



## OPEN HOUSE PARENT HANDBOOK

OPEN HOUSE NURSERY SCHOOL

318A Warren Street, Brooklyn New York 11201 718.625.5252

[www.OpenHouseNurserySchool.com](http://www.OpenHouseNurserySchool.com)

- School Director--Eileen Shannon, [eshannon@openhousenurseryschool.com](mailto:eshannon@openhousenurseryschool.com)
  - Associate Director--Amy Herrick, [aherrick@openhousenurseryschool.com](mailto:aherrick@openhousenurseryschool.com)
- Information about our other staff members can be located on our website.

# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>4</b>
OPEN HOUSE NURSERY SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT .....	4
<b>THE PHASE-IN PERIOD AND OTHER TRANSITION TIMES</b> .....	<b>5</b>
FOR FIRST-TIMERS .....	5
AND FOR THOSE RETURNING .....	5
<b>YOUR CHILD’S CAREGIVER</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>FIRST DAY CHECKLIST</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>SPECIALISTS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
EARLY CHILDHOOD CONSULTANT.....	6
<b>GUIDELINES</b> .....	<b>7</b>
EARLY DROP-OFF, DROP-OFF, AND PICK-UP.....	7
CLOTHING .....	7
FOOD.....	7
REST TIME.....	8
BIRTHDAYS .....	8
TOYS IN SCHOOL.....	8
MESSAGES.....	8
WEATHER EMERGENCY CLOSURES .....	8
PLACEMENTS.....	9
FINANCIAL AID .....	9
TUITION OBLIGATIONS AND COLLECTIONS .....	9
<b>THE CLASSES AT OPEN HOUSE</b> .....	<b>9</b>
THE NEST .....	10
THE GARDEN.....	10
THE POND.....	10
THE SAVANNAH.....	10
THE RIVER.....	10
THE MEADOW .....	10
<b>CLASSROOM BLOGS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>OTHER PROGRAMS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
THE VOUCHER SYSTEM.....	10
AFTER3PLAY.....	11
VACATION CAMPS .....	11
SUMMER CAMP .....	11
EDUCARE.....	11
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b> .....	<b>11</b>
ILLNESS .....	11
ALLERGIES / NUT FREE ENVIRONMENT.....	12
HEAD LICE .....	12
ACCIDENTS AND MEDICAL EMERGENCIES .....	12
HEALTH FORMS.....	12
FIRE DRILLS .....	13
EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES.....	13
<b>PARENT PARTICIPATION</b> .....	<b>13</b>
BOARD OF DIRECTORS.....	13



FUNDRAISING .....	14
<b>SCHOOL CALENDAR.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
WORKSHOP ON EARLY CHILDHOOD SEPARATION .....	15
FALL SOCIAL .....	15
CURRICULUM NIGHT .....	15
PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES .....	15
FAMILY DAY .....	15
FUNDRAISING EVENTS .....	15
END OF YEAR CLASS PARTIES.....	16
VACATION CAMP/SUMMER CAMP .....	16
<b>FAQS.....</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>EVACUATION PROCEDURE .....</b>	<b>C</b>



## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to Open House Nursery School! We believe that clear expectations and effective communication are essential for a positive school experience and, with that in mind, we have prepared this handbook. It should answer many of your immediate questions and become a year round reference guide for All Things Open House. Inside, you will find information regarding our policies and your responsibilities, and guidance on dealing with everything else from health forms to birthday cupcakes. If you misplace the Handbook, go to our Website ([www.openhousenurseryschool.com](http://www.openhousenurseryschool.com)). All this information and much more, can be found there. We're planning for you and your child to have a great year at Open House!

### *Open House Nursery School Mission Statement*

The following are the objectives of Open House Nursery School:

- To promote optimum development of children in the Early Childhood years.
- To provide needed services, including childcare and Early Childhood Education to the community.
- To seek to provide these services to children and their families from a broad range of backgrounds, and to offer program flexibility to serve diverse needs.
- To provide an environment in which effective communication and cooperation is enhanced on all levels, where differences between people are understood, respected, and treated in a complementary rather than competitive manner.
- To provide an educational environment for children in which the following are stressed:
  - Development of the “whole child”.
  - Recognition that learning progresses from the concrete to the abstract, and that an Early Childhood curriculum is based on a rich and varied assortment of activities.
  - Development of the following attributes in children: sensitivity, curiosity, readiness to accept challenges, flexibility of response, logical thinking, tenacity, reflection, positive self-concept, self regulation, effective communication, and responsibility.
  - Acquisition of fine motor skills, cognitive skills and factual knowledge in a manner that is relevant to the child’s perspective.
  - Recognition that the child’s learning process is best cultivated when a relationship of collaborative interaction prevails between parent and child.
- To provide a learning environment, which reflects the premise, that children learn in many ways and through all their senses.
- To provide a learning environment which shows a balance between the following:
  - Unfettered exploration and guided instruction.
  - Passive and active learning.
  - Providing challenges and a sense of security.
  - Individual and group activities.
  - Short and long-term goals.
- To provide a learning environment that reflects recognition of the importance of:
  - Play in the learning process of young children.
  - Parental involvement in the learning process, and judicious use of teacher intervention.



## **THE PHASE-IN PERIOD AND OTHER TRANSITION TIMES**

### *FOR FIRST-TIMERS*

For children new to Open House, phase-in begins with the home visit before the first day of school. Your child's teachers will visit you and your child at home so that they will not be "strangers" on the day school begins. The teachers will discuss classroom routines with you and will address any questions or concerns you might have. A home visit gives you, your child, and the teachers an opportunity to begin building a relationship and facilitates a smooth transition into school life. Teachers will call parents towards the end of the summer to schedule home visits prior to the start of school.

The school year will begin with a period of several days where children are gradually introduced to the group and classroom setting. You will have received, either previously, or with this packet, a schedule for this "phase-in." Classes will initially meet in half groups for abbreviated periods. The length of this time will be extended over the course of the next few days or couple of weeks. The length of time it takes before your child attends at full schedule will depend on the age of the group.

If this is your child's first school experience he/she may exhibit separation anxiety. This is developmentally typical for young children and should not be considered a "problem" but rather a process to be worked through. This is accomplished by having a parent, caregiver or other *significant* adult stay in the classroom until the child is comfortable. The next step generally is for the adult to stay in the lobby or grab coffee in the lounge so the child can check in with them if needed. When it has been decided that the adult may leave the building, please provide a phone number in case your child becomes distressed later. If you are in doubt as to whether you should leave the classroom ask your child's teacher. He or she will be your best guide.

Children are all unique. The length of time it takes for a child to successfully separate varies greatly from individual to individual. Some newcomers will be ready to separate after a day or so, some will need a couple of weeks. Parents/caregivers can continue to stay in the classroom until the child is settled into class. Open House teachers and staff are available to help any child who is having a particularly tough transition and teachers will provide necessary feedback to parents during the process. However, the children must come first and conversations of any length are usually not possible. When a longer discussion is needed, an appointment can be arranged.

It is recommended that all new parents attend the separation workshop (see that section for more details). Or, if you feel you need a longer conversation about this process, you may set up an appointment with Meri Wallace, our early childhood consultant, or with the Director, Eileen Shannon.

### *AND FOR THOSE RETURNING...*

All classes at Open House have a phase-in period, even those that are largely composed of returning children. Experience has taught us that even children familiar with the school often need a couple of days to settle in with new teachers, new friends, and a new classroom.



It's not unusual for separation anxieties to recur at other times during the year, particularly after school breaks. While some children can jump right back into their routines, others may take more time to ease back in. Since children at this point are familiar with their teachers and classmates, parents can remind their child of some of the many things they know and enjoy and can look forward to about school. At drop-off, it's important to express your confidence that your child is going to have a good time and will be in safe hands with our teachers.

### **YOUR CHILD'S CAREGIVER**

In some families the caregiver is the adult who sees the teachers most frequently. It is best that the teachers be introduced to the caregiver at the beginning of school or, when possible, at the home visit.

Open House values caregivers and respects their important role in the lives of young children. If your caregiver is not well acquainted with nursery schools you might want to have a discussion about Open House and share our literature. Open House is always grateful when caregivers can accompany classes on trips as chaperones.

### **FIRST DAY CHECKLIST**

On the first day of school your child will be allocated a cubby. Here is a list of the items you should store there:

- a complete (seasonally appropriate) labeled change of clothing
- a blanket and cuddly, if staying for rest
- Diapers and wipes or bottle, if needed
- a family photo or two
- lunch, if staying for lunch (refrigeration is available for perishables).

### **SPECIALISTS**

A variety of specialists come to Open House on a weekly, or occasional basis, to enrich our program with dance, drama, music, and story telling. Schedules will be provided in class newsletters.

#### *Early Childhood Consultant*

Meri Wallace, Director of the Heights Center for Adult and Child Development, author of *Birth Order Blues* and columnist for *Sesame Street Magazine*, is our Early Childhood Consultant. Ms. Wallace comes four times a month to observe classes and consult with teachers. As a service provided by the school, she is available to meet with parents by appointment. At the beginning of the school year she gives a workshop on separation between children and parents. As the year progresses she will give workshops on other topics of interest to parents. If you wish to have a personal consultation with Ms. Wallace about your child, please contact the Director.



## GUIDELINES

### *Early Drop-off, Drop-off, and Pick-up*

- Early drop off is available beginning at 8:00 a.m. It is preferable that you let us know in advance that you need this coverage. Please see Vouchers for more information on this option. If you are not using early drop-off, please do not arrive before 8:50 a.m. **We expect children to arrive no later than 9:20 a.m.** The structure and continuity of the children's activities are disrupted by late arrivals.
- Give your child time to settle into an activity before you leave the classroom, then be sure to say a quick, cheerful goodbye. This will help your child feel more secure.
- Socialize with other parents in the lobby or the lounge. Talking with other parents in the classroom can be distracting.
- At pick-up time please wait until the teachers have opened the classroom door before you go in to meet your child. It is very important for the well-being of your child that you arrive on time. If you do expect to be late, please notify the school so your child can be prepared for the delay.
- Children are only released to their parents or to those designated in writing. Alert us in the morning if you have any change of plans and note it on the **Going Home Notes** hanging in each classroom. **We will not release a child to anyone who is not scheduled to pick up your child that day.** *Keep all contact numbers completely up to date so that you can be reached by the school at any time.*
- **OUR SCHOOL CLOSSES AT 6:00 P.M. If your child is staying until 6, please be here by 5:50 so we can complete our closing in a timely fashion. It is stressful for children and staff, alike, to have to stay overtime waiting for late pick-ups.**

### *Clothing*

Sometimes children like to wear fancy clothes to school, but the activities they engage in when they are here will include painting, cooking, and playing on the roof playground. We ask that you bring your child to school in sturdy play clothes that do not need special attention.

We all know how easily children's mittens, socks, scarves, etc. can get lost. Give yourself the best chance of finding lost items by **LABELING EVERYTHING**. Open House has a Lost & Found Box.

Keep a complete, seasonally adjusted change of clothing in your child's cubby. In wet or cold weather it is advisable for your child to wear boots or have a spare pair of shoes in the classroom. We use the roof playground on all but the coldest days, so please make sure your child comes dressed appropriately. A hat and mittens/gloves are essential to your child's health and comfort.

### *Food*

The school provides snacks and parents provide lunch. Foods that are perishable should be bagged together and the bag should be labeled. On arrival, place that bag in the Perishables bin in your classroom. Non-perishable foods can be left in the lunch box. A thermos will keep lunches warm.

We will not insist that children eat at lunchtime, but we will encourage them. Children are asked to eat a minimum of 1/2 of the main course before proceeding to the dessert portion of the lunch.



When feasible, we will send home the uneaten portion of your child's lunch. In this way you will have concrete "feedback" concerning your child's lunch habits.

With the exception of a few days following Halloween, *candy is not permitted at school*. Lunch should include a balanced selection of foods.

If your child is on a special diet or is allergic to certain foods, let us know before the school term begins. If your child's needs are very unique, we may ask you to provide snacks from home.

**Since many children are seriously at risk when exposed to peanuts and tree nuts, they will not be permitted in the classroom.**

### *Rest Time*

If your child stays for rest time please keep a clean blanket in their cubby. The children sleep on small cots or mats provided by the school. We suggest that you label everything and keep to a once-a-week cleaning schedule. A small pillow and/or soft toy may also be included.

### *Birthdays*

We are happy to celebrate your child's birthday in school though we try to keep it simple. A celebration with cupcakes is welcome, but additional party favors/goody bags are discouraged. Children enjoy time and attention from loving adults above all else, therefore a school visit from a parent or special person on birthdays is wonderful way to celebrate the day. Talk to your child's teacher to make arrangements.

### *Toys In School*

Children **may not** bring toy guns, swords, or any other toy weapons to school. We also discourage bringing expensive or deeply cherished toys, because it is possible they may get lost or broken. Transitional objects, which help a child adjust to the school environment are welcome. Teachers will let your child know when it is time to put home toys away.

### *Messages*

Please notify the school before 9:15 a.m. if your child will be absent for the day (718.625.5252). Messages for other families can be left in their mail pouch, and messages from the school to you will be found in your mail pouch and/or posted on the school notice board and website ([www.OpenHouseNurserySchool.com](http://www.OpenHouseNurserySchool.com)). Be sure to check for any communications when you come to school. If caregivers are picking up your child make sure they know that checking the mail pouch and notice board is one of their responsibilities.

### *Weather Emergency Closures*

If the public schools close for bad weather, so do we. Call the school or check the website if you are not certain.





### *Placements*

Your child's class placement is made after carefully considering many variables such as age and class size. Parent input is valued, however placements are at the discretion of the Director.

### *Financial Aid*

A limited amount of Financial Aid is available to our school community. The Financial Aid Committee meets to award grants based on the information provided by the Financial Aid Applications. If interested in applying for Financial Aid for next year please ask for an application at the front desk. Financial Aid for the fall is awarded in the previous March. Applications are due the end of January.

### *Tuition Obligations and Collections*

Payments are due on the 1st of the month according to each family's payment schedule. A payment schedule is included in your enrollment contract. In addition, you will receive an invoice before each payment is due.

Checks returned to the bank will be assessed a \$25.00 processing fee. If OHNS receives two checks that are returned in one year, parents will be asked to pay by money order.

Payment is due upon receipt of invoice and is considered late when not received within 30 days. **A LATE FEE OF \$50** will be added each and every month a payment is past due. Invoices that are 120 days past due will be referred to a collection agency.

OHNS reserves the right to refuse the entry and/or terminate the contract of any child whose payments are not current. Such notice or refusal of entry will not affect the parent(s) obligation to pay tuition. No tuition shall be waived nor a refund granted during a child's absence for any reason and OHNS has no obligation to fill the position vacated by the child's absence.

In the event of default in payment, the parent(s) shall be responsible, in addition to the balance of tuition, for all costs, disbursements, accounting and legal fees incurred by OHNS in the pursuit and/or collection of such outstanding tuition.

Withdrawal after the first of July preceding September enrollment will obligate each family to their entire contract.

Be certain to consult with your tax advisor to see if your family is eligible for the Federal Childcare Credit.

### **THE CLASSES AT OPEN HOUSE**

Placement of students varies somewhat each year depending on the overall age of the student population. The ages listed below are the age of the child at the beginning of the school year. All classes are staffed from 8-3 and children's contracted schedules are 9-12, 9-1, 9-3, or extended day to 6. Common to all classes is the following schedule: 9-12 instructional time, 12 to 1 lunch and quiet play, and 1 to 3 rest. The Extended Day program runs from 3-6.



### *The Nest*

This class for younger 2s has three, four and five day schedule options.

### *The Garden*

This class for older 2s and young 3s has three, four and five day schedule options.

### *The Pond*

This class for older 3s has three to five day schedule options.

### *The Savannah*

This is a class for older 3s attending 5 days a week.

### *The River*

This class is for young 4s attending 5 days a week. All children stay for lunch. Rest and extended hours are optional. Students who turn 4 by December 31<sup>st</sup> of entering year are eligible for Universal Pre-Kindergarten. Speak to the Director for more information.

### *The Meadow*

This classroom is for our oldest children, approximately 4.6 – 5 years old attending five days a week. All children stay for lunch. Rest and extended hours are optional. Students who turn 4 by December 31<sup>st</sup> of entering year are eligible for Universal Pre-Kindergarten.

## **CLASSROOM BLOGS**

Each classroom maintains a blog page on our website ([www.OpenHouseNurserySchool.com](http://www.OpenHouseNurserySchool.com)) under the *Community* page. Photos, updates and class news are posted on the blog pages regularly for parents and family members to see. Each blog page is password protected; your teachers will give you the assigned name and password for your class.

## **OTHER PROGRAMS**

### *The Voucher System*

To provide greater flexibility for changing schedules, parents can purchase vouchers for extra hours of childcare on an as-needed basis, adding to their regular contracted hours. Vouchers can be purchased by the hour or in packages of up to 80 hours at a time, at a discounted rate. It is best to let us know as soon as you can when you need additional hours of childcare. Vouchers can only be used on days that your child is already contracted to attend, or for the After3Play program (described below).

For more information on hours and pricing of vouchers, or to purchase the vouchers, see the front desk.



Vouchers are only valid for the school year (including the summer) in which they were bought. They are non-transferable, they cannot be used retroactively, and no refunds will be made for leftover hours.

### *After3Play*

This is a program that meets at Open House for children ages 3-7. It is open to children attending Open House as well as schools in the area. Children are picked up at neighboring schools by our staff members. This program offers classes taught by specialists in such areas as language, dance, yoga, and fine arts. Inquire at the front desk if you are interested in this program.

### *Vacation Camps*

During holiday recesses Open House will be open to our children and to children 2.5 to 6 years old in the neighborhood. It's a relaxed version of our regular school program and will use a lively themed approach. Past themes have been, "Dinosaur Day," "Rocks Around the Clock," "Wild Things In Brooklyn," and lots more. Our schedule is aligned with the public school schedule. Pass the word to friends and neighbors!

### *Summer Camp*

We use our own outdoor space (with water-play) and we're fully air-conditioned inside. There are weekly visits by musicians and dance specialists and, for the older children, field trips to such places as the Staten Island Children's Museum and the Prospect Park Zoo. We offer flexible programs to meet the needs of different family schedules. Spread the word to friends and neighbors!

### *Educare*

Educare is a 5-day, 8 am -6 pm scheduling option that includes all vacation camps and summer camp. A small tuition savings is enjoyed with this option.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### *Illness*

Please alert your teacher if your child has been ill or exposed to a contagious disease. Consult the Directors if your child needs a medication during school hours.

If your child falls ill at school we will notify you and ask you to pick him/her up as soon as possible. Here are the symptoms that will prompt such a phone call:

- A fever of 100 degrees or above
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Persistent cough
- An unexplained rash or blistering
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Head lice



- Symptoms consistent with chicken pox, impetigo, strep throat, or any other contagious disease

An ill child will be isolated from classmates and be made as comfortable as possible. Before returning to school your child must be free of symptoms, including fever, for 24 hours. In some cases we may require that you bring us a doctor's note.

#### *Allergies / Nut Free Environment*

Please alert us to your child's allergies. Open House is a nut-free environment. Please do not bring anything containing these items to school.

#### *Head Lice*

In cases of head lice, your child must be treated with a medicated shampoo. All dead eggs (nits) must be removed. All bedding and clothing at school and from home must be machine washed in hot water to prevent re-infestation. Before returning to the classroom your child will be examined. We have a "no nit" policy, which means that if any lice/nits are found your child will not be allowed to return to the classroom, **no exceptions will be made.**

#### *Accidents and Medical Emergencies*

If your child sustains a minor injury at school an Incident Report will be completed and a copy will be placed in your mail pouch. If your child has a medical emergency we will call you immediately. If you can't be reached we will proceed as instructed on your child's emergency medical release form. If necessary, we will contact your child's physician and/or call an ambulance to take your child to the Long Island College Hospital.

Until you arrive, the Director will take responsibility for your child's well being. The Director and many staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid. Keep us completely up to date with current work, home, and emergency contact phone numbers. If you know you will be at another number for just a day or part of a day, inform the front desk. Parents with complicated work schedules often fill out a monthly calendar of where they will be each day. If caregivers come from their own home to Open House we should have their number also.

#### *Health Forms*

We are licensed by the New York Department of Health and they require that we follow very strict guidelines. Before your child enters school, we need either our completed health form or a doctor's report, which includes a record of all legally required immunizations (see enclosed guidelines), lead test results, and evidence of a physical exam completed within the last calendar year. This report is mandatory for admittance and must be handed in by the first day of school. **WE CANNOT ADMIT CHILDREN INTO THE SCHOOL WITHOUT A COMPLETED REPORT.**

**Emergency release forms and trip forms** must also be completed and on file by the time school begins.



### *Fire Drills*

For everyone's safety, Fire Drills are regularly scheduled throughout the school year. All the children and staff practice exiting the building quickly; therefore they do not pause to put on jackets or coats.

### *Emergency Evacuation Procedures*

A copy of Open House's evacuation procedures is attached. In case of an emergency, the school will call your emergency contact information.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

There are many ways in which you can enhance your child's school experience. Here are some:

- Chaperone trips
- Become a class parent
- Help to improve the school's facilities
- Fund raise
- Lead or participate in classroom projects (e.g., read a book, sing some songs, share cultural traditions)
- Share special skills in computing, graphic design, music, etc.
- Become a member of the Board of Directors
- Join a Board committee to help with fundraising, parent life, programs, strategic planning – Board membership is not necessary
- Act as a docent for new parents during phase-in

You will receive more specific information on how to get involved in Open House activities early in the school year.

### *Board of Directors*

The Board of Directors consists of parents, teachers, and administrators who meet to establish policies and plan fundraising events. It is an excellent way to work for the current health of the school and to contribute to its future.

Board committees include:

- Fundraising
- Programs
- Admissions
- Parent Life
- Strategic Planning
- Finance

The Board functions by the rules set forth in the Open House Nursery School By-laws. Board officers are elected annually. All board meetings are open to any member of the school community. Minutes of the meeting are archived.

Open House does not expect a financial contribution from board members, only a strong belief in the mission of the school and in the power of collaboration



### *Fundraising*

Open House is an independent school. Therefore it relies on tuition and parent-based fundraising to operate. Fundraising events include a Book Fair, the Annual Giving, and our Auctions. Fundraising is vital to us! Please talk to the Director if you can volunteer any time, energy or ideas toward fundraising.



## **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

Check the website for exact dates: [www.openhousenurseryschool.com](http://www.openhousenurseryschool.com)

### **CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS**

#### *Workshop on Early Childhood Separation*

An evening workshop on early childhood separation will take place at the beginning of September. We want your child to have the best possible start to the school year, **therefore we highly recommend that parents and caregivers new to our school make an effort to attend.** But returning parents and caregivers are invited, as well. It is an excellent source of general information on questions relating to separations and new beginnings. Meri Wallace, our early childhood consultant and director of the Heights Center for Adult and Child Development will be the workshop leader. Ms. Wallace will also be in the school and available for consultation on one of the first few days.

#### *Fall Social*

Early in the fall you will receive an invitation for our weekend family brunch. This event is to welcome new members to our school community and to allow “old timers” to catch up on the news and get reacquainted after summer vacations. Bring your whole family!

#### *Curriculum Night*

A parent orientation evening is held in each classroom in October. During this event you will visit your child’s classroom, meet the parents of your child’s classmates and receive an overview of the school year. The teachers will explain daily routines and share their goals for the class. This is an adult-only event.

#### *Parent-Teacher Conferences*

Conferences are held in the Fall and again in the Spring. Additional appointments can be made with the director or teachers at any time during the school year. Please do not hesitate to discuss any issues or concerns. Space limitations do not allow us to provide childcare.

#### *Family Day*

Family Day is a tradition at Open House on the last day of school before the winter break. Family, caregivers and/or friends are invited to visit school and socialize. Special snacks are shared, and songs are sung. Every child should have a visitor. Check your school calendar for the date of this event. School closes at 11:30 a.m. on Family Day.

#### *Fundraising Events*

Our auctions are our most important fundraisers. The monies we raise enable us to apply funds to the areas of greatest need (financial aid, upgrading of learning materials, etc.). *Parents Night Out* is usually held in the Winter. This is an adults only evening with catered food, drinks and live music. There’s a live auction for fabulous items; in the past we have auctioned use of vacation



homes and tickets to gala events. *The Spring Fling* is a wonderful family event with music, activities, food and fun. Families and businesses donate goods and services for the silent auction.

### *School Picnic*

Held in late May or early June, all of our families are invited to bring a picnic lunch along and meet in Prospect Park for a happy, whole-school get-together. This is a chance for eating, socializing and playing games in the great Brooklyn outdoors.

### *End of Year Class Parties*

The year-end parties are joyful transition celebrations—food, fun, and the ceremonial distribution of handmade yearbooks to each child. Pre-K students hold a slightly more “formal” event, which includes a graduation ceremony with diplomas.

### *Vacation Camp/Summer Camp*

School closes for the winter break, mid-winter break, spring break, and summer. If you need childcare during any of these times ask for a vacation camp application. The Summer Camp Applications become available in April. Since enrollment is *on first come first served* basis and space is limited, please plan ahead.





## FAQs

OUR WEBSITE: [openhousenurseryschool.com](http://openhousenurseryschool.com)

This handbook and much more are included on our website. We encourage parents to check it regularly. It includes not only general background and guidelines, but will keep you informed about recent and upcoming school events.

### HOW MANY TEACHERS ARE THERE PER CLASSROOM?

All classrooms have a qualified early childhood educator leading the class and an experienced assistant teacher. Since our staff includes several regular floaters along with numerous student teachers from cooperating colleges, additional adults will generally be found helping in each classroom. In the youngest twos class, there are three adults. Open House is licensed by the Department of Health Division of Day Care and meets all of their requirements.

### WHAT ACTIVITIES WILL MY CHILD BE DOING AT THE SCHOOL?

The teachers plan an active curriculum that will promote social, emotional and cognitive development. In our safe, non-competitive, and nurturing environment, the children enjoy a comfortable routine that alternates between more open-ended choice times and more structured group get-togethers. During choice times a variety of age-appropriate activities, such as puzzles, reading, play-dough, drawing, water/sand table, art and building materials are offered. Structured group activities include music, meeting and story-time. Our emphasis is on encouraging the growth of the social self-supporting children as they learn to share, take turns, manage conflicts, exchange ideas and a myriad of other skills. And, of course, as this important framework is being constructed, cognitive growth is proceeding rapidly and happily. Classes will spend extended time focusing on themes of interest such as seasonal changes, colors, dinosaurs, new babies, etc. Our large array of materials, toys and projects is thoughtfully selected to encourage children's natural desire to learn new language and information about the world around us. In addition, on every day that weather permits, children spend a period of time running, jumping and climbing up on our spacious, enclosed roof playground. On inclement days, we enjoy movement and music activities indoors. A nutritious, delicious and much-needed snack is served every mid-morning and afternoon.

### HOW IS DISCIPLINE HANDLED?

We believe that discipline is a tool meant to support the growth of self-awareness and control, not to punish. Waiting, sharing, taking turns, are big challenges for little people. Adults model cooperative behavior and effective communication at all times and intervene whenever necessary. When they do, they help children manage conflicts by identifying the problem and "using words" to brainstorm solutions. For any on-going issues, teachers will communicate with parents so that school and home are working together with a child's best interests in mind. At Open House we understand that children benefit from clear expectations and consistent limits. Given time and guidance all children learn socially appropriate behavior.



## WHAT'S THE BEST WAY OF TALKING WITH MY CHILD ABOUT THEIR DAY?

Parents will often tell us that they ask their kids about their day, but only get one-word responses. A few tips: asking your child “so how was school today?” is too general and abstract for most children. Instead, try to focus in on specific aspects of your child’s schedule, e.g.:

- “What did you talk about/do in circle time/meeting time?”
- “What did you do during choice time?”
- “What happened during roof time today? Who did you play with?”

Remember young children live in the moment. They do not yet reference time as adults do. Therefore yesterday is generally anytime in the past and tomorrow may mean next week. Your classroom blog, with its photo displays and descriptions of current activities, is also an excellent tool for sparking some discussion with your child.



## **EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

1. Exit building using Fire Drill Plan and bring the following:
  - Emergency Medical Release Forms
  - Emergency Contact Information
  - Instructions for changing answering machine message
  - Ready Kit/First Aid Kit
  - Keys to school/Emergency Radio/Light
  - Cell phone (Eileen's cell 917-626-2855)
2. Notify the 76th precinct (718.834.3211) that the school is being evacuated.
  - Report missing children and staff to emergency personnel.
3. If necessary, proceed to Evacuation Site – St. Peter St. Paul Church, corner of Court and Congress St.
  - Begin telephoning Emergency Contacts
  - Leave messages on telephone answering machine
4. Release children to parents or caregivers
  - Staff will record time and person picking up each child
  - Parents will not come into a room to pick up their child. Their child will be brought to them to minimize the effect on remaining children.
5. Group remaining children
  - Consolidate groups so that teachers can get breaks and /or communicate with their own families.
  - Continue telephoning designated emergency contacts for those children still remaining.
  - Staff will care for children until they are picked up.
6. In cases of severe illness or injury, Emergency Medical Release procedures will be followed.

**Emergency supplies will be stocked at all times.**

