



R.I.S.E. Preschool

Reading Integrated Preschool Experience

Handbook

2021-2022

R.I.S.E. Preschool
62 Oakland Rd.
Reading, MA 01867
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ABOUT R.I.S.E.

R.I.S.E. Preschool is a kind and caring school offering developmentally appropriate early childhood programs and services for young children, both with and without disabilities. Integrated programming offers children the opportunity to learn skills, competencies and attitudes from a diverse group of children. Children learn that everyone has strengths and areas in which they can improve. They develop a solid awareness and understanding of others and have opportunities to make friends with many different people.

STAFF

R.I.S.E. preschool is staffed by certified teachers, educational assistants, and specialists of the Reading Public Schools. The program is coordinated by the Preschool Team. This Team consists of preschool special needs teachers, a speech/language pathologist, an occupational therapist and a physical therapist. A unique feature of the program is the integration of specialists and therapies into the daily routine. All staff members collectively have many years of early childhood experience.

R.I.S.E. Preschool Director	Kelley Bostwick
Secretary	Denise Santoro
Classroom Teachers	Janelle Boutin – Wood End Joyce Camenker – High School Maureen Deligianidis –High School Erin Joyce-High School Ann Marie McGrath – High School Jessica Muolo – High School Karen Stuart – Wood End Tracey Tomkins-Killam Kathy Whelan - Killam
Physical Therapists	Maria Fitzpatrick Alysia Redard
Occupational Therapist	Linda Boyages
Speech/Language Pathologist	Patrice Donahue-High School Jennifer Zurcher-High School Kaitlyn Rubin-Wood End Sarah Whalen-Wood End Jenna Cerat-Killam
Paraprofessionals	Jennifer Bodin Cindy Boudreau Sabrina Cavaliero Lynne Cerretani-Clarke Christine Donofrio Karen Forlizzi

Gina Girouard
Camille McCormick
Katrina Maher
Jackie Mulrain
Cathy Naughton
Ann Marie O'Brien
Susan O'Leary
Carolyn O'Neil
Mary Sage
Sary Thach
Kathy Tierney
Lori Weston
Eileen Wilkes

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for admission to the R.I.S.E. Preschool, typically developing children must be 3 years of age on or before August 31st of the entering year.

We are seeking community children that can act in an age-appropriate manner, follow directions and play independently, as well as display the ability to separate from their parent.

THE PRESCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS

Children who are currently attending the R.I.S.E. Preschool have placement priority, as do siblings of current students. All other children who will be enrolled in the program are selected based on the application process.

R.I.S.E. Preschool Application Process

1. In January, applications will be sent home to all children that are currently enrolled in the preschool program. The \$35 application fee is waived. All applications must be returned by January 31st, in order to be guaranteed a space in preschool for the upcoming year. On the same application, siblings of current preschool children may apply as well. There is a \$35 application fee for new students who are siblings. If needed, we will lottery our siblings of current preschool children into programs and establish a waiting list.
2. A statement will be placed on the R.I.S.E. school website stating that the application process has begun.
3. Applications will be accepted from January 3rd to January 31st.
4. In the beginning of February, if necessary, a lottery to fill available slots will occur. The lottery will continue to place all children that applied in order on the wait list. Children that are twins or entering with a sibling will be pulled forward with the first lottery name pulled.
5. Parents will be notified by March 1st of the lottery acceptance into the program or their spot on the wait list.
6. On March 15th, the first month's tuition is required as a deposit to hold the child's spot in the program. If the first month's deposit is not received by March 15th, the spot will be offered to the next child on the wait list.
7. After the lottery, applications will continue to be accepted and applicants placed in programs or on the wait list. If a child is being placed on the wait list, the family does not need to provide the \$35 application fee; however, upon placement into a program the \$35 application fee will be required along with the first month's tuition as a deposit.

8. Applications will be accepted by non-Reading resident on March 1st. If the child is placed on a wait list, the family does not need to provide the \$35 application fee; however, upon placement into a program the \$35 application fee will be required along with the first month's tuition as a deposit.
9. Applications will only be accepted if the child is 3 years of age by August 31st.

R.I.S.E. Preschool follows the same calendar schedule as the Reading Public Schools. Before and after school care is available for a separate fee through the Extended Day Office only at the High School site. Please contact Chris Nelson, Director of Community Education at 781-942-9136 or Chris.Nelson@reading.k12.ma.us for more information or to register.

The tuition is expected to be paid on or before the first of each month. You may provide payment by check or via paying online through E-school. The tuition fee is consistent even if there are holidays or vacation periods during the month. This also applies if your child is absent. A reminder notice will be sent for overdue tuition.

Prompt payment is expected. Failure to make prompt payments will result in the child's withdrawal from the program. Payment two months in arrears may result in mandatory termination. Reinstatement will not occur until all delinquent tuition is paid in full.

If a check is returned, payment must be made by certified check/money order or cash to cover the amount of the returned check. A \$25 fee will be charged by the Town of Reading for any tuition checks returned for insufficient funds. Repeated occurrences of returned checks may result in termination from the program.



Preschool Health Procedures

All medications, including over-the-counter, must meet the following criteria:

- Doctor's order
- Signed parental permission
- Pharmacy labeled container
- In case of a long-term medication, no more than a 30-day supply can be kept at school. Only a school nurse may administer medication.

For Illness:

In order to ensure the health and well-being of all of our students, we request that you adhere to the following when deciding if you should keep your child home from school:

- If your child has a **fever**, please keep the child home until they have been fever-free for **24 hours without medication**.
- If your child has had **strep throat or conjunctivitis**, please wait until he/she has been on antibiotics for **24 hours** before returning to school.
- Please keep your child home if they have been vomiting, have had diarrhea or other flu-like symptoms, or have had continuous nasal discharge or a persistent cough.

If your child seems to be ill while at school, staff or the school nurse will call you to pick up your child. Please contact the school nurse with any questions or concerns about your child's health at school. It is very important that you keep us up-to-date on any medications that your child is taking, any recent health concerns and/or any allergies.

If your daily schedule does not allow you to stay home with a sick child or to pick up a child during the day, please have alternate care people available, whom you designate as such, and who are aware that they have been designated and can be called to pick up your child.

In the case of life-threatening emergencies requiring the use of an "Epi-pen," the school nurse will train personnel involved as "first responders."

Handwashing is the first line of defense against disease. We are vigilant with both children and adults that hands are washed before eating, after toileting, handling body secretions and after cleaning. Please remember to have your child wash hands before entering the classroom as they start their day at school.

*Children should be **unmedicated** and **fever free** for at least **24 hours** before returning to school.*



COVID Information

School Protocol:

- Staff and students must wear masks/face coverings. Specific time will be allotted by teachers for mask breaks during the day; these times will be physically distanced and follow safety protocols
- Masks must be 2-ply cloth. Research has shown that the following options do not provide adequate protection so cannot be used:

neck fleece, neck gaiters, bandanas, knitted masks, masks with vents.

- Please test the fit of your student's mask. It should cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly over the mouth and chin. It should not gape on the sides. Make sure your child can breathe comfortably wearing their mask.
- Practice putting the face mask on and taking it off while avoiding touching the cloth. Help your student recognize the importance of avoiding touching their mask while they are wearing it.

Health Information:

- To prevent illness outbreaks, staff and students with any illness must stay home. We will err on the side of caution in our mission to keep everyone healthy and to keep schools open.
- **Every day before your student leaves home please note any of the following symptoms:**
 - A cough or shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - A fever of 100°F or higher or chills
 - A sore throat or headache
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
 - Congestion/running nose – not related to seasonal allergies
 - Unusual fatigue
 - New loss of taste or smell

In addition:

- Has your student been in close contact with anyone with suspected or confirmed Covid-19?
- Has your student had any medication to reduce a fever before coming to school?

The student must stay home from school if the answer to any of the above questions is “yes.”

If you are not sure whether your child should stay home, please contact the school nurse to discuss your child's condition before sending your student to school.

Illness Protocol:

If a child is suspected to be ill with Covid-19 symptoms while at school, the following steps will be taken

- The student will be evaluated by the school nurse
- If the nurse's assessment confirms likely illness with symptoms consistent with Covid-19, the student will be cared for in an isolation area in the building
- Parent or guardian will be asked to pick up their student within 30 minutes.
- Parent or guardian will be directed to have their student evaluated by a physician and tested if necessary, and will follow guidance for isolation if test is positive. If warranted, contacts of the student will be notified
- If a provider makes an alternative diagnosis, student may return to school following the recommendations for the diagnosis and school protocol.

In order to protect students and staff, it is imperative that there be a timely dismissal plan for all students. Parents must provide a plan that ensures pickup within 30 minutes. Be sure to update all contact information in the parent portal and make updates when it changes.

SCHOOL ABSENCE

All families are required to participate in the Absentee Verification Program. Whenever a child is going to be absent from school, the parent is required to call the school and leave a message on the R.I.S.E. voice message.

If your child attends preschool at any location, please call (781) 942-9179 for the High School location, (781) 942-5420 for the Wood End location, and (781) 944-7831 for the Killam location.

Please give all information requested on the recording. Your call will be recorded. These messages will be compared to the school's absentee list for the day. In the event that your child's name is on the absentee list and a call has not been received, the school will call your home, cell phone then places of employment. If verification is not received from a parent we will refer to the list of names supplied to the school on your child's emergency card and call those names in the order given to verify the absence. If verification is still not received after the above-mentioned attempts have been made, we will call the Reading Police Department.

If your child is going to be out of school for any reason, please let the office know. For illnesses, this is especially important so that we can inform families of any communicable illness symptoms while maintaining confidentiality. In addition, teachers and children miss a child when they are absent, so they would like to know that the child is okay.

PARKING

High School Location:

Please park in the small parking lot across the road from the Central Office Parking lot. ***PLEASE DO NOT PARK ALONG THE ROAD!*** Unless you have a handicap parking license plate or placard, please do not drop off or pick up in the small parking lot next to the building. This lot is strictly for specific R.I.S.E. staff and central office staff. Please do not park in the Deliveries Drop off/Pick up parking spots because these are reserved for buses and vans. For the safety of your children, please accompany them to the door at R.I.S.E. preschool and take care while crossing the road. **PLEASE USE THE CROSS WALK.** We share the road with high school students and the greater Reading community.

Wood End & Killam Location: Please park using the parking lot or on a neighborhood street that is available for on street parking. **PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN THE FIRE LANES!** Unless you have a handicap parking license plate or placard, please do not use the handicap parking spots or park in the staff parking lot. For the safety of your children, please accompany them to either the side door or to their teacher's outside door at Killam. Please take care while crossing the parking lot. We share this parking lot with Wood End & Killam students and staff.



TRANSPORTATION

The preschool does not transport children to or from school. Children will only be released to those designated in their file, and teachers/office staff may ask to see identification if there is any question. *If a child will be picked up by anyone other than his or her parent or legal guardian, a written permission slip must be provided to the preschool office.* In addition, please make office staff and teachers aware if there are specific individuals who should not be on school grounds. If an active restraining order is in place for an individual associated with a preschool student, a copy of the order must be kept on file.



SNACK/LUNCH

Snacks and lunch are provided by parents. Please provide your child with healthy snack, a water bottle and/or beverage and any utensils needed. We are no longer a tree nut or peanut free school. Please note that we do not heat or refrigerate snacks or lunches. An insulated lunch bag with an ice pack is encouraged. Full day students have a snack in addition to lunch. Please be sure to send enough food for the day.



CURRICULUM





Our curriculum is based on the Massachusetts Common Core Standards for Preschool. All children have the opportunity to participate in structured, contained choice play time, circle time, structured learning and activity time, snack, recess, music and story time each day. The curriculum provides a wide range of open-ended, hands-on activities that are developmentally appropriate for preschoolers. The activities offer each child the opportunity to gain competence in skill areas, as well as grow in self-esteem. The child's daily program often includes expressive activities such as art, music and dramatic play. Children have numerous opportunities to work on independent decision-making, group cooperation, conflict resolution skills and classroom responsibility.

The teachers capitalize on personal experiences and passions, as well as the children's interests, to adapt curriculum allowing classroom uniqueness while still adhering to the common core and state curriculum frameworks. Classroom observations and assessments become important tools for the teachers to communicate with parents.

Behavior Management Policy

At R.I.S.E. Preschool we use a positive approach to teaching behavior. We believe that all children are motivated to behave when taught what is expected of them and given firm but kind guidance, support and recognition. The R.I.S.E. rules are:

- RESPECT
- INCLUSION
- SAFETY
- EFFORT

RESPECT	INCLUSION	SAFETY	EFFORT
eyes watching	take turns	body calm	always try
ears listening	invite others to join	hands to self	do your best
voices quiet	use kind words	use materials appropriately	
body calm	share		
			

The rules and behavioral expectations will be explicitly taught to the children through classroom lessons.

For minor infractions in which children are having difficulty complying with the rules, they will be given reminders and redirection. For major infractions there will be an appropriate consequence such as removal from the activity, loss of an item or privilege, or an opportunity to make reparations. Parents will be notified if a child exhibits unusual emotional or physical behavior that threatens the well-being of the child or others.

If a child has on-going behavioral issues, the Team will meet with the parents to develop a behavior plan to address the areas of concern.

Typically, a wide range of behavior is exhibited in a preschool classroom and most of it is quite easily managed.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality plays a vital role in promoting respect for every individual and fostering a strong community. R.I.S.E. Preschool takes confidentiality very seriously and makes every effort to protect each family's privacy. Communications among staff and parents about children should be kept confidential at all times. R.I.S.E. Preschool recommends that conversations about a child, behavior, or incident should

be conducted in private, away from the child and other members of the R.I.S.E. community. If a parent has a question or concern, we suggest that this parent first contact the teacher via email or in person to arrange a time to discuss.



Diapering/Toileting

Toilet training will not be coerced. Generally, staff will assist you in carrying out the toileting routine upon which you have decided. However, please discuss this with your child's teacher to ensure that the teacher is comfortable implementing the plan. Children will wash their hands with liquid soap and running water after being toileted.

Staff members will also wash their hands with liquid soap and running water after assisting children with any toileting routine. Individual paper towels shall be used to dry hands.

When handling clothing soiled with feces, urine, vomit, or blood, staff members will wear gloves and bag clothing in sealed plastic bags, storing them apart from other items.

UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

If there are any unusual circumstances at home, such as illness or death, parents' vacations, or changes in childcare arrangements (such as a new nanny or babysitter), please notify the teachers so that they can help your child adjust more easily to the situation.

CONTACT INFORMATION

It is very important for parents to keep us informed of any changes to phone numbers, addressed and email addresses. Be sure to let us know if you would like to change the individuals who are authorized to pick up/drop off your child. Updated information can be crucial during an emergency.



NO SCHOOL POLICY

It is the policy of the Reading Public Schools that school is in session on all scheduled days, and that parents will determine when conditions are such that it would be unwise or unsafe for their child to attend. However, when bad weather or other extraordinary conditions warrant, school may be cancelled or there may be a delayed opening. In the event of a delayed opening, the half day morning session is cancelled, and the afternoon session will go on as scheduled. Full day students will report at the announced start of the day depending on the delay. There may be times that R.I.S.E. Preschool will be going remote during a "High Heat Index Day" or during a "Snow Day." This decision will be made by the superintendent of schools via most area television/radio stations and/or local cable channels.



CONFERENCES

Parent support of the school's goals and activities are the most important ingredient to your child's success in school. To that end, it is vital that an active communication system be developed between home and school. Members of the staff will often take the initiative to send home a message about student achievement or difficulty. Questions and concerns from parents are encouraged and always welcome; however, it can be challenging when class is beginning or ending. We encourage parents to communicate via phone or email when a face-to-face session is unavailable. In addition, parents are urged to follow the "chain of command" when addressing a problem/concern/question regarding their child. Parents should first speak to the teacher or staff member most directly involved with the student. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, these issues should then be directed to the attention of the R.I.S.E. Preschool director.

During the school year, parent-teacher conferences are held in the fall to review your child's progress. All parents are encouraged to attend. See your child's teacher for scheduling your conference. Whenever the need arises, or if you have an immediate concern, do not hesitate to call the school to arrange a meeting with one of the teachers or the Preschool Director.

Progress notes are sent home in January and June.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

The Reading Public Schools does not tolerate discrimination against students, parents, employees or the general public on the basis of sex. The Reading Public Schools is also committed to maintaining a school environment free of harassment based on sex, including harassment based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy or pregnancy status. The Reading Public Schools' policy of nondiscrimination extends to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business; no person shall be excluded from or discriminated against in employment, admission to a public school of Reading or in obtaining the advantages, privileges, and courses of study of such public school on account of sex.

How to Report Sexual Harassment: Individuals are encouraged to report allegations of sexual harassment to the Title IX Coordinator(s) identified below or the Principal. Any report of sexual harassment, as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, will be responded to promptly in accordance with the District's Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures, available at: <https://www.reading.k12.ma.us/district-information/> Reports of discriminatory harassment not constituting sexual harassment as defined under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, will be initially addressed through the District's Title IX Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedure and may, if dismissed under that procedure, be investigated in accordance with the District's Civil Rights Grievance Procedures, available at: <https://www.reading.k12.ma.us/district-information/>.

Upon receipt of a report of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will: (1) promptly and confidentially contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures; (2) inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a Title IX Formal Complaint; (3) consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures; (4) if the school

district does not provide the complainant with supportive measures, document the reasons why such response was reasonable; and (5) explain to the complainant the process for filing a Title IX Formal Complaint.

Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be directed to the District's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

The District's Title IX Coordinator(s) are: Dr. Jennifer Stys, Director of Student Services (Jennifer.stys@reading.k12.ma.us)

Physical Restraint Policy

Prevention of Physical Restraint: The Reading Public Schools recognizes that on occasion physical restraint is required to protect the safety of school community members from serious, imminent physical harm. Physical restraint may be used only as an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited in public education programs except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed in appropriate under the circumstances. Physical restraint shall mean direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint does not include: brief physical contact to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort. Physical restraint shall not be used: (a) as a means of discipline or punishment; (b) when the student cannot be safely restrained because it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting; (c) as a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a public education program rule or staff directive, or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm; or (d) as a standard response for any individual student. No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) may include use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior. Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort. Physical restraint in a public education program shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

Nothing in this policy, or the applicable regulations, prohibits: (a) the right of any individual to report to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual; (b) law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or other person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or (c) the exercise of an individual's responsibilities as a mandated reporter pursuant to MGL c. 119, § 51A. The Reading Public Schools complies with the requirements of Massachusetts regulations governing the use and reporting of physical restraint in schools, 603 CMR 46.00

SECURITY CAMERAS IN SCHOOLS

The School Committee works to maintain a safe and secure environment for its students, staff, visitors, and facilities. Security means more than having locks and making certain that doors are locked at the proper times. Security also means minimizing fire hazards, reducing the possibility of faulty equipment, keeping records and valuables in a safe place, protection against vandalism and burglary, the prosecution of vandals, and developing crisis plans.

School facilities and their contents constitute one of the greatest investments of the community. The School Committee believes it to be in the best interest of students, staff and taxpayers for the district to exert every reasonable means to protect the investment adequately.

In pursuit of this objective, the School Committee authorizes the use of security cameras in school district buildings and on its property for the purpose of video recording to ensure the health, welfare and safety of all students, staff and visitors, to deter theft, vandalism and other negative behavior, to safeguard district buildings, grounds and equipment. Security cameras are meant to be used for forensic purposes only and not surveillance, except in situations deemed appropriate by law enforcement. Security cameras may be used in locations as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent of Schools in consultation with school officials as well as local law enforcement. They may be used in any area, inside or outside of school buildings in a manner consistent with state and federal law.

The district shall notify students and staff through student and employee handbooks and appropriate signage that security cameras are in use.

The Superintendent shall ensure that proper procedures are in place and are followed regarding use, viewing, disclosure, retention, disposal and security of video recordings or photographs from security cameras in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. A video recording used for security purposes in school district buildings and/or on school property shall be the sole property of the school district. -All video recordings will be stored in their original format and secured to avoid tampering and to ensure confidentiality in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Access to video recordings from security cameras will be determined at the discretion of the Superintendent/designee and/or building principal/designee. Law enforcement and emergency response officials shall be granted access to video recordings or the security system in a manner consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding with the local law enforcement agency and with applicable state and federal laws.

The Superintendent may, from time to time, issue further guidance that is consistent with current laws and this policy.

SOURCE: MASC

Adopted: August 2015

Adopted by the Reading School Committee on October 29, 2020