



Parent Handbook

2020-2021

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This handbook includes important information regarding the policies of the Covenant Cooperative Nursery School. Please refer to the contents throughout the year.

Please remember that all Rhode Island schools and public buildings are designated as non-smoking facilities. Smoking is prohibited on the school grounds.

(Revised 2020)

General Information

Covenant Cooperative Nursery School, a ministry of the Riverside Covenant Church (RCC), is a non-profit preschool located at 165 Rounds Avenue in Riverside, Rhode Island and is licensed by the RI Department of Human Services. CCNS meets all necessary health, fire, building and personnel regulations. Our teaching staff is comprised of a team of well-qualified and experienced teachers and assistants whose goal is to encourage the healthy, age-appropriate development of each child. The curriculum is designed to encourage and nurture growth in all of the learning domains and is aligned with the RI Early Learning & Development Standards. **

In a distinctly Christian atmosphere, the staff seeks to nurture a child's developing awareness of God and his/her own relationship with Him. God is presented as our loving Heavenly Father, Creator of all, and His Son Jesus as our Savior and personal friend. Prayer, Bible stories, worship and songs of praise are included throughout the year.

Through careful preparation of our classroom environment, considered selection of learning materials and thoughtful planning of a developmentally appropriate curriculum, we encourage the development of gross and fine motor coordination and perceptual skills. Large and small group experiences, art, music and story time all contribute to cognitive, readiness and conceptual skills, as well as to creative expression. Understanding that each child is equally deserving of love, respect and opportunity, we seek to promote healthy attitudes toward self, family, neighbors, school and the world. We strive to help each child develop his/her potential to be a contented, well-adjusted person, capable in relationships with others and eager to discover and learn.

Your child is in those marvelous years when so much is being learned through play, exploration, questions and discovery, as well as through observing the attitudes and actions of adult models. These are very important years in the development of character, self-concept and personality. It is our belief that an emphasis upon growth and development in all areas of learning and understanding will help prepare him/her for a positive educational experience in later school years. We encourage you to join with us as we respect the importance and beauty of these early learning years.

We hope that both you and your child will enjoy your time with us. Please take the opportunity to communicate your concerns, questions and ideas with the nursery school staff. As families and teachers work together, we can provide an optimum learning environment for young learners.



*****The RI Early Learning & Development Standards "articulate shared expectations for what young children should know and be able to do. They provide common language for measuring progress toward achieving specific learning goals. The standards are intended to be inclusive of all children...recognizing that children attain the expected benchmarks at different times and in different ways." The Standards are divided into nine domains of early childhood learning: Physical Health and Development, Social and Emotional Development, Language Development, Literacy, Cognitive Development, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and Creative Arts. CCNS also includes a domain of Spirituality.***

***(Taken from the RI Early Learning Standards 2003
and the RI Early Learning & Development Standards 2013)***

The office has a copy of the RI Early Learning & Development Standards which is available for parent perusal. An online copy can be reviewed at: www.rields.com.

Registration Procedures

Parents who wish to enroll a child in the nursery school program may contact the CCNS office at any time during the year for information. Current enrollees and siblings are given priority registration during the first two weeks of January for the following school year. Applications for new students are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis beginning the third week of January. Re-registrations and new applications should be mailed or given to the director. All applications must be accompanied by a non-refundable registration fee.

Completed medical, immunization and information forms for each child must be returned to the office by August 15.

Schedule and Classes

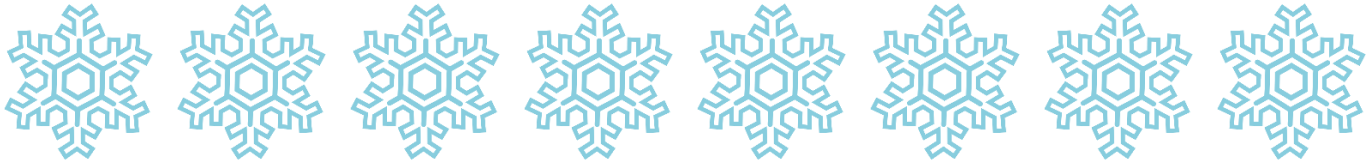
Covenant Cooperative Nursery School Nursery is in session from September through June, in alignment with the East Providence School Department calendar (some variations). Children who are four years old by September 1st are eligible for MWF classes; children must be toilet-ready. The program options include: MWF AM/PM, 8:30am-2:30; MWF AM, 8:30am-12:00pm; MWF Extended Day, 12:00-2:30pm (for students enrolled in the MWF AM program, choice of one or two afternoon a week).

Children who are three years old by September 1st are eligible for T/Th classes; children must be toilet-ready. The program options include: T/Th AM/PM, 8:30am-2:30pm; T/Th AM, 8:30am-12:00pm; T/Th Extended Day, 12:00-2:30pm (for students enrolled in the T/Th AM program, choice of one afternoon a week).

Please use the entrance door at the back of the RCC building. The doors are unlocked at 8:30am and will then be locked during the school hours until dismissal at 12:00pm or 2:30pm. Attendance logs are required for each classroom—you must sign your child in and out each day. Please be prompt in both arrival and dismissal. Repeated lateness for pick-up may result in an additional fee. **If you are unexpectedly delayed in returning to pick up your child, you must call the CCNS office.**

School Calendar

The calendar in the Parent Handbook Addendum lists our yearly schedule, including vacation weeks and holidays. With some exceptions, we maintain the same holiday and vacation schedule as the East Providence School Department



School Cancellations

The nursery school will close due to inclement weather if all schools in the East Providence School Department close. **CCNS remains open in the event of a delay due to busing.** To be certain, please listen to local radio or TV stations for an official announcement of the cancellation. Any parent may request a phone or email notice from the RI Broadcasters Association. A written cancellation policy is available from the CCNS office and will be posted on the CCNS website.

CCNS Cancellation Policy

- ❖ If all East Providence schools are cancelled for the entire district, CCNS is also closed (we do not typically make up snow days).
- ❖ If for some very unusual reason CCNS plans to meet when all schools are closed, we will contact each family.
- ❖ If there is an AM delay **due to busing issues**, CCNS will meet at the regular 8:30am arrival time.
- ❖ RI Broadcasters Association, local TV and radio stations will broadcast closings; CCNS will appear on the list of cancellations under preschools.
- ❖ If school is cancelled during the school day and an early pick-up is required, all parents will be telephoned, emailed or sent a text message. Notification will also be posted on the RI Broadcasters Association, TV and radio stations. Staff, of course, will take responsibility until parents or designated pick-up persons arrive at school.
- ❖ If CCNS is unable to open due to non-weather issues, parents will be notified by telephone and the RI Broadcasters Association. (Please be sure that all your phone numbers are accurate).

Tuition Payments

Covenant Cooperative Nursery School, as a non-profit organization, strives to keep tuition fees to a minimum. We depend upon prompt and faithful payment of the entire tuition amount to maintain monthly operational costs.

Annual Payment Schedule: For parent convenience, the annual tuition may be paid by one of the following four options:

- per year (September 1)
- per semester (September 1 and January 1)
- per quarter (September 1, December 1, March 1)
- per month (September 1 through June 1).

All checks received after the 10th of the month will be subject to a \$20.00 late fee. Any check returned due to insufficient funds will be subject to the merchant fee of \$30.00. The subsequent payment for that month must then be a cash payment. The bank may also issue a fee.

Checks should be made payable to Covenant Cooperative Nursery School or CCNS. On the check memo line, please notate your child's name/class. All cash payments must be given to a staff member; **please do not leave cash in the office.**

CCNS builds its budget upon the annual tuition to be received from the enrolled students. This yearly tuition is the primary source for our operating budget, including staff salaries and all classroom expenses. If a child is withdrawn during the school year, we must receive payment of the remaining tuition for that quarter (September-November, December-February, March-June).

Parent Communication

We want to stay in close communication with all parents whose children attend CCNS. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher, as well as the director, when you have a matter for discussion. Included in the Parent Handbook Addendum are the teachers' home telephone numbers, the CCNS email address and the CCNS website. Teachers will share information/photos thorough newsletters, emails, phone calls, texts, educational apps and other convenient methods. Please be sure to sign the permission form allowing the teachers to share your child's photos with others families at CCNS or on the school website.



Parents in the Classroom**

****During the COVID-19 crisis, no family members or visitors are allowed in the building.**

All parents are welcome to visit our school. Parents may contribute in many ways, such as driving for a field trip, helping in a particular curriculum unit, introducing family and cultural backgrounds, reading a book to the class, presenting an art activity, playing a musical instrument, teaching a new song, leading in a new outdoor game, or participating in scheduled classroom events. Please inform us if you would like to become involved in these activities or in other ways. Your child's teacher will schedule a convenient time for your classroom visit.

Covenant Nursery School
Daily Schedule
(subject to variations)

8:30-9:00	Arrival/Outdoor or Gymnasium Play
9:00-9:20	Classroom Welcome/Circle Time/Story or Bible
9:20-10:40	Centers/Activities/Clean-up
10:40-11:00	Story or Bible/Music & Movement
11:00-11:30	Bathroom Break/Lunch
11:30-11:50	Outdoor or Gymnasium Play
11:50-12:00	Prayers/Goodbyes/Dismissal

12:00-12:30	Rest Time/Story or Music
12:30-1:45	Center/Activities/Clean-up
1:45-2:00	Story/Music & Movement (Teacher or Student Choice)
2:00-2:20	Outdoor or Gymnasium Play
2:20-2:30	Prayers/Goodbyes/Dismissal

Healthy Lunch

We recognize that children are developing habits and attitudes surrounding food choices and that they are being physically affected by those choices. In keeping with our philosophy and concern for the whole child, we must ask that all lunches be healthy and nutritious. With parent permission, a list of food allergies will be posted in each classroom. **Due to the increasing instances of serious allergies to peanuts and all tree nuts, no products containing peanuts or tree nuts are allowed in the classrooms.** Carefully check all ingredient labels for both content and manufacturing process. The staff will also check labels and return any snacks that contain unacceptable or questionable ingredients.

Arrival and Dismissal**

****Please refer the arrival/dismissal protocols in the 2020-2021 Reopening Document**

Parents must complete a release authorization form annually granting permission for a child to be dismissed to any person other than the parents. A **change of routine form** must accompany your child on the days that there will be a change from usual procedures. **We will not allow your child to leave with anyone other than those whose names are on the Parent Release Authorization Form.** Any critical information regarding your child's status (restraining orders, specific restrictions, etc.), must be given to us immediately and will be kept on file. All carpool information must be complete and in the child's file prior to any dismissal. Please remind every person listed on the release form that s/he must show a photo ID when picking up your child. If you are unexpectedly delayed, call the school office to inform us. We are still able to release your child **only** to a person included on your release authorization form. Therefore, make your list as complete as possible. For your child's safety, we reserve the right to deny transportation privileges to any person who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs and/or is exhibiting erratic behavior.

**Parents: Please drive carefully in our parking lot! Use extreme caution at all times.
No child is to be left unattended in a vehicle, even for a minute.
All vehicles must be turned off during arrival and dismissal times.**

Helping Hand/Star Student

Each day, one child is selected to be the "helping hand" or "star student" in the classroom. The helper has many opportunities to assist both adult and children in the classroom as they learn to care for others in a generous and helpful way.

Disclaimer

Neither the Covenant Cooperative Nursery School nor the Riverside Covenant Church can be responsible for lost or damaged valuables or other personal property brought to school by the children. Parents are urged to refrain from allowing articles of substantial monetary or sentimental value to be brought to school. Any item brought from home will be stored in the child's cubby during school hours.

Birthdays

Birthdays are enjoyable days for children and we want to celebrate their day with them at nursery school. All children will be given a "special day," regardless of the date of their birthday. We ask that you honor the following policies regarding after-school birthday parties:

1. Teachers cannot distribute birthday invitations; teachers cannot attend parties.
2. If invitations are given out at school, all of the children in the class must be included. Otherwise, invitations should be mailed or distributed off school grounds.
3. Children should not bring gifts into school.



Healthy Child Policies**

****Please refer to the protocols for child illness in the 2020-2021 Reopening Document**

Sick children do not belong in school, no matter how disappointed they may be when missing a day. Please be particularly attentive during the cold and flu season so that your child does not come to school with any infectious illnesses. We will do a general health assessment of all students each day. If a child needs to be at home due to a suspected or evidenced illness, a parent or emergency contact person will be called. **If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, do not send him/her to school:**

excessive coughing/runny nose, sore throat, pain, chills, earache, fever (over 100.4, orally), nausea or vomiting, unexplained rash, head lice, diarrhea, conjunctivitis (red, oozing eyes), overwhelming fatigue or unusual emotional behaviors (excessive crying, outbursts, withdrawal)

Your child must be symptom-free for a 48-hour period before returning to school. If your child should become sick at school, you will be notified immediately and asked to pick up your child. S/he will remain under supervision in the CCNS office until you arrive. If unable to reach either parent after several attempts, we will call the next person on your emergency contact list. Please inform the school of any contagious diseases so that we can alert other parents.

Children who have specific health-related issues or special needs must have an individualized care plan from the child's physician including information regarding health care needs, food allergies or special dietary needs. Pertinent documents must be signed and dated annually. CCNS staff have been appropriately trained to accommodate children's emergency needs, especially regarding the use of an Epi-pan, food allergies, asthma, CPR and First-Aid. Our consulting pediatrician is Dr. Robert Griffith of Pediatric Associates, Inc. in East Providence, (401) 438-6888.

Please Note: It is not the authority or responsibility of CCNS to dispense medication to children on a routine basis. If your child requires medication, please administer the dosage before bringing the child to school. Parents must inform the director/teacher of the medication administered. In a crisis situation, (asthma, allergic reaction...) symptoms will be treated immediately. A doctor's prescription and written permission for medication administration must be included in the child's file. The director/teacher will be responsible for administering the medication and the parent will be notified immediately. All medication must be given to the director/teacher at the beginning of class—**no medication may be kept in a child's cubby.** It will be locked in the office or classroom closets.

Clothing Guidelines

Nursery school children should be dressed appropriately for play and freedom of movement. The children participate in a daily recreational period, either outdoors or in the gym. **During the COVID-19 crisis, we intend to maximize our outdoor time.** Appropriate attire for fluctuations in weather should be sent with your child (jacket, hat, sweater, boots...). Children are also engaged in artwork, sensory tables and floor time activities. Although we use paint smocks, your child will not come home spotless. In addition to comfortable clothing, please be sure that children wear closed-toe shoes that allow for active indoor and outdoor play.

Classrooms are kept at reasonable temperatures, but during winter months we ask that your child dress warmly and bring a sweat/sweatshirt for the gym. All removable, outer clothing should be labeled with the child's name.

To help in the toileting process, please send your child in clothing that is easy for him/her to manage. Children are to bring an extra change of clothes in a ziplock bag, labeled with his/her name. These clothes will be kept in their cubby during the school year, changed seasonally.



Guiding Children's Behavior

Children are expected to follow some very simple rules of behavior in the classroom. Respect, consideration and self-regulation are just three of the characteristics that the nursery school attempts to foster. If a child behaves inappropriately, the teacher will take him/her aside to discuss the expectations of the classroom. After ascertaining the child's understanding of the situation, the teacher will encourage him/her to rejoin the group, making any necessary behavioral changes.

Each child is treated with respect, tenderness and compassionate understanding. No child is ever subjected to any form of corporal punishment, belittling or disparaging comments, withholding of food or playtime. Parents are apprised of any reoccurring issues so that a plan of mutually agreed upon guidance and response can be implemented in the classroom and playground.

Safety and Supervision

When children are present in the nursery school classrooms, the required RI DHS adult/child ratio for supervision must be maintained at all times (1:10 adult/children for 4-year-olds; 1:9 adult/children for 3-year-olds). This ratio will include the teacher, teacher assistant and/or director. Children will remain under adult supervision in all the areas of the nursery school's operation (classrooms, gymnasium, bathroom and playground).

If a child requires individual attention for any matter, a staff member will attend to him/her in an open area, i.e. the gymnasium, in an adjoining room with an open door or in the office. If a child needs to be separated from others due to illness, s/he will be supervised in the isolation room until the parent/approved adult arrives.

Children are to be given privacy when using the bathroom for toileting. Only one child at a time is allowed in the bathroom in Room 1 or in the stalls in the Women's Restroom. The children are encouraged and expected to practice self-care, including wiping, flushing, handwashing and clothing adjustment. If assistance is needed, the child must come to the doorway of the bathroom/stall to ask for help from the teacher or TA. The adult will not enter the bathroom or stall with a child during toileting procedures.

If a child has a toileting accident, is sick or has an injury involving body fluids, universal safety precautions will be observed at all times. This includes the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), approved cleaning and disinfecting protocols, proper care and/or disposal of soiled clothes and cleaning items.

A child who needs a change of clothes will be supervised by a staff member in an adjoining classroom with an open door. The child will tend to as much of his/her needs as possible with assistance only when necessary. The staff member will inform another adult in the classroom of his/her intent to be available to the child.

Male and female adults are required to use the unisex bathroom (Men's Room) during school hours. No adult is allowed to use the small bathroom in Room 1. No adult (from nursery school or church) is to use the Women's Restroom during school hours. This bathroom is reserved exclusively for the children during the school day, 8:30am-2:30pm.

Appropriate and healthy interaction between adults and children is expected at all times. Inappropriate responses, including language and touching will not be tolerated. Responses among the children are to be continually monitored by the staff. Respect for another's privacy, personal space and body is to be encouraged and modeled.



RI Child Abuse and Neglect Law

Staff is under legal requirement to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. The staff member will report to the director and the appropriate steps will be taken immediately.

Chapter 11 of RI State Law on Abused and Neglected Children states that every citizen is required to report suspected child abuse and neglect. "Any person who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that any child has been abused or neglected...or has been a victim of sexual abuse by another [person]...shall within 24 hours, transfer such information to the Department of Children, Youth and Families, or its agent who shall cause the report to be investigated immediately." The phone number for reporting such cases is: 1 (800) 742-4453.

Field Trips**

**Field trips will not be scheduled for the foreseeable future

One or two off-site, educational field trips are planned for the MWF classes each year. Among the possibilities are a farm, library, market or children's museum. Prior to each trip, parents will receive notification of details and a permission slip. Children are transported/chaperoned by volunteer parents who must have a valid license and insurance verification. Most parents choose to drive their own child or share a ride with another parent. On-site field trips or visits from local programs are offered to both the MWF and T/Th classes.

The following guidelines are in effect during each field trip:

1. Drivers must provide a copy of a license and valid insurance car. Parent must drive their own child or sign a permission for slip for the child to ride with another parent driver,
2. Car seats/seatbelts are used, adjusted properly for each child.
3. The group travels together, following printed directions.
4. Headlights are turned on for safety during the trip.
5. The teacher checks each car before departing and returning.
6. Class lists/addresses/phone numbers/signed permission slips are taken to the field trip site by the classroom teachers.
7. Children wear name tags printed with the school's name and phone number; the children's names are not included.
8. Cell phones/first aid kits/epi-pens are carried by the teachers for any emergencies.
9. A teacher/TA rides in the car with the parent; one in the lead car and one in the last car.



Inclusion Practices

CCNS provides a developmentally appropriate preschool program for all children, regardless of race, creed or ability. We recognize that all children are equally deserving of love, respect and unbiased consideration in all aspects of the school program. We also recognize that every child needs the support and guidance of nurturing, responsive adults to help them navigate their learning experience in a preschool setting. It is our goal to ensure that each family is welcomed to our school and that each person is aware of their value to our community.

To provide an optimum setting for all children, CCNS recognizes that each child must have access to the classroom environment, must be able to participate in daily learning activities and must engage in meaningful relationships with peers and adults. Physical changes/modifications in the existing design of the classroom can reduce barriers and promote access to spaces and materials; use of adaptive tools/materials can boost confidence and success in tasks; changes or variations in the daily schedule/routine can offer latitude in expectations; tiered learning strategies can build upon a child's functional skills and strengths; and a caring, supportive staff can partner with families to encourage, reassure and work towards quality outcomes for their child's preschool years.

Professional support services may be required to serve some children to help them become as fully capable in the classroom as possible. We have a strong connection with our local East Providence School Department and, along with the families, can collaborate with the department to gain further understanding of the support systems available to provide the best possible attention for a child requiring specialized support.



Developmental Screening Information**

****EP School Department will provide further information about new protocols**

Child Outreach Screening

A free service (for RI residents only) offered annually by the East Providence School Department, Child Outreach provides families with information about their child's development. This screening, for MWF and T/Th classes, will be offered virtually this year due to COVID-19. The Outreach program will work with preschools in RI to disseminate the information.

Please note: this screening is highly recommended prior to Kindergarten enrollment.

If parents or teachers have a concern about a child's developmental progress, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the issues. The CCNS office and teaching staff have access to referral/resource information, if needed, for the family. The local school departments are also able to provide families with appropriate information and contact numbers.

Parent/Teacher Conferences**

****Fall conferences will be completed by phone; Spring conferences to be decided**

Two conferences are scheduled during the year, one each semester, for MWF and T/Th classes. The first conference in the fall, "Getting To Know You," allows us to become better acquainted with you and your child. It is a good time to discuss your child's initial adjustment to school and to determine mutual goals for the year (see the October newsletter for more information). In the spring conference, we will discuss your child's progress and development throughout the school year, providing a written conference form based upon classroom observations and assessments.

If you wish to have a conversation/conference with a teacher at some other time during the school year, please try to arrange a time directly before or after school hours. We ask that you do not discuss your child (or any other child) while in the classroom or nursery school building. Children are very aware of and sensitive to comments made regarding themselves. Thank you for your respect for a child's developing sense of self.

Programs and Opportunities for Family Engagement**

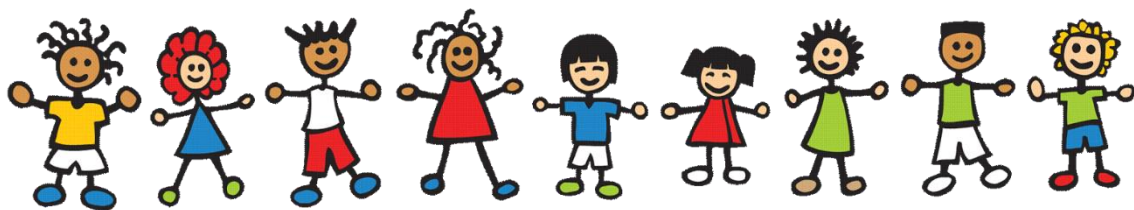
****No family engagement events are scheduled for the foreseeable future**

Parents are welcomed and invited to a variety of family engagement opportunities throughout the year, including events such as Christmas programs, social events/dinners, picnics, end-of-the-year celebrations and other specific classroom activities. Detailed information will be included in our monthly newsletter, bulletin boards, teacher emails or the CCNS web-site.

Throughout the year, there may be opportunity to meet with other parents in either formal or informal settings. Workshops, speakers and discussion groups are some of the possible offerings. If you have any suggestions or expertise in a particular interest area, please speak to the director.

To encourage shared effort regarding your child's learning experience, CCNS teachers build a variety of opportunities for interaction between home and school. Included may be take-home activity bags, class-created books, "homeplay" assignments, special classroom activities and parent presentations in the classroom. Your child's teacher will inform you of these opportunities as the year unfolds.

An annual program evaluation is distributed to the parents in January/February. Please take the time to complete the form and return it to the office with your suggestions. These surveys inform our ability to make changes and improvements in our program.



Fundraisers

At least two annual fundraisers are scheduled at CCNS, one in the fall and one in the spring. The funds generated from these events are used specifically for classroom materials and equipment, enrichment programs, teacher resources/professional development training, family engagement opportunities and playground upkeep. This year, we will have two fall fundraisers (see the October newsletter for more information). We appreciate the enthusiastic response of families in both the organization of and participation in the fundraisers.

Covenant Cooperative Nursery School Commission

A ministry of the Riverside Covenant Church, CCNS operates under the governing board of the CCNS Commission, which in turn reports to the RCC Leadership Community. The Commission consists of a chairperson, secretary, advisory members, the CCNS director and bookkeeper. Two to three parents are asked to serve as representative advisory members each year. In addition, any CCNS parent can present ideas, concerns and issues to the commission. The commission meets on a bi-monthly basis or at the chairperson's discretion.

Some of the responsibilities of the commission include:

- Support the mission, philosophy and goals of CCNS
- Maintain strong connections between RCC and CCNS
- Provide prayer support for CCNS families and staff
- Assist at special events
- Establish and revise policies for CCNS
- Hire, oversee and evaluate the CCNS director
- Evaluate the CCNS program

Welcome

We welcome you, not only to the Covenant Cooperative Nursery School, but also to the Riverside Covenant Church. You are invited to attend any of the services offered on Sunday or throughout the week.

Riverside Covenant Church
Church Office: (401) 433-4356

Sunday Morning Worship Service

9:30am—On-line Worship Service: www.eccriverside.org

Youth Group meets on Sunday evenings from 6:30-8:00pm for grades 6-12 or ages 11-18 for home-schooled children. Masks are required. Contact Marissa Rapoza, Youth Pastor, for more information: marissa.rapoza@eccriverside.org.

The **Cultural Society of East Bay** provides Chinese language lessons at RCC. Contact Jeannie Salomon for more information: (401) 256-8178 or jws@csebri.org.