



**THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF
NORTHBOROUGH & SOUTHBOROUGH
PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Mary E. Finn School
60 Richards Rd.
Southborough, MA 01772
508-485-3176

Preschool Office
508-460-0941

**PARENT HANDBOOK
2019-2020**

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Welcome Message From the Early Childhood Administrator

Dear Preschool Families,

Welcome to the Preschool Programs of the Northborough and Southborough Public Schools! I am looking forward to getting to know your child and working in partnership with you and your child's teacher in making sure your child's first school experience is a positive and memorable one.

The preschool teachers and I created this handbook to provide all members of our communities with important information about preschool programming and procedures. We encourage you to read through the handbook in order to learn more about early childhood education in our district. This guide underscores the integrated philosophy, diverse curriculum and collaborative parent-teacher relationships that are the touchstones of our approach to teaching and learning. We hope you will keep this handbook in an accessible place as a reference during the school year.

As you read, please keep in mind that our preschool community strongly supports a team approach to learning. Collaboration between home and school is an essential component of an effective preschool experience. We actively encourage your involvement and participation in our classrooms and truly look forward to partnering with you to help your child realize his/her full potential.

Thank you for sharing your children with us. If you have any questions or concerns that are not addressed in this handbook, please feel free to contact me or your child's teacher.

Warm regards,

Jennifer Henry
Early Childhood Administrator
(508) 460-0941
jhenry@nsboro.k12.ma.us

Staff Directory

Central Office Administrators

Gregory Martineau, Superintendent of Schools
508-486-5115 x71241

Rhoda Webb, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Schools
508-486-5115

Marie Alan, Director of Student Support Services
508-486-5115 x71221

Deb Lemieux, Assistant Director of Student Support Services
508-486-5115 x71221

Erica Edstrom, Assistant Director of Student Support Services
508-486-5115 x71221

Sandy Burgess, Administrative Assistant to the Director of Student Support Services
508-486-5115 x71221

District-Wide Staff

Jennifer Henry, Early Childhood Administrator (508) 460-0941

Keri Crichton, Preschool Administrative Assistant (508) 460-0941

Sandra Heberlig, Physical Therapist-Southborough (AVC) (508) 485-3176

Nancy Ahrabi-Nejad, Physical Therapist-Northborough (AVC) (508) 351-7048

Andrea Flanagan, Physical Therapy Assistant (AVC) (508) 485-3176

Julie North, AAC Consultant (508) 485-3176

Colleen Ferguson, AT Specialist (508) 485-3176

Assabet Valley Collaborative Transportation Office (508) 460-0491, X11

Mary Finn School Staff (508) 485-3176

Clayton Ryan, Principal Ext. 63103

School Nurse Ext. 63107

Colleen Bercume, Special Education Teacher Ext. 63133

Kristine Hart, Special Education Teacher Ext. 63125

Anne Sears, Special Education Teacher Ext. 63116

Emily Delaney, Special Education Teacher Ext. 63137

Alysun Stephens-Kenney, Special Education Teacher Ext. 63127

Tricia Silva, Occupational Therapist Ext. 63119

Michelle Ryll, Speech-Language Pathologist Ext. 63117

Erin Whiting, Speech-Language Pathologist Ext. 63117

Lauren Dayotas, Preschool Tutor Ext. 63137

Wendy Hills, Preschool Tutor Ext. 63116

Faith Richard, Preschool Tutor Ext. 63127

Purpose/Philosophy of the Preschool Programs

The Northborough and Southborough Schools offer preschool programming to children between the ages of three and five years old . Our classroom populations are diverse and include children with special needs, dual language learners, and typically developing peers.

All preschool classrooms provide rich, language-based curriculum with a multi-sensory, developmental approach to teaching and learning. The curriculum encompasses a “total development” model to ensure that children develop their cognitive, gross motor, fine motor, social-emotional, self-help, and communication skills. There is a strong commitment to helping children develop self-respect, self-regulation, and positive peer relationships based on mutual respect.

Each child’s unique learning style is respected and nourished. The preschool teachers provides a flexible but structured approach to teaching and offer lessons and activities that align with the Massachusetts Common Core.

The preschool staff consists of certified teachers, instructional aides, speech and language pathologists, speech and language aides, occupational therapists, C.O.T.A.s (Certified Occupational Therapist Assistants), physical therapists, and P.T.A.s (Physical Therapy Assistants) as needed. The District's BCBA's and Augmentative Communication Specialist are additional resources for the preschool team.



Curriculum

The preschool teachers deliver a rich, developmentally appropriate, language-based curriculum with multi-sensory, multi-modal approaches to teaching. The curriculum reflects developmental sensitivity and provides support for all areas of a child's growth: fine and gross motor, communication, social/emotional behavior, and self-help.

Play is the primary vehicle for a young child's learning and is the cornerstone of the preschool program. Play enhances a child's ability to use and interpret symbols, stimulates language development, promotes the acquisition of social skills and promotes self-confidence and independence. Play enables children to progress along a developmental continuum. In the preschool classrooms, play is child-initiated, child-directed and teacher-supported.

The preschool curriculum emphasizes learning as an interactive process. The classroom environment is carefully designed for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children and with classroom materials. The environment provides opportunities for children to ask questions, take risks and learn about people with various socio-economic, racial and cultural backgrounds. The classroom is also designed to provide multiple opportunities for children to appreciate their strengths and work on minimizing their challenges or disabilities. Exploring each of these areas results in respecting differences.

Teacher's observations and recordings of each child's special interests, concerns and needs facilitate curriculum planning and assessment annually.

The classroom schedule typically includes:

- *Free choice and directed free play
- *Circle/Meeting Time
- *Snack
- * Share
- *Table Activity Time
- *Gross Motor/Outdoor play
- *Ending Circle/Story

Our classroom is a place where.....

We don't all have to be the same.

We don't all have to think the same.

We don't all have to act the same.

We don't all have to talk the same.

We don't all have to dress the same.

We don't all have to believe the same things.

We have the right to be ourselves.

We like it that people are different.

We know that our differences make us unique and interesting.

We honor different ways of being, acting and believing-even when we don't agree with them.

We do our best to solve problems peacefully.

We speak up if we see others being treated unfairly.

We treat each other the way we'd like to be treated.

We treat each other with respect.



Daily Schedules for Classes

4 Half- day class - Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday
Morning Session: 9-11:45am
Afternoon Session: 12:15-3pm

5 Half- day class – Monday through Friday
Morning Session: 9-11:45am
Afternoon Session: 12:15-3pm

4 Full day class - Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday
9:00 am-3:00pm

5 Full day class - Monday through Friday
9:00 am- 3:00pm

Special Education Students: Session Times per IEP Team Recommendation

Parent/Teacher Communication

Each class has an orientation prior to the first day of school. (Please refer to your child's teacher letter for date/time.)

Parent/teacher communication takes the form of newsletters and daily activity sheets. Parents receive regular communications/newsletters that contain information about upcoming events, snack, special programs and volunteer opportunities.

Open communication is a valued commodity. Parents should contact their child's teacher with any comments, questions, concerns or other relevant information regarding their child.

E-mail is an effective way to reach out to a teacher or therapist to alert them of your desire to share information or ask a question. Please remember that teachers and therapists do not typically access e-mail during the school day. E-mail is also not a confidential way to communicate, so please limit e-mail exchanges in accordance with the district's Acceptable Use Policy.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. Please see each school's dates for conferences listed in the current school year.

Conferences may also be held at other times if a concern or development arises or when a parent makes this request.

Parent Volunteers

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's classroom. Each preschool teacher communicates with parents regarding opportunities to participate in activities and field trips. All volunteers must fill out a CORI form available in the main office. A CORI should be completed at least two weeks before planning to volunteer.

Admission to the Preschool Programs

The preschool entrance requirements are as follows:

- Children who have been identified as having special needs and are on an IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) will attend the preschool program recommended by the child's special education TEAM. The IEP TEAM includes the parents.
- General education students who are not on an IEP need to be at least 3 years of age on or before August 31st. General education students can participate in the preschool program until they are age eligible for kindergarten.
- General education students participate in a screening process by the preschool team to assess their development. Not all children screened may be offered a slot in a preschool classroom. Enrollment is based on availability of slots and classroom composition. When there are more general education children than slots, a waiting list is created. Parents are notified when a slot becomes available.
- General education students are screened on a designated day in January. Information about the screening day is publicized on the district's website, in elementary school newsletters, and in other community locations and publications. General education children are screened using various developmentally appropriate screening tools. Screenings are carried out by the preschool team which may include the preschool teacher, speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist, early childhood administrator, and physical therapist. General education children are expected to demonstrate developmentally appropriate language skills, socialization and play skills, emotional regulation skills as well as gross motor and fine motor ability.
- In the spring, parents receive a letter from the Early Childhood Administrator stating the outcome of their child's preschool screening. If a child is accepted into the program, the preschool team will try to honor parent's request to place them in the classroom which is their first choice. It's important to note that parents may not get their first choice as the teachers must also take into consideration gender balance and other factors which influence class composition and student success.
 - If a child is not accepted into the program, he/she may go through the preschool screening process the following year. If, by chance, openings become available in the fall, another preschool screening is scheduled and parents are contacted to participate if interested.
- The preschool team appreciates parents' understanding of the preschool screening process. Should parents have any questions regarding this process, Jennifer Henry, Early Childhood Administrator for the Northborough and Southborough Public Schools, is available to respond to those questions at (508) 460-0941.

Health & Registration

The District requires specific documents in order to register children in the schools. These documents include: Birth Certificate, Health Form, Current Immunizations, Proof of Residency, Registration Form, Home Language Survey, and Emergency forms. These documents need to be submitted to the school office at the elementary school where the child's preschool and/or special education services are delivered.

Health policies and related health information are posted in the Finn Elementary School Handbook. Please visit: <http://finn.nsboro.k12.ma.us>

Tuition Information

The Northborough and Southborough Public Schools set tuition rates that align with preschool tuition at other private and public preschools in the area. The 2019-20 tuition rates for the preschool classrooms are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| \$3,625.00 per year | 4 day AM or PM program |
| \$4,500.00 per year | 5 day AM or PM program |
| \$7,250.00 per year | 4 full day program |
| \$9,000.00 per year | 5 full day program |

Tuition payments are divided into two (2) payments during the school year. **Tuition payments are due: August 28, 2019, and January 21, 2020.**
Statements/invoices are not sent.

Checks should be made out to Northborough-Southborough Preschool Program. **Please include the preschool student's name on each check and mail these payments to:**

Office of the Superintendent
53 Parkerville Road
Southborough, MA 01772
Attn.: Finance

A program has also been established for online payments for Northborough and Southborough Preschool tuition payments. The Unipay system for online payments is used for this and is currently available on the District website.

The Unipay site accepts Mastercard, Discover, and American Express as well as checking account payments for a small fee. To access the Unipay site (regardless of whether you live in Northborough or Southborough):

1. Go the District webpage at: **www.nsboro.k12.ma.us**.
2. Select **Departments**
3. Select **Early Childhood**
4. Under **Preschool Links**, elect **Preschool Online Payment Center** and follow the prompts to your online payment.

Miscellaneous Information

Lost & Found

Students occasionally misplace things. A Lost and Found Box is located at the Mary Finn School. Parents should check the Lost and Found Box from time to time for misplaced items.

Labeling each child's clothing, lunchbox, and backpack reduces the number of items that are placed in the Lost and Found Box. The school cannot be responsible for items lost by students. All items in the Lost and Found Box will be disposed of during vacation periods and at the end of the school year.

Recess

All children enrolled in the preschool classrooms have the opportunity to use the playground equipment on a daily basis throughout the school year, weather permitting. Children should come to school with clothing that is appropriate and comfortable for outdoor play.

School Pictures

Early in the fall, the SOS (Support Our Schools Parent group) arranges to have school pictures taken. Photographs include both class and individual portraits. Pictures require prepayment and parents may choose from a variety of packages tailored to meet their preference and budget. In the event a child's picture is unsatisfactory or the child is absent, retakes can be taken.

Field Trips

Classes may take field trips throughout the year. A student must have a signed parent/guardian permission slip to participate in each trip. Prior to a field trip date, parents/guardians are notified with details about the trip, including the cost for each student's participation and timelines for payment. Since field trips are closely related to activities going on in the classroom, students are expected to participate. No student will be denied access to a trip due to financial concerns. Parents should contact their child's teacher if this is the case and scholarship support will be provided in a discrete, as needed basis.

A nurse accompanies each field trip. If medicines need to be administered on the trip, parents need to inform the nurse prior to the field trip.

Visitor Sign-In Policy

All visitors, including parents, are required to sign in at each school's office and wear a visitor's badge/sticker. All visitors must report to the office before going to the classrooms or other locations within the school. Parents and other visitors may only visit those areas where they are expected.

Snack

Snack is a wonderful opportunity for children to enhance social skills and practice manners in a naturalistic environment. Parents are asked to send in a snack for their child daily. For the safety of all children enrolled in preschool classrooms, parents must inform their child's teacher of any and all food allergies.

The preschool teachers are happy to help celebrate children's birthdays at school. Parents need to speak with their child's teacher prior to planning this celebration in order to discuss the school's policy for celebrations.

School Closing Information

When a decision is made to cancel school or have a delayed opening of school, the Superintendent of Schools will post the information on the district website (<http://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us>) and notify TV Channels 4 (WBZ TV), 5 (WCVB TV) and 7 (WHDH TV).

If there is a delay in a school opening, the AM preschool sessions are cancelled for that day. Afternoon programs will be held as scheduled. If school is cancelled, there will be no preschool that day. Please do not call the school office or the police office to determine if school is in session.

School closings are also announced through an automated school notification system, One Call Now, in the form of an email or telephone message, based on whichever method has been selected by the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians need to provide their child's school with accurate telephone numbers and email addresses to ensure that timely and accurate messages are received regarding school closing.

Tardiness/Absences

Regular and prompt attendance is necessary for a student's education. Being on time for school is important to a child's education and consistency in the classroom.

Parents need to call the main office of the Mary Finn School when their child is tardy or absent. The phone number for the Mary Finn School main office is: 508-485-3176.

Finn Preschool Calendar 2019-20

| | |
|---|--|
| August 26 | Preschool Orientation/Preschool Open House 3:30-4:30pm |
| August 28 | ALL Preschool Classes Begin |
| September 2 | No School- Labor Day |
| September 12 | Early Release- All Schools- AM PK Only |
| September 30 | No School- Rosh Hashanah |
| September 26 | Finn Picture Day |
| October 9 | No School- Yom Kippur |
| October 14 | No School- Columbus Day |
| October 24 | Early Release- Parent Conferences- AM PK Only |
| October 31 | Finn Halloween Parade; 10:30am |
| November 1 | Early Release- Parent Conferences- AM PK Only |
| November 6 | Finn Picture Retake Day |
| November 11 | No School- Veteran's Day |
| November 27 | Early Release- All Schools- AM PK Only |
| November 28-29 | No School- Thanksgiving Recess |
| December 20 | Early Release- All Schools- AM PK Only |
| December 23-Jan. 1 | No School- Winter Vacation |
| January 2 | Students Return From Winter Break |
| January 10 | No Preschool Classes- Preschool Screening for 2020-2021 |
| (If Jan 10 is a snow day, screening will be Jan 17 and there will be no class that day) | |
| January 16 | Finn Kindergarten Registration (Southborough only) |
| January 20 | No School- Martin Luther King Jr. Day |
| February 17-21 | No School- February Vacation |
| March 3 | No School- Professional Development Day |
| April 2 | Early Release- Parent Conferences- AM PK Only |
| April 10 | No School- Good Friday |
| April 20-24 | No School- April Vacation |
| April 29-30 | Finn Incoming Kindergarten Screening/Orientation (Southborough Only) |
| May 25 | No School- Memorial Day |
| June 16 | Last day of School (tentative)- Early Release- AM PK Only |

District-Wide Calendar

(Please click on the link above to view the calendar.)

District-Wide Policies

District-wide policies are included in the Finn Elementary School Handbooks, and can also be found on the following websites:

For Northborough/Southborough District

<http://www.nsboro.k12.ma.us>

For Finn School in Southborough

<http://finn.nsboro.k12.ma.us>