALL the Nursery School to inform us that your child is sick, especially if he/ she has a communicable disease. Communicable diseases or conditions include:

strep throat	chicken pox	measles
mumps	impetigo	conjunctivitis
hepatitis A	diarrheal diseases	lice
scabies	pinworm	ringworm
viral or bacterial infections		
COVID-19		
Influenza		

Also, the following symptoms could indicate a contagious disease:

fever	lethargy
diarrhea	sore throat
vomiting	reddened, weeping eyes
skin eruptions/rash	constant sneezing/productive cough
runny nose	

If your child is exposed to or contracts a communicable disease, it is essential that you call the Nursery School. In turn, we will send a letter home to inform parents of an exposure to a communicable disease.

## Medication

The Nursery School encourages parents to administer medications at home and **not** at school. The Nursery School staff does not routinely administer medications to the children. Also, we do not apply sunscreen or insect repellent. Medication that absolutely needs to be



administered during school hours must be cleared with the director. If medicine is deemed necessary it will be kept in a secure location out of reach of children. If a physician has ordered a special medical or dental procedure for a child in care, an adult trained in the procedure must be on-site whenever the child is present.

## **Allergies**

If your child has a known allergic reaction, this must be documented on the child's enrollment form and health record kept in his/her file in the office. Also, please report these allergies to the classroom teachers. For your child's safety, these allergies will be posted in your child's classroom. If you object to this information being posted, please contact the director. In case of severe allergies such as to bee stings or nuts, an EpiPen Injector Kit may be kept at the Nursery School and used by the director and/or teachers who are trained in its administration. This is stored in the emergency backpack in the child's classroom. Each classroom has a First Aid Kit that includes the EpiPen (if required). This, along with emergency medical forms for every child, accompanies the classes on all walking or driving field trips.

## **Peanut and Tree Nut Policy**

A growing number of children deal with food allergies and, specifically, potentially life-threatening peanut and tree nut allergies. Washington University Nursery School is peanut- and tree nut-free (Brazil nuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios, walnuts, pecans, and hazelnuts).

## **Accidents**

The Nursery School makes every effort to ensure the safety of all children. However, should a serious accident occur, a parent is immediately contacted. If parents and emergency contacts cannot be reached, we will take your child to the hospital designated on your enrollment form. Minor injuries will be reported to you by your child's teacher at pick-up. All injuries will also be reported in written form and given to you at pickup time. We will ask you to sign an identical form to be placed in your child's file at school.

## **Section 6: Environmental Health and Safety, Maintenance and Emergency Procedures**

To ensure the most optimal learning environment for WUNS is licensed and inspected by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services - Bureau of Child Care and accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We also receive annual inspections by the State Fire Marshall's Office and Health and Sanitation inspections by the St. Louis County Health Department. These inspections ensure that all fire, health, and safety regulations are met and WUNS adheres to high quality standards regarding

teacher requirements, adult/child ratios, curriculum, nutrition, and other administrative practices.

Regular maintenance of the facility and the equipment falls under the University maintenance department. If WUNS staff finds a concern or if during a routine inspection by the representative of Missouri licensing authority there is found to be a concern the followings steps are taken: 1) The WUNS director shall notify the appropriate department on campus for repair. 2) The department will make a visit to the center as soon as possible to access the work needed to be completed. 3) Depending upon the work needed to be completed the department will make repairs immediately or when the parts required are secured. 4) If the latter is the case the equipment in question will be removed or blocked from child use until the needed repairs are made.

The University makes every effort to ensure the safety of students from environment hazards and pollution through the use of environmental friendly supplies and spraying for insects is not done when students are present and is done in a timely manner that no students will be in the area immediately after treatment. All chemicals and cleaning agents are kept in locked cabinets or closets.

## **Emergency Procedures**

We have effective, campus-supported policies at the Nursery School to keep your children safe. Below you will find our Emergency Procedures. We have a safety drill each month, and all staff is informed of procedures, locations of first aid kits and emergency medications, and emergency meeting locations.

### **In case of FIRE**

- Short bell rings alert you to a fire or drill.
- Close doors and evacuate in a calm manner through the nearest exit, as designated on our evacuation map.
- Stay in the designated outdoor area until cleared to reenter.

### **In case of SEVERE WEATHER**

- One long continuous bell ring alert you to severe weather, i.e. tornado threat.
- Take shelter under tables or in a hallway or bathroom.
- Assume tornado position when threat is imminent.
- Stay in the designated area until cleared to reenter classrooms.

### **In case of LOCKDOWN**

- If the WU Emergency Alert System is activated and announces, "Go to secure area" a whistle will be blown.
- Children will be moved out of sight to the designated safe area in the school.
- Teachers will have cell phones to get emergency information from the WU Emergency headquarters to follow accordingly.

- No one will be permitted to enter or leave the building unless evacuation is necessary.
- If possible, an emergency email/text will be sent out explaining the circumstance.
- Lockdown will continue until the school receives an “all clear” signal from WU emergency personnel.

### **Parent Notification Procedure:**

- Parents will be notified of campus emergencies and evacuations through the **WUSTL Mobile app**, which is the fastest and easiest way for anyone — with or without a Washington University email address — to receive emergency alerts. The app is available for [iOS](#) or [Android](#). Note that it is important that you enable push notifications to receive alerts.
- The school has an emergency preparedness bag easily accessible with all contact information, allergy information, and other necessities.
- WUNS staff will attempt to send out an emergency email/text explaining the situation as much as possible, as a follow up to the all-campus emergency alert.

### **General Safety Practices**

- Background screenings are conducted, and all teachers, students, and volunteers are included in the Family Care and Safety Registry.
- Teachers, students, and volunteers are required to have a TB Risk Assessment Form/test and a health form on file.
- All staff members are mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse/neglect.
- Children are supervised at all times and appropriate child: staff ratios are maintained.
- Authorized pick-up information is on file and in the emergency directory. If we are not familiar with the authorized pick-up person we will ask to see identification and will match the person’s ID with the emergency directory information provided by the parent(s).
- Each room is equipped with a first-aid kit.
- Teachers take roll and monitor the number of children in their care.
- Teachers move throughout the playground to ensure adequate and appropriate supervision. The playground monitored closely for safety and improvements.
- Staff is trained in CPR, First Aid, and Choke Saving/Rescue Breathing.
- Individuals who serve food wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.
- Cleaning supplies are stored out of children’s reach.
- Teachers fill out documentation for accidents, incidents, and health-related situations. Parents receive copies of accident/incident forms.
- Teachers follow universal precautions for blood-related accidents and incidents.
- Toys are checked frequently and broken toys are discarded.
- Emergency numbers and first aid kits are included in a backpack for walking and field trips.
- Health and safety information incorporated into the curriculum and taught to the children on a regular basis.

## **Classroom First Aid Kits**

Each classroom has a backpack of First Aid supplies. This pack is taken with the class whenever taking a “field trip” to a destination on campus. The kit contains the following items: CPR Mask, gloves, antiseptic wipes, and alcohol wipes, antibiotic ointment, band aids, gauze pads, Kleenex, paper towels, and germ-x. The backpack also has emergency contact information for each child.

## **Child Abuse Policies and Mandated Reporting**

As professionals in contact with young children and their families, we at the Nursery School are required by law to help the DFS become aware of children who may be abused or neglected. According to the law, public or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors; as well as day care/child care workers, are mandated reporters. Thus, it is policy of the Nursery School to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to DFS immediately by telephone and to follow up in writing within 24 hours the same information as reported by telephone. Our school will offer full cooperation of its staff during the investigation of the reported incident.

## **Section 7: General Policies and Procedure**

### **Arrival and Departure**

Arrival and departure is a busy time at WUNS. During arrival it is very important to set up a routine that your family can follow every day. This provides your child with a sense of security. Please keep teachers informed about your child’s health, mood, eating habits, family situation, or anything you think might affect your child’s behavior at school.

All traffic for arrival and dismissal must proceed from the parking lot entrance west of the school, driving east and stopping at the school entrance. The driver will assist the child in exiting the car and teachers will walk the child to the classroom. Teachers are outside for arrival of children at 8:50 a.m. for the morning session and 12:30 p.m. for the afternoon session. If you arrive late, you must call the school so a teacher can escort your child to the classroom. At dismissal (11:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.) children assemble outside their classroom at picnic tables. The teachers bring children to their cars. Parents will assist the child into their car seat. No child can be dismissed to anyone other than persons designated by the parents. If parents arrive early, please avoid idling your car to help reduce air pollution.

### **Attendance**

If your child will be absent, please notify the director as soon as possible by calling (314) 935-6689.

## **Parking/Building Access**

Free parking is available adjacent to the Nursery School. These three, 30-minute spots are typically available during the school day. Parking in Zone 3 is only permitted with a Yellow Zone 3 parking pass. Parents and visitors wishing to have a longer visit should park in the Millbrook or Snow Way parking garages, located off Throop Drive and Snow Way. Visitor parking in these lots is \$2.00 for the first two hours.

The Nursery School front door is always locked. Parents and visitors must ring the call button that activates a video camera to gain admittance.

## **Inclement Weather**

The Nursery School, as a department within Washington University, follows the university policy for school closings as a result of inclement weather. It is university policy that faculty and staff members should report to work and leave work at their regularly scheduled times. Should weather conditions create potentially hazardous travel, the vice chancellor for human resources will evaluate the severity of the situation and, in consultation with the executive vice chancellors, determine the appropriate measures to be taken. Factors to be considered will include the safety of our faculty, staff and students as well as the services that must be provided despite the severe weather. In the event that the decision is made to dismiss employees early, the staff of the Office of Human Resources will contact the various executive vice chancellors, vice chancellors and deans, who, in turn, will be responsible for communicating this decision to faculty and staff members. A Nursery School staff member would then relay that decision to the parent community via phone and/or email.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted on the grounds of Washington University.

## **Clothing**

It is recommended that children be dressed in play clothes that are comfortable, washable, and suitable for activities both indoors and outdoors. Children need to have at least one extra set of clothing appropriate to the season that can be kept at school. Parents should be aware of weather conditions and dress children accordingly, as outdoor play is an integral part of the daily schedule. During the winter months our general guideline for outdoor play is that we will usually go outside when it is above 20 degrees, with wind chill taken into account. Please mark your child's name in permanent marker on all clothing so that it can be easily identified.

## **Snacks**

The Nursery School provides a healthy snack each day for the children. Fresh fruit (apples, oranges, pears, bananas, melons, etc.) are purchased each week and kept refrigerated. There

are a wide variety of crackers (soda, graham, Ritz, Goldfish, etc.) available. Snack time consists of a fruit, crackers and water.

### **Toys from home**

Bringing toys from home are not permitted. Teachers cannot be responsible for toys and other items brought from home. If children bring toys from home, the teacher may ask the parent to leave it in the car or for it to be kept in their cubby for the day. We ask that you help us avoid this by leaving toys from home at home.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

We celebrate each child's birthday (or half-birthday for children with summer dates). If desired, talk with your child's teacher about bringing a special snack to share with the class.

### **Holidays**

We are fortunate to have diverse cultures and religious beliefs in our Nursery School community. Our policy is to celebrate family traditions, not the religious aspects, of holidays.

### **Field Trips**

Teachers frequently plan short walking trips on campus. Occasionally, trips are planned off-campus to further enhance the children's experiences. Each time an off-campus trip is planned, parents will be notified in advance and required to sign a form granting permission for the child's participation.

### **Confidentiality Statement**

The records kept on families enrolled at the Nursery School are confidential. Staff may not share information on file with others without written permission from a parent or guardian. Information received while in the performance of duties, either written or verbal, shall also be considered confidential and shall be treated the same as written information contained in the child's file.

The Nursery school adheres to the Code of Ethics created by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This document provides guidelines for responsible behavior and establishes a common ground for early childhood professionals to resolve ethical and moral issues encountered in daily practice. The foundation for the Code of Ethics is a commitment to quality early childhood practices, including providers' goals to:

- Appreciate childhood as a unique, valuable part of the human life.
- Base program practices on knowledge of child development.
- Appreciate and support the child/family bond.
- Understand children in the context of their family, culture and society.
- Respect the uniqueness and worth of children, family members and colleagues.

- Develop helpful relationships based on trust, respect and positive regard.

## Section 8: Family Involvement

### **Knowing and Understanding Our Families**

Families and culture are celebrated in the Nursery School. The role of parents is vital. Family involvement and connectedness is an integral piece of what makes our program strong. Families are frequently visible in and around the school, sharing life and what they love with the children. Their role in informing and working together with their child's teacher is the glue that keeps our school in place. It is important to us that we develop skills and knowledge to work effectively with our diverse families. Our staff will use a variety of formal and informal strategies (including conversation) to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure, their preferred child-rearing practices linguistic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds. Program staff will actively use information about families to adapt the environment, curriculum and teaching methods to the families we serve.

### **Parent Participation at School**

You are invited to observe your child at school. Observing allows you to note age and individual related behavior patterns and to watch your child as he/she interacts in a social environment.

If you have questions about what you observe (i.e., children's behavior, use of materials, teacher's behavior, etc.), please ask the teacher about it. When observing, people often see only a snapshot in time and may not clearly understand the context surrounding a certain action in the classroom.

### **Family Arrangements**

WUNS recognizes that all families are not structured similarly and that some families may live apart due to a variety of circumstances. The teachers and staff are sensitive to the needs of children in these situations and will work to support the entire family. We are happy to provide duplicate information to accommodate both parents' need for information. If information is needed by WUNS staff regarding custody, child pick-ups, etc., please provide us with the formal paperwork. Unless we have the appropriate paperwork, we cannot keep a child's biological mother and/or father from picking up his or her child.

## Section 9: Special Programs

Due to COVID-19 some of the Special Programs will be modified for safety.

## **School Picnic**

Families are invited to a school gathering at the beginning and end of the school year. “Popsicles at the Playground” is held the week prior to school starting. This fun family event at on the WUNS playground and allows children and parents to get acquainted with new classmates and their teachers. The last week of school, families gather for a dinner/potluck at Shaw Park to celebrate the culmination of the year.

## **Open House**

In October, WUNS holds an “open house” for current children and their families. This event allows parents and siblings to visit the child’s classroom, meet the teachers and play on the playground. Children are excited to “show-off” their school to their family.

## **After-school Playdates**

We arrange times throughout the year to have the WUNS playground open after school from 3:15-5:00 p.m. so, children and their families can play. Siblings are welcome to join. All children must have a parent or caregiver present to attend.

## **Halloween Parade**

Parents are invited to our annual Halloween parade. An invitation and details will be shared with all parents.

## **Special Visitor Day**

Parent, grandparent or special adult friend is invited to enjoy time to play in the classroom and a special snack with their preschoolers during these special days (fall and spring). Children will bring home invitations and details about each event.

## **Dine Out Nights**

The Nursery School partners with local restaurants to help fundraise for our school. On these Dine Out Nights, families and friends are encouraged to eat out at the designated restaurant. Families enjoy having a meal with fellow WUNS classmates and parents, while also supporting the Nursery School.

## **Night at the Magic House**

In February, the Nursery School rents the early childhood section of the Magic House for Nursery School families. This special night is a huge hit with everyone. Parents can enjoy a private night at their child’s favorite hands-on museum!



## **Annual Parent Social**

In early spring, parents are invited to a “parent-only” social event. In the past it has been a trivia night, gallery night (highlighting preschooler’s artwork), and/or silent auction. The social also serves as a fundraiser for WUNS. Monies raised help support our enrichment programs – Art, Spanish, Nature and Music, as well as specific equipment or school needs.

## **Closing statement**

A strong home and school environment is essential when building a good environment for young children. All of our staff will try to do our very best to keep you informed and involved in our preschool program. Clearly, ongoing communication and support from both families and staff make the connection between home and school a two-way street. Please share with us information about your child and report any changes especially during a major crisis. Anything you share with us will held in confidence. We hope to nurture mutual trust and respect at every opportunity. There will be many ways for parents to become involved at the Washington University Nursery School. We look forward to getting to know you and your family.