



## Tower Day School Handbook

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Welcome to Tower Day School! Please read the information contained in this handbook. There are many policies and procedures with which you should be familiar during your child's enrollment at Tower Day School. Should you have any questions regarding this information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The preschool years are of great importance in the development of children. At Tower Day School, we are dedicated to providing nurturing, responsive encouragement to growth. It is vital that a child's separation from home to a group experience be a pleasant and exciting one. Each day we provide a richness and variety of activities in a flexible and pleasant atmosphere that introduces the children at Tower Day School to the exciting worlds of nature, art, science, language, and music. The children will explore the math operations that we do as adults. Reading and literature become a crucial part of learning early on as well. We want each child to find school a happy place where he/she will derive satisfaction from inventing, creating, discovering, practicing skills, taking responsibility, as well as meeting and solving problems in the presence of sensitive teaching. We consider the total child and provide experiences to encourage physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development.

Tower Day School does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, national origin, political beliefs, marital status, disability, or sexual orientation. A child does not have to be toilet trained to be enrolled.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Tower Day School is a part of the Centre Congregational Church. As such, its governing board is composed of representatives of various committees of the church, as well as the Pastor and the Tower Day School Director. Tower Day School is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).

Parental input is welcome at any time and may be submitted in writing or presented in person to the Director. Parents may request a written response to their suggestions.

The school year at Tower Day School will extend thirty-seven weeks. You will receive a calendar at the beginning of the year.

Tower Day School operates from 8:30 a.m.-3:00 pm. The morning preschool classes are from 8:30 –11:30. There is an extended day option available until 3:00 pm. Our full-day

classes operate from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The Transition Class meets three half days and two full days.

At the beginning of the school year, children are eased into their regular schedule. The opening of school schedule will be distributed with acceptance packets.

For enrollment in the three year old classes, a child must be two years and nine months by the start of school. For enrollment into the Transition Class, please speak with the Director. Applications for enrollment are available in the month of December, before the following September enrollment. Parents are encouraged to visit the school and speak with the Director before applying for enrollment.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

Tower Day School will provide a small birthday present for your child on his/her birthday. Children with summer birthdays will also have a day when their birthday is celebrated. Birthdays are not celebrated with food. Therefore, treats or cakes are not allowed.

### **EXTENDED DAY**

Children may be enrolled in the extended day program. Children are enrolled on a permanent schedule. Children bring their lunch and all eat together at about 12:30 p.m. You may pick up your child anytime until 3:00 p.m. There is a separate fee for this service. Some children use this program to lengthen their school day from their morning session, others use it to attend Tower on the days that their regular class is not scheduled.

### **CONFERENCES**

In October and November, the teachers will schedule parent conferences to discuss your child's adjustment to school. This is a time for parents to share any information they would like regarding their child's development.

In March or April, your child's teacher will have an individual conference with you to discuss your child's progress. You will receive a written progress report at this time. If your child has identified special needs, a written progress report will be given to you every 3 months. The teacher will bring any special problems or significant developments to your attention as soon as they arise.

Teachers will be available to meet with you at any point during the school year. You do not need to wait until the scheduled conference time.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All records kept by Tower Day School are handled by procedures set forth in the regulations of Department of Early Education and Care:

1. Information contained in the child's file shall be privileged and confidential.
2. This information shall not be released or distributed to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without the written permission of the child's parent(s).
3. Parents may request to see their child's record at any time.

4. Parents may also add information, comments, data or any relevant materials to the child's record.
5. Parents may request deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child's record.
6. Parents may request copies of a child's record.
7. Upon written request Tower Day School shall transfer the child's record to the parent, or any other person the parents identify, when the child is no longer in the care of the school.
8. Representatives from the Department of Early Education and Care may review records for regulation purposes.

### **GUNS, WAR TOYS AND TOYS FROM HOME**

Guns and war toys do not belong at school. Their presence generally prompts aggressive play in the classroom. If a child happens to bring an inappropriate toy to school, the toy will be kept in the office. It is appropriate for children to bring toys or special possessions from home provided that they can be shared.

### **PHOTOGRAPHING/VIDEOTAPING/SOCIAL MEDIA**

For reasons of confidentiality, children may not be photographed or videotaped without permission while they are in the school building. There is a professional photographer who comes to the school for individual and class portraits. Teachers do take pictures to display at Open House or to use as gifts to the parents. Photographs may be used for promotional purposes with parent permission.

### **PARENTS' PARTICIPATION**

Parents are welcome to visit the school unannounced at any time. You are also free to visit your child's class at any time although if your child has just started school and has experienced any separation issues, you may want to wait, or observe from a distance. Please feel free to discuss any separation issues with your child's teacher or the Director.

Suggestions about the program, or on school policy, are always welcome.

Communication between parents and teacher is essential. Please contact the Director or teachers to share any thoughts or problems. Please alert your child's teacher to any changes or situations at home that might affect your child's day.

If your child is starting school for the first time, you may be apprehensive about the transition from home to school. Please be assured that the teachers are all very experienced and attuned to the needs of each child. Observation windows are available in the doors of each room if you would like to watch your child making this transition.

### **TOWER PARENTS' FORUM**

The Tower Parents' Forum sponsors enrichment activities for the children as well as meetings for the parents. All Tower parents are invited to join the Tower Parents' Forum Board to help plan and coordinate the activities as well as the fund-raising.

### **TUITION POLICIES**

Tuition may be paid yearly, quarterly, or in ten equal payments. There are no deductions or refunds for absences of two consecutive weeks or less. If the child is absent **due to illness** for more than two weeks, 50% of the tuition required for that period of time will be

necessary to continue enrollment. There are no refunds for absences due to vacations. Tuition accounts must be kept up-to-date in order to continue enrollment.

### **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

At the beginning of each session there will be a staff person at the main entrance of the school to assist the children out of the cars and into the building. The children may begin entering the building at 8:20 a.m. If you arrive early with your child you are welcome to wait with him/her until the session begins. Please do not drop your child in the empty classroom and leave. Children are never allowed to be alone while on Tower Day School property. It is very important to be prompt when picking up your child at dismissal.

Children become very concerned when they are left after everyone else has gone home. A late fee will be assessed to those families who repeatedly arrive late to pick up their child. This fee schedule will be sent home at the beginning of the school year.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

If the Lynnfield Public Schools cancel classes or delay their start due to inclement weather, Tower Day School will automatically be closed. There may be days when the Tower Day School Director feels that conditions warrant a school closing. In that event, you will be notified by email that school will not open that day. Unless there are a significant number of snow days, they are not made up. If school is closed in the morning, it remains closed all day. Any evening program would be cancelled as well.

### **PREVENTION OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Tower Day School takes every precaution to protect children from child abuse/neglect while they are here. There are two adults assigned to each group of children. There are observation windows in every classroom door. Children are never allowed to go anywhere in the center without their teachers. They are never alone. No one, other than the child's parents, teachers, or classmates are allowed near the children without parental permission.

Written parental permission is required for all changes in transportation. All people who come to pick up a child who are not known to the school must show identification. The director is frequently in and out of the classrooms. These strategies help to insure that children are well protected while they are here.

All staff are given the written procedure for reporting incidents of child abuse and neglect. The procedures include:

1. All staff are mandated reporters. They have been trained in care and protection issues by the Essex County DA's Office. Staff should speak with the Director about their concerns, the concerns are documented.
2. If indicated, the Director will report suspected child abuse/neglect immediately, by calling the Department of Children & Families (DCF) Lynn Office (1-781-477-1600). This verbal report will be followed up with a written report (51A) within 48 hours.
3. If a staff member believes there is a reportable condition and the administration does not file, this staff member should file the report with DCF herself.
4. All concerns of suspected abuse and neglect that are reported to DCF will be communicated to the parents by the administration unless such a report is contraindicated.

\*If the director files a 51A, or learns that a 51A has been filed, alleging abuse or neglect of a child while in the care of the center or during a center related activity, she will notify EEC (978-681-9684) immediately. A meeting will be held with the staff member in question to inform her of the filed report. The staff member in question will be prohibited from having direct care with children pending a DCF and EEC investigation.

\*Tower Day School will cooperate in all investigations of abuse and neglect, including identifying parents of children currently or previously enrolled in the center; providing consent for disclosure to EEC of information from, and allowing the EEC to disclose information to, any person/agency required.

\*Tower Day School will not allow any allegedly abusive or neglectful staff member to work directly with the children until DCF has completed its investigation and for whatever time EEC requires. Physical abuse of a child is grounds for immediate dismissal without pay. The personnel policies address this issue further.

### **TERMINATION AND SUSPENSION**

The Director may recommend to a parent that Tower Day School is not the best placement for a child if it appears that he/she does not benefit from our program. These circumstances can vary from extreme lack of attendance to severe separation problems to concerns regarding the child's safety or his/her impact on other's safety. The Director will meet with the parents to discuss concerns as they arise, and make plans to try to alleviate the situation. The parents will receive a written report outlining the concerns. In an attempt to keep the child in our program, we will offer referral options for evaluations, diagnostic or therapeutic services as well as pursue options for supportive services, including consultation and educator training. If appropriate, we will work with specialists to develop a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program.

If it should be determined that Tower Day School is not the best placement for the child, parents will be provided with a list of referral services and other schools in the area. This referral will strongly encourage the parents to contact the local public schools.

Any child terminated from the program will be prepared consistent with his/her ability to understand.

Tower Day School does not plan to suspend any children.

### **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

Behavior management of the children is directed toward the goal of maximizing the growth and development of the children and for protecting the group and individuals within it. It is handled in a consistent, reasonable, and appropriate way based on the understanding of the individual needs and development of each child. It is expected that through appropriate limit-setting and guidance children will develop the inner controls and level of independence necessary to manage their own behavior. It is expected that they will develop the skills necessary to form positive individual relationships as well as the skills necessary to not only behave well in a group but also to learn well in a group.

Under no circumstances are physical punishment or humiliation allowed as discipline measures. Children are spoken to kindly and with respect. Since certain acts are prohibited in order to ensure the safety of each child (e.g., biting, hitting, throwing things), as well as to encourage appropriate social skills, usually a firm "NO!" will suffice when behaviors are inappropriate. Distraction, offering alternatives for behavior, encouraging verbalization, and a "sitting-down, cool down" are all possibilities for response to behavior that needs redirection. Discussions, with children and staff, of appropriate behaviors are used often. Emphasis is on positive reinforcement.

**The following are prohibited at Tower Day School:**

- Spanking or other corporal punishment
- Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment.
- Depriving children of meals/snacks
- Force-feeding
- No child will be disciplined for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. No child will be forced to remain in soiled clothing or forced to remain on the toilet. No other unusual or excessive practices will be used.

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

If your child receives a serious injury or suffers an acute illness at school, we will follow these emergency procedures.

1. Administer first aid, if possible.
2. Call the Lynnfield Police to request an ambulance, if necessary.
3. Call the parent. If neither parent can be reached the emergency phone number on the form will be called.
4. Transport the child to the hospital, accompanied by a staff member and the child's health record. If the child's condition permits, the child will be transported to the hospital of the parents' choice noted in the child's file.

**PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCIES AND ILLNESS**

For minor emergencies (where it is determined that safety is not hurt by waiting for parents to arrive), the parents are called to take their child for treatment.

For emergencies where time or severity requires immediate transportation, the teacher in charge of the child will begin first aid, if appropriate while the other staff person takes charge of the rest of the group. If the ill/injured child cannot be moved to an isolated location, the other staff person will remove the group to another classroom for a combined, story time or sing along. The Director (or Emergency Person) calls first the Lynnfield Police, and then the Parent, (at home #, work #) to inform of the injury and where to meet us. The Director or Teacher (whoever the child knows best) will accompany the child and his file to the hospital. If an ambulance is deemed unnecessary the teacher or director may accompany a parent who drives the child for treatment. Staff shall not transport children in their own cars. Any illness or injury that occurs at the center and requires overnight hospitalization will be **immediately** reported to EEC by telephone. Any illness/injury that occurs at the center and requires medical treatment will be reported to EEC by submitting an Illness/Injury Report Form with the required documentation to the center's EEC licensor **within three business days**. It is important that the

program wait until the form is fully completed, includes the center's facility number and is checked for accuracy before it is submitted to the EEC (i.e. the diagnosis and treatment are documented). This will assist in determining what follow-up action will be taken.

When the parents cannot be reached and the child needs to go for emergency treatment, a person on the emergency list will be notified. If a family member is listed, that person will be called first. The child's Pediatrician will also be contacted.

Prior to a field trip, the staff discuss who will bring a cell phone and who will be in charge of the first aid kit and any other required medications. Should an injury, requiring emergency treatment, occur during a field trip, Staff will use the First Aid Kit that they bring with them, if helpful. A staff member will stay with the child while another calls for help. The other staff will take the rest of the group to a safe location until it is decided how the trip will proceed. After calling for emergency assistance, they will call the school to have the parents contacted. They will also have a list of names and phone numbers (including emergency numbers) of the children they have with them. It will be determined when the staff calls the school who will continue to contact parents until they are reached. The child will be transported by ambulance and the staff person with the child will contact the school as soon as possible after arrival at the hospital.

### **EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL**

Please do not send any child to school who has a temperature, fresh cold symptoms, or GI symptoms. Please do not send a child with a rash to school unless it is confirmed that the rash is not contagious. Please report all communicable illnesses so that we can alert other parents.

Any child, who is absent due to illness, must remain out of school until he/she has been symptom free for at least 24 hours. When a confirmed case of a communicable disease is identified, parent(s)/primary care giver(s) will be notified as soon as possible and given an information sheet on the illness, symptoms to look for and center exclusion policies related to the illness.

### **PLAN FOR ADMINISTERING MEDICATION**

All staff who administer medication except for emergency medication must successfully complete the EEC training and Medication Administration. Documentation of their training will be kept in their personnel file. Annually, the Director will assess each teacher's ability to administer medication.

All medication to be administered, be it over the counter, or prescription, must be prescribed by the health care practitioner. The parents are required to provide written authorization. This authorization, unless it is revoked, will be valid for one year.

All medications must be in the containers in which they were originally dispensed and with their original labels affixed. Over the counter medications must be in the original manufacturer's packaging. The child's name must be on the container.

We will not administer any medication contrary to the directions on the original container, unless so authorized in writing by the child's health care practitioner. Any medications

without clear instructions on the container will be administered in accordance with a written physician or pharmacist's descriptive order.

Unless otherwise specified in a child's Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP), all medications will be stored out of the reach of children and under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security and safety during the time the children are in care. Medications found in the USDEA Schedules II-V will be kept in a secured and locked place. Prescription medications requiring refrigeration shall be stored in a refrigerator maintained between 38 degrees and 42 degrees.

All emergency medications are immediately available. The medication, the MD's orders, the child's photo and gloves are all kept in individual bags.

All unused or out dated medication will be returned to the parent, and the return will be documented in the child's record. When return to the parent is not possible, such prescription medications will be destroyed and the destruction will be recorded by the Director in accordance with the policies of the DPH Drug Control Program. Medication which needs to be brought to school also needs to be hand-delivered by the parent. It should not enter the classroom.

Tower Day School will not administer the first dose of medication to a child.

Each time a medication is administered the administration is documented in the child's record including the name of the medication, the dosage, the time and method of administration, and who administered the medication.

At Tower Day School, all medications must have written authorization by both the parent and a health care practitioner. The pharmacy label listing the prescribing physician will be accepted as written authorization from the health care practitioner. All administrations will be recorded as listed above. Parents may, with written permission of their child's health care practitioner, train staff in the implementation of their child's ICHP including dispensing medication.

### **PLAN FOR MEETING THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF MILDLY ILL CHILDREN**

Children who are mildly ill, thereby wanting activity, are allowed to stay in the classroom, and eat, drink or rest at will. This would include children with vague complaints or a temperature less than 100 degrees.

Others who need to stay in the director's office rest there until they are picked up. They may eat/drink depending on their symptoms. Parents will be called when a child is strongly complaining of feeling ill, has a temperature over 100 degrees, vomits or has diarrhea, or displays symptoms of various contagious illness such as strep, flu, pneumonia, etc. Any child who due to asthma or other respiratory problem and is wheezing or appears to be laboring will have his parents called.

General practices and procedures for the care and comforting of ill children, recognition and documentation of symptoms of illness, and taking children's temperatures are all covered in the first aid course given to the staff.

## **HEALTH FORMS**

A Massachusetts School Health Record **must** be filled out by your child's physician and returned before the first day of school. It must remain current every year.

## **SNACKS**

We provide a mid-session snack for the children that could be water, crackers, pretzels, and fruit. All of these are subject to the food allergies of the children in the class. Please make sure your child's teacher is aware of any food allergies. Due to the fact that many children have special dietary requirements, we insist that all snack food given to the children come from the school.

## **TRANSPORTATION CHANGES**

Tower Day School must be notified in writing whenever a child will be picked up by someone other than his/her parent. **A child will not be dismissed to anyone without dated, written, parental authorization, as well as proof of identification.** This policy applies to carpools as well as nannies and babysitters.

## **TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Each student will have a Transportation Authorization Plan in his or her file. This plan will be completed and signed by the child's parent. It will confirm how the child arrives at and leaves school each day, and who is authorized to pick her/him up.

Parents and guardians are strongly urged to promptly notify the school (by email or telephone message) when their child will be absent or arriving late. Parents will be contacted if their child is unexpectedly absent from school.

As there is no center-owned vehicle, the transportation of children to Tower Day School is the family's responsibility. At the beginning of each session, staff people are posted at the front door and side walk to receive children and walk them to their classrooms. The procedure is the same at the end of the day; children are escorted to their vehicles, which are lined up outside the school. Parents are welcome to walk their child to and from the classes whenever they wish. **IN THE EVENT THAT SOMEONE OTHER THAN THE PARENT OR THE PERSON IDENTIFIED ON THE TRANSPORTATION FORM PICKS UP THE CHILD, WRITTEN PARENTAL PERMISSION STATING WHO WILL PICK UP THE CHILD IS REQUIRED.** The person picking up the child needs to be told by the parents that he/she will be required to show identification. Unless in extreme emergencies, phone call authorizations will not be accepted. In the event of an emergency, children will only be released to someone whose name is on the signed parental consent form.

In the case of an emergency children are transported by ambulance, or picked up by their parents or designee. **STAFF OWNED VEHICLES ARE NOT USED TO TRANSPORT CHILDREN.**

Families are responsible for the supervision of the children before they arrive at school.

The vast majority of field trips are walking field trips. On occasion, a field trip might be scheduled that would require transportation. A first aid kit, cell phone and emergency phone numbers will accompany the children along with Tower Day School Staff.

As specified above, any vehicle used to transport children from Tower Day School will be a school bus hired from a school bus company. The company also provides their driver.

Staff vehicles are not used for transporting children to and from field trips.

Tower Day School will not allow the number of children riding in a school bus to exceed the number of seats therein. All children will remain seated while the vehicle is in operation.

- There shall be no dangerous objects present while transporting children.
- Any equipment needed for emergencies (repair equipment, first aid) will be secured.
- Staff accompanies the children. They are well versed in the needs of the children.
- The children will only be transported to and from Tower Day School. They will not be released to anyone.
- There is no regular transporting of children.
- As stated above, a first aid kit, cell phone and emergency numbers will be available on the bus.

### **REFERRAL SERVICES POLICY**

There are times when concerns arise regarding a child's development or health. The teachers/lead teachers are responsible for the on-going assessment of each child. When she notices a delay, or when she sees a child struggling, after she makes an anecdotal record the following will occur:

- she will discuss the concerns and the record with the Director and the parent.
- the Director will observe, add to the record and review the child's file.
- if the Director sees no problem, she will continue monitoring the child.
- if the Director shares the concerns, the parents will again be notified of the school's concerns.
- any recommendations will be made or validated.
- a list of resources located in the area of this community are attached, but not all shall be considered "recommended". Parents need to consider whether they are required to contact their primary care physician for referrals.

If a referral is made, the parents will receive a written statement, the referral checklist, including the reasons for the recommendations, a summary of observations and any efforts made to accommodate the needs. The Director will assist the parents in making the referral. If the school makes the referral, parental consent will be obtained. The record will be kept in the child's file.

Parents will be informed of their right to seek services, including their right to appeal under Chapter 766.

With parental permission, the Director will follow up with the agency/service provider who evaluated the child for assistance in meeting the needs of the child at the center. If services are not provided or indicated, we will review the child's progress monthly. If a child is deemed to have a disability, we will inform the Director of Special Education in the child's home town (with parental permission). Tower Day School will ensure that all appropriate specific measures will be taken to ensure that the health requirements of children with disabilities are met, when children with disabilities are enrolled.

## **REFERRAL LIST**

This is a list of some resources available in this area. These are not recommendations.

### **Special Education Directors**

Lynnfield  
525 Salem St.  
Lynnfield, Ma. 01940  
781-581-5140

Peabody  
21 Johnson St  
Peabody, MA  
978-536-6060

North Reading  
North Reading Middle School  
North Reading, MA  
978-664-7823

For other towns, see director

### **Social Services and Mental Health Agencies and Hospitals**

Department of Mental Health  
365 East St..  
Tewksbury, MA, 01867

Melrose/Wakefield Hospital  
585 Lebanon St.  
Melrose, MA 02176

North Shore Children's Hospital  
57 Highland St.  
Salem, MA. 01970

### **Developmental Screenings**

Braintree Pediatric Rehabilitation Center at Lynnfield  
50 Salem St.  
Lynnfield, 01940  
781-246-4225

### **Audiological Screenings**

Beverly Hospital  
Herrick Street  
Beverly, MA 01915

North Shore Children's Hospital  
57 Highland Avenue  
Salem, MA 01970

