

Islesboro PreSchool

Family Handbook

Also available on our website:

Islesboropreschool.org

Philosophy and Mission:

The Islesboro Preschool (IPS) recognizes each child as an individual with their own set of life experiences. Each child will be encouraged to explore, observe, experiment, and discover through direct, concrete interaction with the environment. Children are given activities to challenge and to increase their developmental skills. Children are accepted for where they are in all stages of development and encouraged to develop at their own rate. Character development is fostered to build caring, honest, respectful, and responsible individuals.

Program:

The preschool will provide an atmosphere that encourages social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth and development of the child as a whole. Using the Maine Early Childhood Guidelines and Infant/Toddler Guidelines, our program will structure activities to meet those goals. Programs such as Creative Curriculum and Handwriting Without Tears will provide structure and assessments to guide and monitor children along their developmental continuum. The day will include a variety of activities which includes sharing and conversation time, stories, songs, finger plays; creative arts and crafts; games and large muscle play with outside play; nature, science, and math activities; field trips on island; and exposure to readiness skills for kindergarten.

Standards:

Islesboro Preschool, incorporated in 1981 as a non-profit 501c3, is licensed by the State of Maine, and complies with all the standards put out by the Department of Health and Human Services. Its operation is governed by a Board of Directors and an Executive Director. Each class is taught by a teacher with an appropriate degree.

Incorporation:

An annual meeting of the corporation is held each spring. At this meeting, board members are voted on and annual policies are determined. The By-Laws of the corporation are available in the Director's office. Quarterly board meetings will convene on an as-needed basis when any new policies can be discussed.

Affirmative Action Statement:

IPS advertises in the public media. Children are admitted regardless of race, creed, sensational origin, or religion. The IPS complies with the American with Disabilities Act. It will work with agencies and families to support children with special needs.

Communication

Good communication is of the utmost importance. It is important that there is a similar child care philosophy between the center and parents. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards the positive outcome for the children. Sensitive issues will be discussed in private at a mutually beneficial time. This booklet is supplied in an effort to answer many of your questions and create a mutual understanding of our organization.

Parents are encouraged to visit the preschool at any time, unless health protocols are in place. If the teacher is not free to speak with you, please understand that the children come first during class time. A special call hour may be arranged or leave a message when it is convenient to contact you. Teachers and the Director can be reached through the website email, or call the preschool at 734-8386 or 207-706-6188 and leave a message.

Location

Islesboro Preschool is located at 152 Main Road, next to the Town Office Buildings. Entrance is through the Town Office parking lot to our driveway. The gravel drive to the Main Road is an exit only.

Enrollment Guidelines

Children who are two and a half years of age through kindergarten age are eligible to enroll in the Preschool programs.

Children who are 3 months through two and a half are eligible for the Infant/Toddler program.

The developmental needs of the child are also a consideration of program eligibility. Classrooms will fulfill the best developmental groups possible to meet the needs of all children involved and meet licensing guidelines.

A child must be two years and six months before September 1st OR three years old before October 15th to be eligible for the preschool group. Children who start preschool before their third birthday will be on a trial basis to decide if the child is developmentally prepared for this experience.

The teacher will make the decision with the parents for the child to continue or not after a minimum two –week observation period. If the decision is made that the child is not developmentally ready for preschool at this time, the child can participate in the Toddler program until the age of three.

A registration packet must be completed and returned within the first week of attendance. This registration packet information is to ensure that your child will get the very best care possible and satisfies the record keeping requirement of state licensing guidelines.

All forms will be reviewed annually and may be updated at other times if required. If there are any changes of information, please notify the director to update your records. There is a deposit fee for the ten-week summer program. Enrollment is open throughout the year when space is available.

Absences

Please notify your child's teacher when your child will not be attending preschool. It often will affect a teacher's plans when the number of children changes. It may also affect the scheduling of staff. There are five excused absences in the September through June program. Extended absences for illness or family plans can be discussed with the Director.

Health Information

Each child is required to have on file a health statement, which includes up to date immunizations. Parents must provide an immunization record within the first 30 calendar days from the date his/her child entered the preschool program. This is a State Licensing requirement.

The preschool must have on file a signed *Permission for Health Care* form authorizing emergency care for each child. This would include emergency numbers for contacting a parent or guardian as well as another third party, authorized person. Beth O'Mara is our primary health care advisor contact along with the Health Care Center.

Please keep your child home if there are symptoms of illness and notify the school staff if your child has a communicable disease. In the event a child contracts a communicable disease and exposes other children; a notice will be sent out informing parents and providing possible actions that may be taken for prevention. The ill child shall not return to preschool until the period of contagion has passed.

No child who arrives in the preschool classroom noticeably ill, with a rash or fever, will be admitted for that school day. If a child becomes ill while at the preschool, the parent or guardian listed on the *Permission for Health Care* form will be notified immediately and asked to promptly pick-up his/her child.

A child attending the preschool should be fever free (without the aid of any medication) for 48 hours before returning to school.

Every effort is used to reduce the spread of illness by encouraging handwashing and other sanitary practices.

Medications

Parents will provide any medications needed by the child, including over the counter and prescription medicine. Parents need to fill out a medications form which gives permission to administer the medicine and details of its use by staff. All medicines must be in their original container with the pharmacist's or manufacturer's label, child's name, dosage instructions, current date, name of medication, and times to be administered clearly written.

Tuition/Payment Procedures

Specific rates will be determined annually. Invoices based on attendance will be emailed weekly. Tuition payments are due upon receipt and can be paid online, mailed to PO Box 88 or placed in the tuition payment folder located outside the Director's office on the bulletin board. Payment may not be made to other staff members.

The success of our program depends on prompt payment of tuition. Since we have entered an annual contract with the Town of Islesboro to provide quality child care services, we are fortunate that a portion of our salary expenses are paid by the town. However, other expenses influence our rates and fees.

- Operation of the IPS building
- Administration of the IPS programming
- Supplies, equipment, snacks, etc.

Arrivals and Departures

For the purpose of safety, children must always be left in the care of an adult when the child is coming and leaving the classroom. Children must never be left in the classroom without the teacher or teacher's aide present. Parents are asked to enter the room or playground area when picking up their child. Procedures may change under special circumstances directed by the Department of Health and Human Services.

It is required by state law that all parents or authorized people need to sign the child in and out each day. A sign in/out sheet is located by the entrance. No child will be released to a person unless previously authorized by the parent or guardian in the registration packet.

If someone different is picking up your child, a change can be made verbally for that day to a staff member. If someone unfamiliar with the staff will pick up your child, written permission from the parent may be needed and staff may ask the individual for identification

If you have topics to discuss with the teacher, please request a meeting in advance. Pick up and drop off may not be the best time to discuss serious problems. Little ears and minds hear and understand more than you know. If coverage of the classroom is available, another space for a conversation may be found or a time arranged.

Please do not bring your child to preschool more than 15 minutes before class begins for the day or pick up more than 10 minutes after class ends for the school day.

If circumstances arise in which a parent cannot be at preschool by the assigned time, arrangements need to be made with the teacher. If a child is left beyond these defined limits with no arrangements made prior, an authorized person will be called and a late fee penalty may be assessed.

Weather Cancellations

Islesboro Preschool follows the public school's emergency closing procedures. Please listen to a local radio station or public media for cancellations due to weather. If Islesboro Central School (ICS) is cancelled due to weather conditions, then the preschool is closed. If the ICS has an hour delayed start, then the preschool will start at 9:30 AM. If there is an early dismissal from ICS, then the phone chain will be used to notify parents for early pickup.

Snack Information

The preschool will provide snacks for all students who are able to eat solid foods. Nutritious guidelines will be followed and any individual dietary concerns will be followed. Children will be encouraged to follow appropriate social etiquette surrounding food and group conversation. Children will be encouraged to try new foods, but it is the child's choice. * Birthdays are a special time in your child's life. We encourage celebrating that special day. Parents may bring a special snack to share with the class. Please consider healthy options.

Proper Dress Requirements

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and safe shoes while attending preschool. We like to have fun! Having fun involves outside play and lots of messy activities. During these times we want the children to feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without worrying about the maintenance of their clothing. Flip-flops are discouraged as a safety concern. The child's name should be clearly labeled on all outdoor clothing to ensure the return of all possessions and clothes. Outside activities are planned during the winter, so please plan for warm clothes, boots, hats and mittens. An extra set of clothes should stay in your child's cubby for a change during the day, if necessary.

Field Trip Guidelines

Islesboro Preschool tries to vary the child's experiences by including field trips into our annual plans. Parents will be informed in advance through a posted notice and a permission form sent home for off island activities. On-island excursions are made within a walkable distance from the preschool. Strollers and safety ropes are utilized while traveling on the Main Road. An annual on-island permission slip is in the registration packet. Parents may be asked to drive for field trips. The requirements for drivers are that they may carry only the number of children they can buckle into individual seat belts, and their insurance must be a minimum 100/300 coverage. All children must have an approved booster seat when on a preschool field trip unless the school bus is used. Ferry fare will be the responsibility of the preschool for off-island field trips. Two adults should ride in each car carrying more than three children on an off-island field trip.

Personal Toys

A child may bring a toy from home during the first two weeks of school in order to make the transition from home to school easier, but it is preferred that personal toys be left at home or in the car. It is appreciated when books, tapes, records, or other equipment are brought to be shared with the whole group. If toys are brought, please note that they may be put away. Little ones have difficulty sharing with

others especially if it is their own special toy. Please remember that toy guns and war toys are not permitted at the preschool or on playground. A child may bring a special rest time sleepy toy and toys may be brought on a special sharing day for show and tell activities.

Fundraising

In order to maintain a budget and keep tuition costs as low as possible, the preschool may run fundraising events throughout the calendar year. It is the responsibility of the membership to help with this endeavor. Each family is required to help with all events; i.e., Christmas and Easter Fairs. Families have a choice of doing additional fundraising events to be applied to their tuition. The Fundraising chairperson will assist in answering any questions that may arise. Any fundraising expense over \$300 has to be approved by the Finance Committee. Individuals must submit a budget and plan to the Fundraising Chairperson for approval of an independent event.

Scholarships

Scholarships are available through the Islesboro Community Fund. Applications are available at the preschool or on the Islesboro Community Fund website and are mailed directly to the ICF, P.O. Box 166, Islesboro, ME 04848.

Supplies

Donations help us keep costs down. If you are able to donate any supplies, please ask a staff member for a list of what is needed.

Scheduled Days and Holidays

Preschool begins after Labor Day and ends mid-June the following calendar year, with exact dates being determined annually. Specific days and times are determined at the annual meeting to set the schedule. The preschool follows the

Islesboro Central School's academic calendar for holidays and vacation weeks. An online calendar can be referenced on the preschool's website.

The Summer Program begins the last week in June and continues for approximately ten weeks to the end of August. There is no summer program on July 4th.

Our program will educate and familiarize children about various holidays. Cultural and religious differences will be acknowledged and respected. If you have questions about activities surrounding a specific holiday, please ask the teacher about her plan.

Discipline

Giving positive verbal rewards encourages acceptable behavior. This reinforces a good feeling about behavior and serves as an example to act in a way to receive praise.

Asking a child to stop and think about his/her unpleasant behavior enables a child to work on self-control.

We maintain a positive discipline policy, which focuses on prevention, redirection, love, consistency, and firmness. We stress two main patterns of behavior: respect for other people and respect for property. The children are explained the rules frequently, so they are familiar with the guidelines.

Please keep in mind that there will be disagreements between children. Young children have a hard time expressing their feelings. Sometimes they hit, throw toys, bite, etc. We will try to prevent problems, redirect when appropriate, discuss inappropriate behavior, encourage making amends with others, and sometimes withdraw privileges based on the principle of "natural consequences". The use of time outs will be rare unless the child needs a brief cooling off period.

If a discipline problem arises that does not respond to the above-mentioned techniques, we will hold a conference with the parents. Together we will find a

solution. You may be called to remove your child if the behavior prevents us from being able to properly care for the other children.

Under no circumstances will there be any spanking, physical abuse, verbal abuse, name calling, or isolation used. Neither food nor sleep will be withheld from a child as a means of punishment. These statements are required by licensing.

Infants and Toddlers

Infants and Toddlers follow their own schedules. There is an outline of the day, but they are not capable of sitting still for a circle time, may need a morning nap, etc.

Infants are fed on demand. Breastfeeding infants need to have an adequate supply stocked and properly labeled. Toddlers usually eat meals and snacks on a set meal schedule.

These children need to bring their own snacks and meals. Parents need to supply diapers, wipes, powders, ointments, bottles, bibs, teething or other personal objects and a complete change of clothes.

A report will be prepared daily for each infant/toddler. It will include such things as time of feedings, what was eaten, amount eaten, time of diaper checks and results, times of naps, any medication given, and various comments about the child's day.

Toilet Training

When you feel your child is ready for toilet training, we ask that you begin teaching this at home. We will follow through and encourage your child in our care. The child must be showing signs of readiness. When a child is ready the process should go rather quickly. The child must always be kept in pull ups or 5-ply training pants. Switching between diapers and training pants can be confusing for the child. Please keep in mind that the activity level here can distract from using the potty when the urge hits. Therefore, we may continue to use pull-ups

until your child can and will announce that he/she must use the bathroom and can control his/her bladder or bowels for a few minutes.

During this time, we ask that your child be dressed in “user friendly” clothes. Best are elastic waist pants or dresses. Try to avoid overalls, snaps, and tight clothing. Parents need to supply pull-ups, or training pants with plastic pants, plus extra clothing-including socks.

Naps/ Quiet Time

There will be a designated nap/rest time every day. All children must nap, rest, read, or play quietly during this period.

Rest time gives children a much-needed break in their day. Without rest time, children can be argumentative, short tempered with others, and not very happy by the end of the day.

Infants nap at various times and their schedules will be accommodated. Between 12-18 months old, children tend to only need one nap a day. At this point we may try a scheduled nap/ rest period.

Special Needs

The Islesboro Preschool will make all reasonable modifications to our policies and practices to accommodate children with special needs, unless to do so would be a fundamental alteration of our existing program. Each child will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine eligibility.

Medical Emergencies/ Injuries

Minor bumps and scratches are inevitable, but we make every effort to keep children safe through supervision and safe practices. Minor injuries receive appropriate first aid. Depending on the nature of the injury, an Injury Report will be filled out and a copy given to the parent to sign.

If an emergency illness or injury occurs, you will be contacted immediately, and the Islesboro Health Center will be called. Parents are responsible for all costs involved in emergency medical treatment.

Evacuation Plans and Fire Drills

We are required by state law to do a fire drill each month. We vary the time of day to help staff and children feel comfortable with the process. We practice two means of escape. The routes are posted by law in the entrance area. An evacuation crib with wheels is used to transport infants and non-walking toddlers. The yearly fire drill log can be found on the bulletin board in the front hallway.

In the event that we do need to evacuate our building, children will be taken to the Boardman Cottage for pickup.

Reporting Requirements

As a child care facility, we are mandated reporters to the Department of Human Services if we feel a child is being abused or neglected. Always be sure to let the director or teacher know when you drop off your child if he/she has any unexplained cuts or bruises. All children that come to child care with injuries have them logged into the child's file. If you ever feel that the Islesboro Preschool is not operating in a safe manner, please bring the matter to our attention. If you want to see the state licensing guideline, there is a copy in the preschool room that you may borrow.

Indoor/Outdoor Play

We provide a variety of toys to play with. Toys may be rotated or taken temporarily out of use, so children do not get bored. Young children have less developed organizational skills and can get frustrated or upset when there are too many toys to choose from. We encourage children to select one or two toys at a time and to put items away before selecting something else.

We are outdoors every day that the weather permits. Make sure your child is properly dressed for the day. We do not go outside if the temperature is below 21degrees (including wind chill), or above 90 degrees (including the heat index).

Otherwise, we are mandated by state law to take the children outside. If a parent feels their child is not well enough to participate in outside activities, they should stay home until they are well enough to participate.

Relationship Policy

Living on a small island may result in IPS employees or its directors having personal relationships with staff or parents of children attending the school. When that is the case, it is imperative that IPS staff and its directors be circumspect about any discussions or actions which could be seen as putting the interest of the child or his/her parents at risk of different treatment.

Confidentiality regarding all school matters related to the child and parent(s) must be maintained at all times. If a concern exists, it is the responsibility of the IPS staff or board member to remedy the situation. Depending on the facts and circumstances, inability to do so may result in counseling, reduction in pay or title, or in extreme cases separation from the school or its board.

Confidentiality of Records

All children's records are only open to the teacher, director and any parentally authorized person. Confidentiality papers acknowledging the responsibility of such information are signed by all staff.

**Please remember it is your preschool and your child's education.
Be involved!**

Revised 8/25/2021

This handbook will be reviewed annually. Notification of changes will be given to parents.

