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# 2011-2012 HANDBOOK

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## **I. WHO WE ARE**

Ashmont Nursery School is a non-profit, non-sectarian, cooperative pre-school for children aged 2.9 (as of September 1) to 5. It is located at One Ashmont Street in Dorchester, near Codman Square. Facilities include a spacious indoor play area with a wide variety of materials and an outdoor play yard. The school is licensed by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).

Started by nine mothers as a weekly playgroup, ANS is a parent-run cooperative dedicated to fostering exploration, play, and the lifelong love of learning. Under the guidance of and in partnership with our certified teachers, parents form a community that encourages caring for all of the children and families, a sharing of ideas, skills, concerns, and values. Parents and teachers alike maintain the good humored, cooperative, and diligent attitude that has prevailed in shaping the school. Almost two generations of children have thrived in our safe and nurturing environment.

Over the past 25 years, in two different locations, ANS has developed a culture of openness to all who come here. It is inclusive, and focuses on the positive. We are committed to creating and maintaining an environment which nurtures the overall well-being and healthy growth and development of every child at Ashmont Nursery School. We believe that it is extremely important to provide a loving, open-door environment that allows the children to feel safe and respected, and which also welcomes them, their family and friends, and the community at large. The issue of openness and how we welcome is of great importance for the subtle but powerful lessons that are learned in such moments by our children. We are invested in making sure that as adults, we continue to model for our children the best kinds of community interactions.

Currently, Ashmont Nursery School's faculty consists of three LEAD certified Teachers with over thirty combined years experience at ANS. Under the supervision of the Director, the teachers work together with one Parent-Teacher each day. The maximum number of children is twenty per day giving ANS an adult/student ratio of 1 to 6.

### **A. Goals and Philosophy**

The program provides an environment where children feel safe, secure, respected and recognized as individuals. A positive self-image affects each child's ability to get along with others, to explore and to create. We find ways to help children feel good about themselves in all aspects of their learning. The nursery school space is set up with a variety of materials and activities from which children can choose. The materials in the room are stimulating, challenging and adaptable for children of varying developmental levels.

The environment at Ashmont Nursery School stimulates the development of the “whole” child, encourages their curiosity and caring for the world, and enables them to truly feel a sense of faith, hope, and joy in their lives. In order to build and maintain this trusting environment, we believe in using a person-to-person approach in all situations in our school: when teaching the children how to interact with each other and grown-ups, when interacting with each other as teachers and families. We use this approach with every person who comes to our school for various reasons and we use this approach with those people we meet on our walks and field trips. We feel open and caring towards everyone and sincerely want the children to feel this way, too.

We strive to build understanding and community with everyone we come in contact with. We believe that getting out into the community at large enables the children to see first-hand how the world works. It is a vital and significant way to increase their desire to know about other people, places, nature, and all of the intricacies of life itself. We believe that the world that we live in and share with one another is an amazing and beautiful place. We believe that it is very important to make sure that every child is supported in their growth, and that the whole range of their needs, feelings, and ideas are nurtured and accepted. Through their development and experiences, the children can explore their roles in our world, make choices and find out how to help solve the problems they learn about. It really matters that the children learn to have as high a regard for one another, our communities, and our world as they do for themselves. The children continue to learn that one person’s needs and wants do not supersede another person’s. Everyone needs to care and help one another as best we can. Every action and decision we make is based upon our philosophy, and also our belief that children learn what they live. We want them to be happy children who love life!

The children are offered a selection of activities each day. There is time for free play, small group activities, art, movement, dramatic play, story time, outdoor play, field trips, singing, reading, and snack. An important goal of Ashmont Nursery School is to draw upon the racial and cultural diversity of the families and our world to enrich all of the children, parents and staff. Finally, the school believes that the relationship between the preschool aged child and their parents is the single most important part of their lives. It therefore asks that parents assist the teacher in the classroom on a regularly scheduled basis and help in the administration of the school as well.

## **II. THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEES 2010-2011**

The school is governed by a Board of Directors composed of six officers elected each year (the Executive Committee). Each family is required to serve on a committee, on the Executive Committee, or to fill some other significant role to fulfill the cooperative component determined by the Board.

## A. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee oversees the operation of the nursery school to ensure that it runs efficiently, cooperatively and in a financially responsible manner. Committee meetings, unless they need to be changed for some reason, are held on the **first Thursday of each month** and are open to the entire Ashmont Nursery School community. One member from each committee/job must attend the monthly meeting, as only those in attendance will have the opportunity to vote on current issues brought forth by the Executive Committee.

These meetings are held to review any issues that may affect the Ashmont Nursery School community. Once the Executive Committee has determined potential courses of action, their recommendations are brought to the entire community to be voted upon. Draft meeting agendas will be made available to the community a week or two in advance of each meeting. In order to keep the agenda for these meetings manageable, we ask that any requests to add an agenda item be made a minimum of **3 business days** before the day of the meeting.

Persons on the Executive Committee are nominated, then voted upon by the current Ashmont Nursery School community. If there is only one nomination for a position, an election can be waived if no objections are put forth to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is comprised of the following officers who, in addition to meeting on a monthly basis, also perform the specific functions outlined below:

**Co-Presidents** - are involved in every aspect of the school's operations. They prepare Executive Committee agendas, preside over monthly meetings, chair Board of Directors meetings, oversee all committees and jobs, ensure all committee responsibilities are carried out timely and in a manner consistent with the school's philosophy and policies, act as liaison between the school and the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), ensure the school is in compliance with accreditation criteria, and oversee the accreditation/reaccreditation process. Updating (with input from teachers and committees) and printing the Handbook for the following year is also the responsibility of the Co-Presidents. The Presidents are an open ear to all issues and concerns that may arise from any co-op community member.

**Vice President** - primary responsibility is communication within the co-op community. Assists the President(s) as needed, presides at meetings in President's absence, creates/maintains/distributes family phone tree, email list, school year calendar, and any other relevant documents to be utilized by the ANS community. Coordinates annual school photograph session and coordinates the rental of the nursery school for private functions. Arranges for and updates all of the required inspections, including Fire Department and Inspectional Services. Sends thank you notes on behalf of Ashmont Nursery School.

**Treasurer** - is responsible for accurately recording and paying all school related costs including but not limited to teacher & substitute salaries, taxes, and any invoices that have been

authorized for payment by the Board of Directors. Drafts an annual budget, provides monthly financial reports and oversees Ashmont Nursery School bank accounts in conjunction with the billing officer. The treasurer is also responsible for the execution of the teaching staff contracts on an annual basis, as well as any other contracted service, needed for the school.

**Billing Officer** - works closely with the Treasurer to ensure that all payments due to the school are received and deposited in a timely fashion, issues tuition bills to Ashmont Nursery School families and tracks payments accordingly, coordinates voucher program and payments, also receives payments for all drop-ins, function rentals, and fundraising dollars generated. In essence, the billing officer receives and deposits any and all payments that come into the nursery school. Provides administrative support in the areas of billing and compiles/maintains list of students for teacher use. Compiles/maintains daily attendance lists (including early morning and extended day rosters), posts sign up sheets, and distributes to teachers. They will also assist Summer Program Committee with billing functions.

**Secretary** - records and expediently distributes minutes of all Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and Family Meetings held at the nursery school to keep the entire community abreast of happenings at ANS. All minutes are mandatory and should be submitted within 3 days of monthly meetings to the Executive Committee for review. Once reviewed, final EC notes are dispersed to EC plus teachers via mailboxes and email, and for General Board of Directors Meeting minutes and Family Meeting minutes the entire school community receives final notes which should also be posted on bulletin boards in the school entryway. A copy of all Meeting minutes should also be filed in the school office. Completes annual filing with secretary of state. The Secretary also maintains a database of ANS alumni and supporters, and is responsible for maintaining school's archives.

## **B. Committees and Jobs**

Committees are comprised of families enrolled at Ashmont Nursery School. All families must either serve on a committee or in a job. One member from each committee must attend the monthly board meetings. All committees and jobs report to the Executive Committee.

**Admissions Committee** - Oversees application and enrollment procedures. Actively recruits new families to help the school meet its enrollment goals. Maintains admissions phone line (checks messages, keeps outgoing message up to date, returns calls to prospective families), sends out applications and brochures, processes applications. Meets with prospective candidates, plans and implements the admissions open house/s and two parent information sessions, conducts tours of the school, arranges follow-up child visits. Surveys enrolled families regarding their return for the following school year, provides scholarship information and financial aid applications as requested, sends acceptance letters, notifies new families of the Spring General Meeting. Works closely with the teachers on final enrollment decisions, and the Billing Officer to monitor

application fees and tuition deposits. Provides the Registrar and Billing Officer with a list of new families, and maintains and provides current attendance and family lists to teachers and EC for distribution. Delegates open house promotion and staffing tasks to all families, who are expected to support these efforts. Additional related tasks as needed.

**Auction Support Committee** - Under direction of Executive Committee, coordinates annual Auction. Delegates tasks to all families, who are expected to assist in this major fundraising effort. Provides ongoing support and oversight for this work, and maintains database for auction.

**Facilities Committee** - Manages and maintains the interior/exterior of the school physical plant. Members of this committee are responsible for coordinating the upkeep of the heating, electrical, and plumbing systems, as well as removing leaves. While some tasks will require that facilities contract the services of outside purveyors, other tasks such as replacing window screens or leaky faucets will be completed by the committee. The facilities team coordinates annual clean-up day prior to the start of the school year by contacting Ashmont Nursery School families to inform them of date and by pre-determining (with teacher input) tasks to be completed. Assists the summer program committee with facilities issues. Investigates and, with input of teachers and EC, pursues energy-saving initiatives and improvements for the school.

**Fundraiser Committee** - is a major revenue-generating arm of the nursery school. This committee develops, coordinates, promotes and implements all fundraisers on behalf of the school, and secures major donors for the annual Auction. Responsibilities include securing corporate donors/auction sponsors, and spearheading a minimum of 3 fundraising efforts during the school year, one of which is the annual Ashmont Hill yard sale. Other efforts may include (but are not limited to): social fundraisers such as a wine tasting, Raffles, and product sales (i.e., t-shirts). Committee delegates tasks to all families, who are expected to assist in fundraising efforts, so that maximum financial results may be attained.

**Development Committee** - Grant Writing was a new committee for 2009-2010, based on groundwork laid by the 2008-2009 fundraising committee, and one family's significant expertise in this area. The aims of the Development Committee are twofold and related:

- To research, identify, and apply for grant funding to support the Ashmont Nursery School.
- To cultivate relationships with individuals and organizations with significant possibilities for charitable giving to the school.

Specific tasks include:

1. Further define and clarify the role of the Committee in relationship to ANS governance, teachers, other Committees (in particular, fundraising, facilities, and treasurer), and other parents.

2. Conducting research to identify potential sources of grant funding and charitable donations for ANS at local, State, and national levels.
3. Communicating with potential donors to initiate relationships, clarify guidelines, and answer any questions.
4. Reviewing possible opportunities with responsible parties at ANS.
5. Working with ANS teachers and Committees to ensure that any funds obtained will be properly managed and reported on. It is the responsibility of all of ANS, as appropriate, to manage or carry out these activities.
6. Creating draft submissions for review by responsible parties at ANS.
7. Based on feedback from responsible parties at ANS, finalizing and submitting grant applications.
8. Donor liaison work, including working with responsible parties at ANS to gather information for grant reporting, as needed, and conduction small scale donor events (ie classy dinner or other function, with a medium to large ask amount).
9. Outreach to large donors specifically for the Auction. It is assumed that this will largely consist of relationships that have already been developed during the summer and fall.

Expectations within any one school year are that the Development and Grants Committee will identify at least 5 new potential sources of funding and submit at least 3 full grant applications. For 2010-2011, the Development Committee has a target of \$50,000 for the year.

**Hospitality Committee** - Arranges the food & beverage for annual clean-up day, the three (3) general meetings of the nursery school as well as other school-sponsored events such as the Fall Open House and parent/teacher workshops. The school will reimburse all refreshment expenditures for the aforementioned events according to budget. Members of this committee also spearhead coordination of the Family Potluck Dinner and the Farewell Picnic. They will coordinate with the Auction Steering Committee on food for the Annual Auction and the fundraising committee for the Yard Sale.

**Program Committee** - Coordinates and implements field trips, classroom visitors, special projects and other programming matters in close conjunction with the teaching staff. Responsibilities include distribution and collection of permission slips, recruiting chaperones and planning transportation for field trips that require driving. Sends photos and/or press releases to local newspapers to promote the children's activities (for example community involvement projects, halloween costume parade, etc.) A week before every field trip, the program committee puts together a plan for which children are driving in whose cars, and reviews the plan with the teachers. Revises the permission slips as necessary. Each field trip permission slip will expressly state whether or not the trip is appropriate for siblings to attend.

**Personnel Scheduler** - Handles all personnel issues that involve the teaching staff and parent teachers. The committee is responsible for locating substitute teachers for permanent staff as needed, creating a substitute list for families to utilize when a parent teacher “sub” is required as well as maintaining/updating teacher files and the personnel policies manual.

Compiles and distributes the monthly calendar for parent teaching in a timely fashion, with at least one month’s notice. Posts the schedule on bulletin board and notifies webmaster for posting on ANS’ BigTent site. Obtains date preferences from families prior to creating the calendar. While the scheduler makes every effort to accommodate requests, there is no guarantee that all requests can be granted. They follow up by phone with anyone who has difficulty fulfilling parent-teaching commitments. Upon publication of the schedule, the scheduler is not responsible for locating a substitute or coordinating “switches” between families.

Works with teachers to identify and pursue professional development opportunities. Should there be a teaching vacancy, the personnel committee will work with the Executive Committee and Board to locate viable candidates and walk them through the interview/hiring process.

#### **Substitute teachers and LEAD certification**

When one of our three teachers is not available to teach on a given day due to illness or personal reasons, the personnel committee will use the list of substitute teachers to find a sub for that day. All three of our teachers are LEAD certified teachers. At any given time in the school (early drop-off, the school day, and after school) we are required to have one LEAD certified teacher in the building. Normally, LEAD certified substitutes are paid at the “certified LEAD teacher” rate only when they are fulfilling this requirement for us. Substitute teachers are reimbursed at a rate of \$12.00 per hour.

**Purchaser** - Buys food and supplies as requested by the teachers in the most cost-effective manner possible (ideally through a warehouse club and/or Trader Joe's). Works with the teachers to arrange for the purchase, delivery and shelving of snacks, paper goods, cleaning and teaching related supplies. Works with families to meet dietary restrictions and accommodates whenever possible. The purchaser is responsible for insuring that all original invoices are submitted to the treasurer for reimbursement. Assists Summer Program Committee with (at least) non-perishable supply purchase for summer program.

**Registrar** - Sends out registration packets in August (and to any new family that comes in during the year) in order to gather necessary documentation for students enrolling in ANS in accordance with EEC regulations. Sets up student files and ensures they are complete with accurate and up-to-date information (i.e., medical and emergency contact) prior to the start of the year and throughout the school year. Assists Summer Program Committee with registration of summer applicants. Maintains school office in an orderly fashion.

**Summer Program** - Oversees the administration of the summer program, including hiring teachers, sending out registration packets, filing registration forms and teacher forms, coordinating the schedule, purchasing, attendance and billing. The committee is assisted by the Co-Presidents, Registrar, Billing, Purchaser, Facilities and Treasurer to coordinate successful completion of the above activities. Involves approximately 2-4-hours/week onsite at the school during the program hours. The committee responsibilities commence after the New Year and extend through the end of the Summer Program.

**Webmaster** - Maintains and improves ANS website and other internet-based communications tools, such as the ANS group on BigTent. Actively seeks opportunities to update information and improve communication within the community. Works with Vice President and other EC and school committees to develop on-line information resources to support ANS families in their committee or school jobs. Advises EC regarding potential enhancements, additional uses of website, or supplemental tools (wiki, photo sharing, or other group functions) as would benefit the entire ANS community. Is responsible for all such electronic content - accuracy, appropriateness, privacy, etc. Handles related tasks as need arises and works closely with the EC regarding ANS electronic communications.

### **C. Family Involvement**

The cooperative aspect of the school requires that each family be involved in the following ways:

- Work in the classroom as a Parent-Teacher approximately once a month.
- Participate by performing a job or doing work on a committee.
- Assist with fundraising events during the year; including but not limited to our Annual Yard Sale and Silent Auction.
- Attend three (3) general meetings- September, January and May.
- Participate in at least one maintenance workday per year.
- Attend Fall and Spring Parent Conferences.
- Participate in monthly board meetings as described above.

### **D. Communication**

Communication among families has evolved over the years in parallel with changes in technology. Lately this has meant a heavy reliance on email, along with ad hoc collections of electronic documents scattered among families, that may or may not transition from year to year. In an effort to centralize and streamline ANS communications and documents, in 2009-2010 we will be attempting to utilize a web-based community application.

We have set up an ANS group on <http://www.bigtent.com>. An account will be set up for each family, and access information will be emailed at the beginning of the school year. BigTent features news, forums, and most importantly for ANS, an event calendar and document repository.

During the year, in the course of your committee assignment, you will likely develop electronic documents that will be immensely helpful to the family that will be doing your job next year. Please make an effort to upload these documents to BigTent and tag (label) them appropriately. Also feel free to post news items or calendar events that will be of interest to the whole ANS community.

Please note that the ANS group on BigTent is accessible only to those with a current account, so you don't need to worry about your information or documents becoming available to the general public. At some point we may make a subset of our group accessible to the general public (for example, public fundraising events), but this will always be done with everyone's privacy as a primary consideration.

### III. ADMISSIONS POLICY

Our program is structured to meet the educational needs of children from ages two years, nine months (by September 1st) to five years in the Dorchester community and other Greater Boston neighborhoods. As a reflection of this community, the school strives for diversity and balance. Our Diversity Policy was adopted by the school in the spring of 1994, and is available upon request. The Ashmont Nursery School welcomes all regardless of race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, cultural heritage, political belief, marital status or disability in administering its educational policies, admissions policies, financial aid program and other school administered programs.

#### A. Early Admissions

Returning children and siblings of alumnae are given given priority in schedule and admissions, provided that the family has successfully fulfilled the responsibilities outlined in the parent contract. The early admissions program will require that an application and a fee of forty dollars (\$40) (fee waived for returning children) be submitted by **February 1st**. If the child is not a returning student, the parents must attend one of the parent information sessions, and the child must complete a child visit during which time the teachers can observe him/her in the school environment to ensure ANS meets the needs of the child

Acceptance notification will be sent out by the middle of March. A non-refundable deposit equal to one month's tuition and a signed parent contract will be required by April 1st to hold the seat.

The deposit will be applied to the last tuition payment of the following school year. A registration packet, including important forms regarding health information, emergency numbers, etc., will be provided and must be filed with the Registrar before the beginning of the school year. Children will not be allowed to attend school without these completed forms.

## B. Regular Admissions

Families interested in applying for a space at Ashmont Nursery School are invited to complete an application and submit it with the application fee of forty dollars (\$40). The application deadline is **February 1st** for the next school year. Parents/Guardians must attend a parent information session to learn more about the school. An appointment is then made for the child to visit, during which time the teachers can observe him/her in the school environment. If, by mutual agreement of parents/guardians and teachers, Ashmont Nursery School meets the needs of the child, the admissions board will review the application and seats will be awarded as determined by that group with the aim of diversity and balance. Acceptance letters are usually sent out mid-March - coinciding with the Boston Public School assignment notification.

When a child is accepted, a deposit equal to one month's tuition and a signed parent contract will be required to hold the seat. Signed contracts and deposits will be due the first week of April (approx 2 weeks after acceptance). The **non-refundable deposit** will be applied to the last tuition payment of the school year. A registration packet, including important forms regarding health information, emergency numbers, etc., will be provided and must be filed with the Registrar before the beginning of the school year. Children will not be allowed to attend school without these completed forms.

## C. Late Applications

Any applications received after February 1st will go onto a waiting list below those not granted a seat in the first round. Notifications will be made on the earliest possible date, regarding acceptance to ANS.

## D. Tuition Payment Policies

### Regular Day Tuition (8:30am - 2:45pm):

Three Days	\$5,330
Four Days	\$7,150
Five Days	\$8,800

Early Morning Drop Off (7:30am - 8:30am): \$8.00 per day

**Extended Day (2:45pm - 5:15pm):**

\$22.00 per day

Tuition is due **August 1st**, and while the balance of your child's tuition is welcome in full at that time, *it may be paid in up to nine (9) installments all due on the 1st of the month beginning August 1st and ending April 1st.* Families who plan to return the following school year and therefore submit a deposit on April 1st, may make their final tuition payment on May 1st.

Monthly invoices will be sent by the Billing Officer, and will include early and late stay fees if your child has a permanent slot. Drop in days will be billed the following billing cycle. Upon admission, a non-refundable deposit equal to one month's tuition will be collected and applied to the last tuition payment. Checks should be made payable to the Ashmont Nursery School and put into the Billing Officer's mailbox in the school office. If the first payment due August 1st is not received, the family will be contacted, and if a remedy is not reached within 10 days, the child's spot will be released and a family will be invited to attend from the waiting list.

For children who have a space reserved in the early morning and/or extended day program, charges for these programs are assessed like regular tuition (i.e. the family is charged whether or not the child attends on a given day). Drop in spots for regular day, early morning, or extended day programs are available as space allows on a first come/first served basis and are charged per day (see page 19 for Drop in Policy). Sign up sheets are posted on the bulletin board.

In the event of a child's voluntary withdrawal or decrease in schedule prior to the end of the school year, the family will pay the tuition due in the month that notice is given as well as for the following two calendar months. For example, if a family notifies ANS that their child will withdraw from school on September 10, the family will owe full tuition for September, October and November. The same scenario is true for decreasing or dropping a permanent slot in the before or after school programs. Although we try to be flexible with families making last minute school choices, we must maintain the financial health of the coop, meet our obligations to our staff, and not unduly burden remaining families.

#### **IV. FINANCIAL AID**

Financial Aid is supported by fundraising events throughout the year. A variety of factors are taken into consideration, but in order to be eligible, family income must fall below 275% of Federal Poverty Levels. Applications are available through the Admissions Committee, and are reviewed confidentially by the Executive Committee.

The Ashmont Nursery School Scholarship moneys are raised each year through parent-run fundraising efforts and through tuition. Our goal is to assist families for whom the cost of tuition would be unduly burdensome, particularly:

- Those who are income-eligible for EEC vouchers yet cannot participate in that program for reasons other than income.
- Those whose incomes are slightly above the upper limit for voucher eligibility.

## **A. Application Process**

Financial Aid applications are sent out along with acceptance letters. Applications are due back two weeks later along with parent contracts and deposit. The Executive Committee will then access the applications and a decision will be made by the end of the current school year.

If any scholarship money remains, additional applications will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis.

It is not incumbent upon the Executive Committee to distribute all of the scholarship money. If it is felt that the applications submitted in a given year do not warrant award of all the money, remaining funds may be rolled into the following year's scholarship fund.

## **B. Income Guidelines**

ANS scholarships will be awarded to families whose income falls at or below 275% of Federal Poverty Levels (FPLs). Eligibility is to be determined using the most recent year's tax return. In the case of extreme and unforeseeable extenuating circumstances (i.e., sudden and/or catastrophic illness or disability), the Executive Committee may choose to consider applications from families whose income exceeds 275% of FPLs. (A member of the Executive Committee must obtain an updated copy of FPLs annually—the Office of Representatives to Congress is a good place to inquire for it.) Current year income must be considered in assessing the amount of the award, but should not determine basic eligibility.

Tax returns from the most recent year must accompany an application for it to receive consideration.

## **C. Assets**

Family assets should be considered, however, the Executive Committee may waive consideration of IRA's and ownership of a primary residence in determining a family's need for a scholarship.

## **D. Other Considerations**

In addition to income, expenses and assets, the Executive Committee will consider the following:

- Are there one, two or more involved parents/adults in the household?
- How many days is a child to be enrolled?
- How likely is it that a child's enrollment will be determined by receipt of a scholarship?
- What is the family's need for childcare?
- Can / Should the family apply for child care vouchers?

## **E. Unexpected Financial Difficulties**

If a family experiences difficulty in meeting their financial obligation to the school, they must work with the Billing Officer to develop and put in writing a mutually satisfactory payment plan. With a plan in place and adhered to, the school will allow the child to continue attendance uninterrupted.

If a family, having made such a plan, finds themselves unable to follow through with it, must renegotiate immediately with the Billing Officer. If the family fails to do so, they will receive a written notice to that effect from the Billing Officer. In the case that the Billing Officer (in consultation with the Executive Committee) determines that the same situation has occurred a second time (payment plan disregarded and no attempt made to renegotiate) the child's attendance will be suspended until an agreement can be reached between the school and the family. The child's slot will be held for him/her for two week's time. During that time, tuition will continue to accrue and be charged until the matter is resolved. The child's slot may be released if not resolved at that time.

## **V. A CHILD'S DAY AT SCHOOL**

### **A. Our Curriculum**

The ANS curriculum is centered on the needs and interests of each child and the group. We value each child and nurture her/his emotional, social, physical and intellectual development. We also stress respect for all people and nature in our world. In addition to the regular daily schedule, the Ashmont Nursery School holds special events throughout the school year to celebrate the diversity of our community and offer children and staff a deeper understanding and appreciation of our varying cultures and experiences. We celebrate, in a simple way, various holidays and special occasions with the children: children's birthdays, Halloween, Days of the Dead, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Martin Luther King's Birthday and at times other holidays which parents celebrate in their culture and share at school, i.e. Santa Lucia Day. Whenever possible,

Ashmont Nursery School will inform parents in advance of these events and celebrations. In addition, if you would like to share a holiday or a special tradition, please tell the teachers. If you have any questions, you are invited to bring this to the attention of the teachers or the Executive Committee.

Our curriculum is designed around the children's interests, their developmental needs, the seasons, nature, and our world. We try to foster each child's natural curiosity and love of learning about everything. Following is a sample daily schedule.

### FREE CHOICE TIME

Pretend Area:	Dress up clothes, dolls, stuffed animals, medical tools, cradle, high chairs, pretend dishes, and food.
Block Area:	Wooden unit blocks, large hollow blocks, small people, vehicles, and animals.
Sand Table:	Sand, trucks, containers, shells and rocks.
Water Table:	Water, containers to pour and fill, and eggbeaters.
Writing Area:	Variety of sizes of paper, markers, colored pencils, crayons, scissors, tape, hole punchers and rulers.
Art Area:	Play dough, clay, paints, or collage.
Recycle Area:	Recycled materials, tape, string, scissors and rubber bands.
Puzzle Area:	Puzzles and small manipulative materials
Nature Area:	Turtle, Tortoise, Parakeets, animal pictures, pinecones, shells, rocks, insects, magnifying glasses, and nature books.
Reading Area:	Lots of books about the children's interests and themes - both fiction, and non-fiction.

### SNACK

### OUTDOOR TIME

Vegetable garden, climbing structures, slides, playhouses, sand, bikes, wagon, shovels, pails, picnic tables.

### **CIRCLE TIME**

### **SMALL GROUP TIME**

Children choose one of four activities. For example:

- Easel painting
- Woodworking
- Pet care
- Magnets

### **BOOK TIME AND STORY**

### **LUNCH**

### **REST TIME**

- Children make up their rest mats.
- Children look at books on their mats
- Children listen to one story tape
- Quiet, relaxing music is played

### **FREE CHOICE TIME**

Writing Area, Recycle Area, Small Manipulative Materials, Play Dough

### **AFTERNOON SNACK**

### **REGULAR DAY DISMISSAL**

### **OPTIONAL EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM**

## **B. Arrivals and Departures**

### **Arrivals:**

7:30am Early morning drop off is an option for up to 6 children. Register for a permanent slot with the Registrar or check bulletin board for openings as needed.

8:30am PARENT-TEACHERS SHOULD ARRIVE NO LATER THAN 8:30AM. Please try to arrive

on time. This is your time to set up the outdoor play area, sweep the walk if needed, talk with the teachers about the day, and be ready to greet the children.

8:30-9:00am Children begin to arrive and have free play until about 9:45 when they clean up and have a snack. Children arriving late (after 9:00 am) can have a hard time settling in because they don't have their time for free play and socializing with the other children and their teachers.

#### Departures:

1:15pm Parent-Teachers are scheduled to work until this time, but should plan to stay until clean up is completed. Parent-Teachers may take their child home at this time, or return at 2:45 pm for pick-up (or 5:15 if signed-up for extended day).

2:45pm Please be prompt picking up your child. Think of 3:00 pm as the time you should be leaving the building unless you need to speak briefly with one of the teachers.

5:15pm End of extended day. Please be prompt picking up your child. All of your children's things should be gathered and your goodbyes said as you leave no later than 5:30.

### C. Late Pick-up Policy

It is very important, both from the teachers' perspective, and, most importantly, that of your child, to pick up on time. For this reason, our late pick up policy is strictly enforced. Because the last 15 minutes of the day (2:45-3:00) and (5:15-5:30) are considered a "grace period", if you arrive anywhere from one minute to 15 minutes late (i.e. between 3:01 and 3:15), you will be charged a late fee of \$15. An additional fee of \$1 a minute will be assessed for any additional time over 15 minutes. Parents who arrive late should fill out a late fee sheet and return it to the Billing mailbox. Blank forms are posted on the bulletin board.

### D. Drop in Policy

Any unfilled slots are available for "drop in" students. This includes the early morning time, the regular day, and the extended afternoon. Parents wishing to have their child drop in for the regular day must sign in the teachers' calendar book located on the desk in the office, and **number their request (1, 2, 3)**. Drop ins must be arranged in advance with a teacher. The maximum number of children that may be at school on a given day is 20. Families may not "swap" days with another family.

If you know in advance that your child will be absent for a scheduled day please write this in the teachers' calendar book. Otherwise if your child is sick, or will not be coming to school, please call the school as early as possible in the morning so that another child may use that slot if needed.

There are signup sheets on the bulletin board for early morning and afternoon drop ins. Please check there to see if any spots are available, and cross off your child's name if he/she will not be present for a given day.

Because the drop in program is offered as a convenience to families, the rate is slightly higher than the regular tuition. The fees are as follows:

Early morning	7:30am - 8:30am	\$ 8.00
Regular day	8:30am - 2:45pm	\$55.00
Extended day	3:00pm - 5:15pm	\$22.00

### **E. What to Bring to School**

For the first day of school your child should bring a small blanket, small pillow, a fitted crib sheet (not too tight to fit on the rest mat) and a favorite stuffed animal or doll (if desired) for rest time. Children should wear clothes that can get dirty. We want children to feel free to get thoroughly involved with the materials at school. Each child needs to keep at school a complete change of clothes, including: underwear, socks, shirts, pants/shorts and sweater/sweatshirt marked with their name. As the weather grows colder, slippers and a pair of gloves or mittens should be kept in their cubby. Please check these clothes throughout the year to make sure they are seasonally appropriate and still fit. **All items including boots, blankets etc. should be clearly marked with your child's name.**

If your child is wearing diapers, please make sure that you send in a stock of diapers and wipes with your child's name on it.

On winter and cold days, dress warmly for playing indoors. The schoolrooms can be cool. For outdoor play, boots, hats mittens, warm coat and snow pants (when necessary) are a must! Plan on your child being outside for walks in light rain, so boots and a raincoat are needed on rainy days. We try to get the children outside every day, unless the temperature is below 30° or it is raining hard.

**Please leave your child's toys at home.** At school we use our school toys and learn to share and take turns. Books and Music are welcome for sharing with the class.

## F. Lunch and Snack

The nursery school provides mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks. The teachers and the Purchaser coordinate snack purchasing.

We encourage parents to pack a *healthy* and delicious lunch for your child each day. The children enjoy having small amounts of a few different foods and a drink. Please include foods and a drink that your child likes and which are also nutritious. We suggest that sweets and candy be saved for eating at home, as your child and the others all prefer to eat the sweet food. If your child has other foods from which to choose, healthier foods will be selected from the foods you have provided. For drinks, we suggest juice, milk or water, rather than sweetened drinks. We teach the children that food and drinks can help them grow strong and healthy bodies, so please help by providing healthy choices at lunch. There is no microwave or refrigeration available for lunches, so please use an insulated thermos, cold pack, etc. if needed to keep food cold. Also, please label lunch boxes and plastic containers. Do not be surprised if your child does not eat all of her/his lunch every day. It may be for any number of reasons, but be reassured that s/he will eat what they need or want at that time.

## G. Field Trips

Throughout the school year, a number of field trips will be planned. Some of these are walking trips, and some are driving trips. All children are invited to attend every field trip, even if it is not occurring on a day they usually come to school. When a child attends a field trip on a day that is not his or her normal day, a parent or guardian from his or her family is required to accompany him/her. Please keep the following in mind:

**Permission Slips** - A permission slip must be on file for every child that is joining a field trip. This year there will be a signup sheet with field trip details, sign up deadline, and an area for each family to sign up. This sheet will then be copied for each child's file. Please be sure to:

- Sign up by the deadline if you and/or your child wish to attend
- Try to avoid last minute changes of plans which would require crossing out entries on the sign up sheet. This sheet must be neat and organized as permission slips are required by law for each child.

**Chaperones and Carpools** - We often request additional parents join us on field trips as chaperones so that there are enough adults to hold children's hands as we walk. For every driving field trip, parents will be asked to volunteer to drive as many children as they can fit in their car. *Teachers do not drive on field trips.*

**Car seats** - On the morning of a driving field trip, parents not driving their own children are asked to leave their car seat on the ramp going up to the school outside (weather permitting) with masking tape labeling whose seat it is.

**Siblings** - Some field trips are appropriate for siblings to attend, and some are not. The field trip permission slip will state whether or not the field trip is a sibling trip or not.

## H. Teacher Break Times

We always have difficulty fitting teacher break times into the daily schedule. This fall we will be trying to schedule one twenty-minute break into the schedule for each teacher once every three days. This is planned for 8:30am - 8:50am each day, so that the teachers have a bit of time to make personal calls and attend to their personal business a couple of times a week. It's therefore possible that you'll see teacher in the office every day during drop off - please do your best to respect the teacher's break period.

## VI. THE PARENT-TEACHER'S DAY AT SCHOOL

The most important aspect of Parent-Teaching is to come and have fun with your child and everyone else.

- Arrival** Please arrive for Parent-Teaching by 8:30 am. Check with a Teacher to see what is going on for the day, set up outdoor play yard, check the play yard for litter, and sweep the walkway.
- Free Play** Free play is from 8:30 am - 9:45 am. The Parent- Teacher should choose an area to be in to help and play with the children. Sitting on the floor or in a chair to get down on the children's playing level is a good idea. If you or your child wants to go to another area, just switch with a Teacher. We try to keep a 5:1 or 6:1 ratio in all areas of the school. Ask/help a child to put away a particular toy she or he played with before moving to another activity, if materials are strewn around.
- Clean-up** About 5 minutes before the end of Free play, a Teacher will tell everyone there are 5 more minutes to finish playing, then we will clean up. The Teacher will put music on and everyone helps clean up.
- Snack** At snack time, children can help to set up the tables with dishes, foods, and drinks. All children sit down at a table with a Teacher or Parent-Teacher to have a snack after handwashing. The Parent-Teacher should always honor his or her own

child's request to sit next to them. At snack, the Parent-Teacher can assist children as needed and chat.

- Outside Play** The Parent-Teacher should help children to put on outside clothing if needed. Children should sit down on the bench when they are ready, then a Teacher will go out with the first five children, others coming out as they are ready. The Parent-Teacher should go out too. Be sure to dress for the weather: clothing and foot gear.
- Circle** The Parent-Teacher should sit with their own child and the other children and Teachers and participate in the activities. Your child will get to count all of the children with your help if he/she wishes, and have the first choice of small groups.
- Small Groups** Children will choose a small group activity. The Parent-Teacher will have a group with no more than 4 children, their own included. Parent-Teachers are welcome, but not expected, to bring in special activities to share with a group - just let the Teachers know what you would like to do. Children then go to wash up.
- Story Time** The children will each choose a book to look at/read themselves. Then the Teacher will collect these books, and read a story to the whole group.
- Lunch** The Parent-Teacher should help his or her own child wash up and then sit down at a table and help children with their lunches - opening and packing up, as well as chatting and eating.
- Clean Up** Please wash dishes per guidelines and wash tabletops with a soap and water spray and then a bleach and water solution. Sweep the floors by the tables. Please leave the chairs pushed into the tables when done. When children begin getting ready for rest, please help as needed.

Answering the telephone is not a priority. The answering machine will take the message if not picked up. Please limit your personal or work phone calls to a bare minimum. Your primary responsibility is to be with the children.

## **A. What to Expect From Your Child**

It is quite common for the child whose parent is doing parent teaching to have a more difficult day than usual, particularly early in the year when he or she is not accustomed to sharing you with other children. Sometimes you might feel frustrated or embarrassed, but the teachers

understand and will help you, your child and the other children work out any problems. Focus on having fun and being relaxed rather than your child's issues.

However, we do think it can help if you prepare your child before coming to school by telling him/her that it is your day to be the Parent Teacher at school, that you will be with your child and will also help anyone who needs it. We will also try to talk with them about this. The teachers would be happy to discuss this with any parent as needed and to help your child if needed.

At snack, lunch, circle and story, let your child feel special and sit with you. Please don't have another child sit on your lap at these time, the others can sit next to you or near you.

## **B. Being Aware and Available to Children**

It is important for all the adults who are working in the room on a particular day to be aware of where children are. We can and should be spending time with small groups or individual kids, and yet while doing that, we also have to have a sense of the group as a whole. This is not always easy to do, but it certainly can prevent a lot of problems. It helps if you try to always be positioned so that you can see a good portion of the room or play yard. We should also try to limit adult conversations so that energies can be focused on the kids.

There will be times when the kids are involved and busy playing with one another and you feel as if you're not doing anything. It's perfectly fine to simply observe at these times. Our role is not to entertain but to make sure that a lot is happening for the kids. If it is, there is no reason to interrupt. The important thing is to be aware of what they are doing and available should they need some help. Children need to feel that they are safe and well taken care of at all times. We establish rules of safety with the children at the beginning of the school year, and these rules are posted in each room as a guide to the parent-teacher and as a reminder to the children.

## **C. Encouraging Creativity and Use of Imagination**

It is important to us that the materials in the space encourage independence of thought and creativity as much as possible. Children should be allowed to use most of the materials in the way that they choose, even if it is not the intent of the particular toy or activity. They have such a natural ability to use their imaginations and be resourceful and creative. They seem to lose this spontaneity if we make them feel that there is a "right" way of doing everything. There are limits, of course. We can't allow a child to paint the walls as opposed to paper, and we'll have to follow directions if we're doing a cooking project. What we can do is provide many activities,

which allow for individual expression such as painting, gluing, play dough, blocks, sand, water, dramatic play, writing, woodworking, etc.

We should also encourage and allow children to do things for themselves, making them feel that we see their work as valuable and that we have confidence in their abilities. For example, it is quite common for adults to draw pictures for children. This is with good intentions, of course, and children will often ask adults to draw for them. When we do this, however, we discourage them because they anticipate their inability to create a perfect object the way an adult can. They also begin to get the message that in order for it to be of any value, it has to be something recognizable. For very young children, the process of doing something is often more important than the end result. Adults will often ask, “What is it?” of a child who is painting for the fun of it without any thought to what it might be, or experimenting with mixing colors, or stacking blocks to see how high it can be before it falls. These are valuable experiences for children, and we can help them feel good about themselves by commenting on some aspect of the process such as the colors they are using, how hard they have worked at something, how tall the building is, etc.

#### **D. Limit Setting**

There is no question that consistent, clear limit setting and discipline is important to young children. They do not want to have total control over what goes on in their lives - it’s too scary. They need to know that we will stop them if they are hurting others or being overly disruptive and that we will teach them to solve their problems in a caring and fair manner.

It also seems important that there are not too many rules and regulations. If there are, children can become overwhelmed and feel that they can’t do anything right. To the extent that it is possible, the children participate in the development of appropriate rules. The best bet seems to be having only those rules that are necessary to keep the children safe and then being very clear and firm about enforcing them. This can be difficult in a cooperative because of the large number of adults the kids will be in contact with. Therefore, it’s very important that we communicate with everyone who works in the room about particular issues that may be going on for the group or the individual children who seem to be having trouble at particular points and about how we are dealing with these. Consistency is very important!

Throughout the year we spend a good amount of the time teaching the children to respect each other, and how to communicate verbally rather than physically. It may be easier to push someone out of the way than to ask them to move, or to grab a toy out of someone’s hand when one would like to play with it rather than to ask for a turn. Pushing and grabbing are not acceptable, however, and it is up to us to teach alternatives. Some things we might say in these kinds of situations are:

“Pushing hurts people. You need to ask Linda to move out of your way if you can’t get by.”

“Please use your words and ask Casey if you can have a turn with that toy when she is done. It’s not okay to grab things from people.”

“ I will give Kareem five more minutes with the bike and then you may have your turn.”

The message has to be clear that it’s not okay to hurt people to get what you want.

It’s also important to acknowledge the feelings that a child may be experiencing when she has been aggressive. We don’t want her to think that it’s not all right to have feelings but that they have to be expressed in ways that don’t hurt other people. We may need to help children find alternatives to working out their anger. They may need to yell out that they’re angry or stomp their feet or pound on some play dough. We can tell them, “it’s OK to be angry, but it’s not OK to hurt people.”

The following is the formal school discipline policy, as stated in our EEC licensing materials:

- Corporal punishment, including spanking, shall not be used.
- No child shall be subjected to severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse.
- No child shall be denied food or force fed as a form of punishment.
- No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.
- Children who are being disruptive may be put in “time out.”

## **E. Work Substitutes**

**IT IS EVERY FAMILY’S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THEIR COMMITMENT TO PARENT TEACHING IS MET.** When a parent is unavailable for a scheduled workday, the best option is to use the parent teaching calendar to swap with another family. The Personnel Committee also maintains a list of paid substitutes (including current and former parents and interested others) who will be available to work, and paid by the family who uses them. The rate of pay for parent teacher substitutes is \$12.00 per hour. Parents interested in a substitute should make their own arrangements with the sub as far in advance as possible. When families need a long-term substitute, they may designate a person who is used consistently as their substitute, such as a friend, relative, nanny, etc. but must work at least 3 parent teaching days themselves.

All changes in scheduling (swap, substitution, etc.) are to be reported to the teachers and the scheduler when the arrangements for such changes are made.

## **F. Siblings**

It is not appropriate to bring siblings on parent teaching days. The nursery school children need the parent teacher’s undivided attention, and the presence of a sibling can often compromise

that attention. Please find alternate care for children other than very young infants during your parent teaching days.

## **VII. THE PARENT AND TEACHER PARTNERSHIP**

A cooperative program such as this is a partnership between teachers and parents. We must each bring to this relationship a willingness to work together to provide the best environment for the children. This requires a commitment from all of us.

Basically, there is more to this program than dropping your child off in the morning and picking him/her up a few hours later. We believe that the parent and teacher relationship is as important as the relationship the teacher has with the children.

We stress communication. We think it's important that you maintain a high level of interest in your child's activities during the time s/he is at school. It's essential that we feel free to ask questions, express our opinions, allow for different styles in the classroom, and for different family lifestyles and values. Please let the teachers know when your child and/or family is experiencing something new or different or has any specific concerns, moving, family illness, parent(s) travel, nightmares, parents-children arguing etc. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year, at which time a written report about each child's progress is shared with parents and placed in the child's file.

In addition, parents are urged to talk with the teachers whenever they have any concerns, or if anything out of the ordinary is happening at home which could affect your child's behavior. Teachers, in turn, are always available (by appointment) to discuss any concerns that may develop. Also, the school has periodic whole school meetings. All of this is done to help further our goal of maintaining an excellent line of communication in the community. You should always feel free to offer an opinion, or voice an objection, to suggest a new idea or to ask a question. Don't feel afraid to say something; don't feel as though "it's not your place to say". Honest, open and frequent communication is the key to the parent-teacher partnership. Also, always feel that you can share your ideas, books, materials, talents, concerns and cultural traditions.

## **VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

In keeping with our open-door policy, Ashmont Nursery School keeps the door unlocked during the school day, and uses the alarm chime to notify teachers and other adults when visitors enter the building, enabling a teacher or parent to graciously welcome a guest and meet a visitor's needs. Teachers set the door to chime when no adult is in the front room and at their discretion. Parents are invited and welcome to visit their child/ren any time, unannounced.

Ashmont Nursery School has developed the following policies in conjunction with the Department of Early Education and Care guidelines.

### **A. Health and Safety Contacts:**

Megan Sonderegger, RN (ANS Parent)	617-459-1278
Codman Square Health Center, 6 Norfolk Street, Dorchester	617-825-9660
Carney Hospital, 2000 Dorchester Avenue, Dorchester	617-296-4000
Boston Medical Center	617-414-5000
Boston Fire Department	911
Boston Police Department, District C	617-343-4330
Poison Control Center	800-222-1222

### **B. Ambulances**

Boston Health and Hospitals	911
EasCare Ambulance	617-464-1600

Parent and Staff Emergency Telephone Numbers are located in the Emergency Card file next to the telephone in the office.

### **C. Medical Emergency Procedures**

Each parent is required to sign a medical emergency form, which gives the school permission to take a child to the Codman Square Health Center, the Carney Hospital, or to the parent-designated hospital in the event of an emergency. This is kept in a box next to the phone and is on the back of the Emergency Phone Numbers.

The First Aid Kit is kept in the locked cabinet in the children's bathroom. Teachers are responsible for monitoring first aid supplies and notifying the school purchaser when it is necessary to replenish it.

#### **Minor Injury (not requiring hospital treatment)**

- Administer first aid (cleanse, apply antiseptic if applicable, properly bandage).
- Notify parents, guardian or person so designated by the parent if the parent cannot be reached.
- Fill out accident report as judged necessary by the head teacher.

#### **Minor Illness**

- Isolate the child in a separate area of the room.
- Call the parent, guardian, or designated person if the parent cannot be reached and arrange for the child to be picked up immediately.

**Major Injury or Major Illness:**

- Notify parent so that she/he may go to the hospital or clinic as necessary.
- If the parent cannot be reached, using an ambulance or any car if a parent is available to drive, take the child to the parent designated health center or hospital. One or two adults from the school will take the child. If two adults can go, one will wait for the parent to arrive in the lobby of the clinic or hospital.
- The adult(s) will take the child's file and emergency information card with them to the hospital or clinic.
- Staff will continue to try to reach the parent and to calmly explain the situation to them.
- If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the listed emergency contact person will be called.

**Field Trips**

On field trips, a portable First Aid Kit is brought by the Head Teacher along with the Parent Emergency Medical Forms and Phone Number Box.

**D. Injury Prevention Plan**

1. All staff will have completed an American Red Cross certified first aid and CPR course and keep it updated every one to three years as each expires.
2. The teachers will monitor the environment daily to immediately remove or repair any hazard, which may cause injury. This will occur as each room, project and the playground are set up, in session, and during clean up time.
3. A central Injury Log is kept on the teacher's desk next to the phone and reviewed on a regular basis at staff meetings.
4. Injuries are reported to the parents as indicated in the Emergency Medical Procedures by phone if necessary or in person at pick up time. Further documentation of injuries requiring first aid is kept in the child's record with the date and time of the injury and the time of parent notification.
5. Cleaning supplies are stored in a locked kitchen cabinet. Gate to kitchen should be kept locked at all times. No unsafe items such as matches and knives are kept in the classrooms.
6. Storage of toys is designed so heavy items are stored on lower shelves and lighter ones on higher shelves.

7. Rules for children include no rough housing, no running or throwing anything indoors, only four people on the loft at once, and only soft toys the loft.
8. The interior loft structure is built with appropriate measurements between ladder rungs.
9. Any spills are immediately cleaned up to prevent slipping.
10. Children are required to wear shoes or slippers during cold weather in case we need to take them outdoors in an emergency.

### **E. Plan for Managing Infectious Disease**

1. Ashmont Nursery School will not admit any child who has a diagnosed communicable disease while in the infectious stage and shall notify all parents when any communicable disease has been introduced into the school. Teachers will inform parents in person, posting a note on the door, sending home a written notice, and/or by implementing the phone tree.
2. Parents or guardians will be carefully questioned as to symptoms of infection in their child as well as other family members. The teachers will monitor such early signs and symptoms of illness as lethargy, decreased activity, unusual behavior or poor appetite in a child closely. Although these symptoms do not require exclusion from school, close observation for further developing illness is required.
3. A close contact between parents, teachers, physicians, health care consultants and the Public Health department will be maintained to insure that vaccinations are up to date and health problems are managed adequately. Transition time between parents and teachers at the beginning and end of the day will be thoughtfully used to identify symptoms of any infection in the child or household contacts.
4. A child should not be brought to school if any of the following conditions occur:
  - Fever higher than 98.6 the previous evening or in the morning of school
  - Fever of 99 within the past 24 hours of school morning
  - Vomiting in the morning or the night before
  - Symptomatic diarrhea
  - Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
  - Infected skin or sore
  - Undiagnosed rashes
  - Sore throat
  - Yellow skin and/or eyes
  - Fussy and/or unable to comfortably participate in social play or outdoor activities

5. If in doubt about the condition of the child, it is best to keep the child home. This protects everyone. Children should not be given fever reducing medications in the morning and sent into school “fever-free”- this is not in your child’s best interest and does not support our caring environment.
6. If a child exhibits signs and symptoms of illness that require exclusion during the day, the child will be cared for by the teachers or parent helpers in an isolated area and the parent or guardian will be contacted to pick up their child immediately.
7. Resources such as *Health in Day Care*, a publication of the Division of Family Health Services, MA DPH, and *Infection Control in the Child Care Center and Preschool*, Leigh Donowitz, 1991, will be available to all teachers and parents at school.

## **F. Head Lice**

Although not an infectious disease, head lice can be a major inconvenience for affected families and can be transmitted between children both in and outside of the school setting. In keeping with the caring and cooperative nature of our school, ANS takes the following approach to dealing with head lice in our community:

1. Head lice happen, and they do not reflect on the families infected.
2. Should your child become infected with lice, please notify the school immediately, and keep your child home for your chosen course of treatment. Please do not send them back to school until you have determined them to be lice free.
3. Upon notification of a case of lice, the ANS phone tree will be activated and a sign placed on the door asking all parents to check their children for lice before bringing them school, and to remain on the lookout for as long as needed to be reasonably assured the “outbreak” has been contained.
4. All families will help with the school's efforts to prevent the spread of lice, including but not limited to: continuing to monitor your child/ren for signs of lice as needed, the way rest materials are stored and laundered, where coats and hats are kept, the bagging and laundering of dress-up costumes and extra hats and clothing available at the school, etc.
5. Additional published resources will be available to all teachers and parents at school.

## **G. Immunizations**

Children are required by law to have a medical examination and proper immunizations before each school year. Parents may provide ANS with a signed letter stating that this requirement contradicts their religious beliefs, if applicable.

## **H. Plan for Infection Control**

1. Staff and children should be free of known infections and maintain high standards of personal hygiene. Physical exams, vaccination records and TB screening records will be kept updated in accordance with EEC requirements for staff and children.
2. Hand washing is the single most important procedure for preventing the transmission of infections. Its correct performance will be taught and reinforced throughout the year. For routine washing, the hands should be wet, and liquid soap applied with vigorous rubbing together to lather on all surfaces for at least 10 seconds, followed by thorough rinsing under running water and drying. Paper towels will be used to dry hands. Hand washing will be carried out when visible contamination or soiling occurs, after toilet use, after handling any bodily fluids, before eating, before and during food preparation, and after tending children with known infectious diseases or runny noses.
3. Environmental cleaning such as vacuuming, sweeping, dusting and washing occurs at the end of every school day (during the day if the situation arises).
4. Dishes and cups are cleaned of organic material and soaked for 5 minutes in a disinfectant solution of 150 parts bleach to 1,000,000 parts water. After a thorough rinsing, they are air-dried. All contaminated surfaces such as tabletops and the water table are cleaned before and after all meals with a soap and water solution, and then the previously mentioned bleach and water solution.
5. Food preparation is done in the kitchen with the sink and paper towel supplies available. Hands are washed before food preparation and before eating. Disposable gloves are available as needed. All perishable food is refrigerated and discarded after 24 hours if not used.
6. Disposable gloves are available in the first aid kit and will be used for contact with blood or bodily fluids. Any equipment or surfaces so contaminated will be cleaned and then soaked with bleach and water for 15 minutes, rinsed and aired out.

7. The center will be aired out daily for 10 minutes during clean up time after the children are gone.

## **I. Plan for Meeting Specific Health Care Needs**

1. Parents will identify allergies on the information forms filled out before school. These allergies are posted at school in a location that is easily visible during snack preparation.
2. Time is taken during orientation to review these postings with parents.
3. Allergies and other particular health issues are also noted on each child's card in the emergency medical/phone file, which is taken to the hospital in the event of an emergency.

## **J. Medications**

### **Prescription medications**

- Parents must bring in the container with the prescription label on it, which should include the current date, child's name, amount to be given, number of times to be given, and the name of the medication.
- Parents must sign a medication authorization form.
- Medication is stored in the refrigerator or in the cabinet in the children's bathroom.

### **Non-Prescription medicine**

- Non-prescription medicine will not be given without a doctor's note, i.e. Tylenol cough syrup, etc.
- Topical lotions/medications such as sunscreen, antibiotic cream etc. will not be applied without written permission from parent/guardian.

## **K. National/Regional/Local Emergencies**

Ashmont Nursery School has taken every precaution in case of a state of national emergency. If at anytime your phone numbers or emergency information changes, please let the Registrar know as soon as possible.

- The school is stocked with non-perishable foods and bottles of water for three days.
- It has first aid supplies.
- There is a battery-operated radio in order to receive communication from the news media.

- The teachers have planned activities so that your children will be busily engaged if they are to stay at the school for an extended time frame. They are prepared to keep the children overnight if necessary at the school.
- The teachers are available on their cellular phones. In case of a national emergency, the teachers can be reached at:  
Mary Greene: 617-429-5649  
Edna Speller: 617-892-2980  
Kerri Klugman: 617-335-7078

The teachers are well-prepared and able to handle all situations. You are urged to make your own decision about picking up your child from the school. If you, or someone listed on your emergency card is unable to pick up your child, please call the school and notify the teachers as to the name of the person who is picking up your child. The teachers will only then release your child upon proper identification.

If there is a problem with the building, the children will be moved the YMCA, two doors down on Washington Street.

## **L. General Emergency Plan**

In the event of an incident outside of the ANS building that potentially may place any of the occupants at risk, the following plan will be followed:

1. All occupants will immediately move away from all windows and doors leading to the outside and, if necessary, lie down on the floor.
2. The lead teacher will assess the situation, and if necessary, move all occupants to the inside hallway in the rear of the school or to a different classroom.
3. Communication with the appropriate authorities will be made by a cell phone, if necessary.
4. The lead teacher will determine the appropriate time to re-enter the main building.
5. In the event the occupants are outside during playtime, they will immediately be directed into the building, and follow steps 1-4.

## **M. Fire Drill and Evacuation Procedures**

1. The Teacher in the big room will gather all the children at the exit door in Room One and will proceed to the sidewalk of Washington Street after closing door tightly behind you. Walk with children to Ashmont St. Turn right and walk down Ashmont Street. Meet with the other

children and teachers just beyond the ANS yard and fence at the yellow house next to Ashmont Nursery School.

2. The Teacher in the art and/or book areas will gather children and exit through the main access door onto Ashmont Street. Turn right and walk to the end of the Ashmont Nursery School yard and fence. Meet with the other children at the yellow house next to Ashmont Nursery School.
3. If the appropriate exit is blocked, proceed to the nearest available safe exit.
4. The Teacher will check all bathrooms and multipurpose rooms for any children and will escort them outside by the nearest door.
5. The daily attendance records maintained by the Teachers will be brought outside during the drill. Attendance will be taken by the Teacher to insure all children are present.
6. All staff and children will remain on the sidewalk near the yellow house next to Ashmont Nursery School, until notified that all is clear for return to the building.
7. All parents and teachers will make themselves familiar with the evacuation plan.
8. There will be fire drills held every month on dates scheduled by the Teachers. These dates will be scheduled to include all groups of children and staff. The times of the drills will be varied throughout the program day.
9. The Teacher will document the date, time and effectiveness of each fire drill.
10. In an emergency, the teachers will take the backpack with the children's emergency phone numbers and emergency first aid kit. Attendance list will be taken as well.

## **N. Suspected Child Abuse**

All teachers are required to report any suspected child abuse including questionable marks, bruises or neglect to the President and Vice President of the Board of Directors, in strict confidence, prior to a report being made to the Department of Social Services (DSS). The President(s) is responsible for reporting child abuse and/or neglect to DSS.

The Teachers, President(s) and Vice President will take the necessary steps to determine whether there is sufficient cause to warrant filing a 51A report with DSS. The parent will also be notified about the suspected abuse/neglect as part of the filing process. Contact should be made with

any agencies affiliated with the family in an attempt to determine and help coordinate support services being rendered.

If the parent or guardian is not accessible or cooperative and the injury or neglect in question appears serious, the school's medical emergency procedure may be followed and a 51A will be filed, with appropriate follow-up.

## **IX. SOCIAL SERVICE REFERRAL PLAN**

The procedure for referring children and their families to the appropriate social services begins with the recognition of the child's need by the teacher in the classroom. The following steps are then implemented:

1. The teachers will observe and document the area of concern.
2. The child's needs will be discussed at the educational team meeting with the teachers and an Education Consultant.
3. An Educational Consultant will make her own observation and discuss this with the teachers. If the child's special need is unable to be serviced within the classroom setting, the teachers will notify the parent of their concern.
4. The teachers and, if needed, an Education Consultant will set up a meeting with the parents. At this time the Educational team and parents would work together to have the child's special need evaluated. The Educational Team would supply a list of referral agencies. The teachers shall inform the child's parents of the availability of services and their rights under Chapter 766. If the child is under age 3, the teachers shall inform the parents of the availability of services provided by Early Intervention Programs.
5. The parents must give written consent in order to have the school make a referral and this will be placed in the child's folder.
6. Parents must contact and arrange for specific evaluations to be completed.
7. The Educational Team will assist in the evaluation process by meeting with the specialists evaluating the child and sharing information concerning the child's special need. All information will be documented and placed in the child's file.
8. If outside services are recommended, the school will work with the parents and the agency to integrate the services with our program. The teachers will maintain a written record of any

referrals, including the parent conference and results. A referral checklist will be kept in the child's record.

9. If an outside placement is recommended, the school will prepare the child for the transition to the new program.

**Referral Agencies:**

Codman Square Health Center (includes Dental, Vision, Hearing, Pediatrics)	617-825-9660
Carney Hospital	617-296-4000
Children's Hospital	617-735-6000
Dorchester Counseling Center	617-436-0166
Dorchester House	617-288-3230
Lee Community School	617-265-6569
Chapter 776-Special Education Dept., Boston Public Schools	617-635-7800
Bay Cove Early Intervention Program	617-371-3010

**X. PROCEDURE FOR TERMINATION**

Ashmont Nursery School may interrupt or terminate service for the following reasons:

- Failure to pay tuition or other fees
- Failure to honor the family's contractual obligations to the school, as described in the Parent Contract.
- Failure to provide the required registration forms.
- The school is unable to meet the developmental needs of the child or the safety of the child or other children in the program is jeopardized by the child's attendance at the school.

Before the decision is made to terminate based on the latter criteria, the following steps will be taken:

1. Teachers will discuss their concerns with the child's parent(s) and an educational consultant as soon as they become evident. A meeting between parent(s) and teachers will be held. At this meeting, a plan will be developed to evaluate the developmental needs of the child and to help the child modify the unsafe behaviors. The teachers will prepare a written report outlining the content of this meeting and the plan that was developed. Both parent(s) and teachers will sign the report. A copy will be given to the parent(s). The original will be placed in the child's file. Teachers and parent(s) will check in with each other on a weekly

basis to discuss the progress of the situation. Brief notes written by the teachers from these conversations will be placed in the child's file.

2. If the situation is not resolved by the actions described above, the teachers will again inform the parents and the educational consultant. The Executive Committee will also be informed at this time. With parental permission, the educational consultant will conduct an observation of the child. A written report of this observation will be prepared and shared with the parent(s). A copy of this report will be kept in the child's file.
3. At this point, the teachers, parent(s) and educational consultant will determine if it is wise to continue working with the child at the school or if the developmental needs of the child cannot be met safely by the school. If the teachers and the educational consultant recommend that Ashmont Nursery School is not an appropriate placement for the child, they will communicate this to the parents both verbally and in a written report, which will be signed by both teachers and parent(s). A copy of this report will be kept in the child's file.
4. If the parents disagree with the decision to terminate, a mutually agreed upon outside consultant will be called in to observe and offer written recommendations. The cost will be evenly divided between the parents and Ashmont Nursery School. This report will be shared with the parent(s) and a copy will be kept in the child's file. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors will make the final decision after reviewing all of the written reports and meeting with the teachers and the parent(s).
5. If it is decided that the child must be terminated, the family will be given two weeks written notice of the termination. If the Executive Committee, an educational consultant and the teachers all agree that the child's presence poses an extreme risk to the health and safety of children, this time period may be shortened.
6. When any child is terminated from Ashmont Nursery School, whether initiated by the school or the parent, the teachers will prepare the child for termination in a manner consistent with the child's ability to understand. Teachers will talk with the child and the other children about the departing child and the reasons for his/her departure.
7. We do not suspend children from ANS.

## **XI. TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from school. In an emergency, parent-owned vehicles or ambulances will be used, as outlined under "Medical Emergency Procedures" above.

The school goes on field trips approximately once a month. Sometimes the children walk to neighborhood destinations (the fire house, library, park, etc.), and sometimes-public transportation (bus or trains) is used. For further distances, we use only privately owned cars, driven by parents. All children are required to bring their own car seats on these field trips.

## **XII. SNOW DAYS AND OTHER EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

Ashmont Nursery School will make snow decisions independent of the Boston Public Schools (BPS). Typically, however, Ashmont Nursery School will close whenever Boston Public Schools close for the day due to extreme weather conditions. In the event of extreme weather conditions or other reasons for unexpected closure (e.g. burst pipes, etc.), the Executive Committee will make a decision and will notify the co-operative membership by means of the phone tree.

In the event of an emergency which occurs during the school day, such as fire, natural disaster, loss of power, heat or water, the children will evacuate the building as they have learned to during fire drills, and go with teachers to either the YMCA, which is two doors down from the school on Washington Street, or the Codman Square Library, which is two blocks from the school in the other direction on Washington Street. The teachers will take the box containing emergency contact information and will call parents to pick up children as necessary.

## **XIII. FOR THE RECORD**

Consistent with state regulations, Ashmont Nursery School will maintain a written record for each child, which includes:

1. A fact sheet or sheets which identifies the child by the following information, where available:
  - The name, date of admission, date of birth, place of birth and primary language of the child and parent, if other than English.
  - The parent's name, address and phone number (home and work).
  - Name, address and home number of person to contact in case of emergency when the parent is unavailable. (Person must reside in the local area.)
  - Sex, race, height, weight, hair and eye color and any identifying marks on the child.
2. Copies of periodic progress reports.
3. Medical records indicating the child's health while enrolled, including physical examinations, immunizations and a record of any prescribed medications administered to the child.

4. Individual program plans, and periodic review of such plans for any child with special needs.
5. All necessary authorizations, consents and information.
6. All pertinent correspondence concerning the child, including referrals for social services.

All records shall be legible, dated and signed by the individual making an entry. The information shall be continually updated. The records shall be retained for a period of at least five years after the child has left ANS unless the record has been transferred to the parent.

Information contained in a child's record is privileged and confidential. Ashmont Nursery School will not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without the written consent of the child's parent. Employees of the MA Department of Early Education and Care shall also have access to all records, but shall not remove identifying case material from the premises and shall maintain the confidentiality of individual records. Ashmont Nursery School will notify the parent if the record is subpoenaed. The child's parent shall, upon request, have access to the child's records. Ashmont Nursery School shall not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of any information contained in the child's record.

A child's parent has the right to add information, comments, data, or any other relevant material to the child's record. A parent also has the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child's record.

## **A. Grievance Procedures**

We believe that open communication is the key to a successful parent-teacher partnership. Our teachers are always available for discussion with parents, and encourage them to ask questions and express opinions. Our school is a community, which recognizes and respects different family lifestyles and values. In the event that a difficulty or difference should arise between a parent and a teacher, the parent is encouraged to approach the teacher directly. We find that most disagreements can be resolved successfully through direct and respectful conversation.

However, if a conflict is not rectified through private dialogue; the parent or teacher should bring their concern to the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee will attempt to resolve the conflict informally. If they are unable to do so, they will bring the issue to the attention of the Executive Board. The Executive Board will act to resolve the matter using mediation tools that are appropriate to the particular situation, including but not limited to interviewing the parent and teacher separately, bringing the parties together for discussion, soliciting input from outside consultants, and making a decision as to what course of action would be most beneficial to the school community. If anyone involved in the dispute feels unhappy

about the outcome, they have the right to raise the matter with the full school board for further discussion, provided that nobody violates another person's desire for confidentiality.

Per EEC reg. info:7.08 (6) (m) Our program is licensed by the EEC, located at 1250 Hancock Street, 120-6, Quincy, MA 02169. The phone number of the EEC is 617.472.2881; and (n) parents may contact the EEC for information regarding ANS' compliance history.

## **XIV. PARENTAL RIGHTS**

Chapter 28A. Section 10 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts mandates to the Office for Children and legal responsibility of promulgating rules and regulations governing the operation of day care centers (including nursery schools).

In accordance with this law, the Office for Children published the requirements now in effect on March 31, 1977. The licensee must comply with these regulations in order to ensure a minimum level of care for the children serviced by the day care center and/or nursery school.

The licensee (day care center owner) is required to inform all parents of the "rights of parents" as stated in the regulations at the time of admission of their child to the center.

These rights are as follows:

### **A. Parent Involvement**

7.05 (12) Parent Visits - The licensee shall permit unannounced visits by the parents to the center an their child's room while their child is present

7.05 (13) Parent Input - The licensee shall have a procedure for allowing parental input in the development of center and policy programs. The licensee shall provide an explanation to the parent(s) when a parent makes suggestions as to the program or policy of a center and the licensee does not adopt the suggestions. If the parent requests a written response, the licensee shall respond in writing to the parent.

7.05 (14) Reports to Parents - The licensee shall, periodically but at least every six (6) months, prepare a written progress report of the participation of each child in the center's records. The licensee shall provide a copy of each report to the parent(s) or meet with them at least every six (6) months to discuss their child's activities and participation in the center. In addition:

- a) For infants and children with disabilities, the licensee shall complete a written progress report of the child's development every three (3) months, and provide it to the parent(s);

- b) The licensee shall bring special problems or significant developments particularly as they regard infants, to the parent's attention as soon as they arise.

7.05 (15) Parent Conferences - The licensee shall make the staff available for individual conferences with parents at the parental request.

7.05 (19) Confidentiality and Distribution of Records - Information contained in a child's record shall be privileged and confidential. The licensee shall not distribute or release information in a child's record to anyone not directly related to implementing the program plan for the child without written consent of the child's parent(s). The licensee shall notify the parent(s) if a child's record is subpoenaed.

The child's parent(s) shall, upon request, have access to his child's record at reasonable times. In the event such access be delayed more than two (2) business days after the initial request without the consent of the child's parent(s). Upon such request for access the child's entire record regardless of the physical location of its' parts, shall be made available. The licensee shall establish procedures governing access to, duplication of, and dissemination of such information; an shall maintain a permanent, written log in each child's record indicating any persons to whom information contained in a child's record has been released. Each person disseminating or releasing information contained in a child's record, in whole or in part, shall upon each instance of dissemination or release, enter in to the log the following: his name, signature of the person to whom the information is disseminated or released, the purpose of such dissemination or release, and the signature of the person to whom the information is disseminated or releases. Such log shall be available to the child's parent(s) and center personal responsible for record maintenance.

- (20) Charge for Copies - The licensee shall not charge an unreasonable fee for copies of any information contained in the child's record.

7.05 (21) Amending the Child's Record

- a) A child's parent(s) shall have the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant materials to the child's record;
- b) A child's parent(s) shall have the right to request deletion or amendment of any information contained in the child's record. Such request shall be made in accordance with the procedures described below:
1. If such parent(s) is of the opinion that adding information is not sufficient to explain, clarify or correct objectionable material in the child's record, he shall

have the rights to have a conference with the licensee to make his objections known;

2. The licensee shall, within one (1) week after the conference, render to such parent(s) a decision in writing stating the reason or reasons for the decision. If his decision is in favor of the parent(s), he shall immediately take steps, as may necessary to put the decision into effect.

7.05 (22) Transfer of Records - Upon written request of the parent(s) the licensee shall transfer the child's record to the parent(s), or any other person the parent(s) identifies, when the child is no longer in care.

7.95 (23) Notification to Parents - The licensee shall notify the parent(s) in writing of the provisions of 7.05(19) through 7.05(22) and 7.05(24) at the time of the child's admission to the center and thereafter, in writing, at least once a year.

## **B. Information Required by the Office**

7.05 (24) Availability of the Information to the Office - Notwithstanding 102 CMR 7.05 (19), upon request of an employee, authorized by the Director and involved in the regulatory process, the licensee shall make available to the Office any information required to be kept and maintained under these regulations and any other information reasonably related to the requirements of these regulations. Authorized employees of the Office shall not remove identifying case material from the center's premises and shall maintain the confidentiality of individual records.

7.07(6) Meeting with Parents - The licensee shall assure that the administrator or his designee shall meet with the parent(s) prior to admitting a child to the center.

At the meeting, the licensee shall provide to the parents(s) the center's written statements of purpose, services, procedures for parent conferences, visits and input to center policy; procedures relating to children's records; and procedures for providing emergency health care.

The licensee shall provide the opportunity for the parent(s) to visit the centers classrooms at the time of the meeting or prior to the enrollment of the child.

In addition Section 7.03 (23) requires all licensees to have a copy of the regulations on the premises of the center and the regulations shall be made available to any person upon request.

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