

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide high quality education and care for children 15 months to 5 years in an environment that promotes self-esteem, creative thinking and individuality through a respectful partnership between children, parents and staff.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Children will gain the skills of creative thinking, independence, and social responsibility.
2. Nonotuck will foster each child's self-respect and individuality while making them aware of their membership in the group and the community at large.
3. Nonotuck will promote an appreciation for children and families of all cultures, abilities and nationalities.

HISTORY

The Nonotuck Community School, Inc. is a nonprofit child care and preschool run with the cooperative effort of its member families. Nonotuck opened in September 1977, at St. John's Episcopal Church in order to serve a growing community need for quality child care and education. From October 2000 to Dec 2004 the school was located at the VA Medical Center in Leeds. In January 2005, Nonotuck opened in its current location at 221 Riverside Drive in Northampton. Nonotuck provides programs to approximately 50 children aged 15 months to 5 years and is licensed by the state

Department of Early Education and Care.

PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM

At Nonotuck Community School we serve children between the ages of fifteen months and five years. While at Nonotuck, children develop from toddlers who are just beginning to use language and experiment with interpersonal relationships, to school-aged children who are able to empathize with one another, seek out social contacts, and use words freely to express their experiences and feelings. They make the transition from being primarily dependent on adults to meet their needs to being independent children who make and follow through on plans, explore the worlds of other people, and participate in the larger community. We believe that at each developmental level the individual child is an avid explorer, eager to experience the world. We emphasize the development of the whole child. We work to provide a safe environment that will help children to develop a positive self-image, independence and an understanding of one's needs in relation to others. We foster a sense of responsibility for one's actions, and above all the confidence, skills, and curiosity to actively explore, question, problem solve and communicate. Our curriculum is child centered, meaning it is jointly negotiated between the children and the teachers, and it emerges from the children's interests as well as from the teachers' observations and understanding of the "hidden

questions" that children are working to answer through their play. Our curriculum is informed by the National Association Education for the Education of Young Children Developmentally Appropriate Practice Guidelines, the Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences, and the Learning Together with Young Children curriculum framework and other books by Margie Carter and Deb Curtis and the Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers and Creative Curriculum for Preschool. We offer a variety of experiences and materials to help children master a wide range of skills and concepts. We emphasize the concept of community, and teach children to celebrate their connections to one another in Nonotuck's diverse community.

Our goal is to provide ample opportunities for cognitive, artistic, social/emotional, and physical development throughout the school day. The rooms at Nonotuck are flexible learning environments that are tailored to reflect the interests of each group. The teachers work to design a space that is rich in opportunities for children to explore and create. We work to foster a meaningful relationship with the natural world by allowing the children to care for the many plants and animals in our classrooms. The children also help tend our gardens and participate in daily outdoor adventures. We support the children's exploration of scientific and mathematical concepts by providing many opportunities for them to form

theories and test them. We offer classroom activities that promote a love of books, reading, and the arts. Children are encouraged to express themselves through music, dance, and other artistic activities.

We value the strong commitment Nonotuck's families have to our school. We welcome a high level of parent involvement in our classroom activities and encourage families to visit whenever they can.

PARENT COOPERATIVE

As a parent cooperative, Nonotuck families share ownership of the school and participate in their children's education. Parent interaction with teachers, staff, students and other parents is strongly encouraged.

Monthly Co-op Job and Community Hours

As co-op members, parents also fulfill a work commitment every month as a way of having a closer involvement with the school and supporting staff. Nonotuck is a cooperatively run program so it is the responsibility of all parents to keep it running smoothly. All families are required to work 2 hours a month. Jobs vary according to parents skills and abilities. Some parents clean or shop for snacks while others may serve on the Board or on a Committee or participate in the classroom.

At the end of each month families fill out a form documenting the hours they worked in that month and turn it in. The year is divided into quarters and hours can be carried over in each 3-month period – each family

needs to document 6 hours in each 3-month period. If families are unable to document 6 hours, they will be charged \$10.00 an hour for each hour they are short.

The quarterly periods are:
July, August, September
October, November, December
January, February, March
April, May, June

In addition, each family must complete a total of 8 Community Hours during the four quarters. Community hours can be earned by baking for social events, driving for field trips, cleaning, refinishing furniture, etc. Community Hour opportunities will be posted by the school, by teachers, and committee chairs. These hours are also billed at \$10.00 an hour if uncompleted.

Parents document their hours and the office keeps track of them and updates families each month on their progress.

Fundraising and Parent Work Day Hours:

Parents are required to contribute four hours a year to scheduled fundraising events and to work a four hour shift at a Parent Work Day. These opportunities are scheduled throughout the year (usually on weekends). Fundraising and Parent Work Day hours are billed at \$25.00 an hour, if uncompleted.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors consists of 10 elected members in addition to the

Director and the staff representative. Most Board members are parents or guardians of children currently enrolled at the school. One or two of the Board positions, but no more, may be filled by members of the community at large or former Nonotuck parents who have professional expertise beneficial to the school. Members are elected to the Board of Directors by the general membership of the Corporation (all parents and guardians) at the annual meeting. The Board member serves a two-year term. Terms of office are staggered with half the Board positions vacated and refilled at each annual meeting.

The Board does not directly supervise the daily activities at Nonotuck it concerns itself with questions of policy having to do with long-range operation of the school and to some extent with its overall philosophy. Board members are responsible for fiscal policies and fundraising. The Board approves the budget each year and makes decisions about such matters as fees, fines, salaries, and contract negotiations. In addition, Board members keep informed about the operation of the school so they can have discussions and take action as necessary. In addition to the required monthly Board meetings, Board members, when their schedule permits, spend time at the School to see how things are working.

Members of the Board must attend regularly scheduled monthly meetings of the Board as well as occasional special meetings. They prepare for

these meetings by reading relevant material beforehand, such as, explanations of proposed changes or innovations, as well as following through on tasks that arise from Board deliberations. Many Board members have specific tasks involved in serving as officers on the Board. Since a term on the Board runs for two years, a Board member should be prepared to commit that time to the job. If the Board member misses three meetings in a given year, the membership can be terminated.

Board meetings are held once a month on a designated night. Any parent is welcome to attend or to contact a Board member to bring to the Board a special concern or suggestion. Board agendas, a list of Board members, and a schedule of meetings are posted in the Board minutes.

FUNDRAISING

Nonotuck's yearly budget includes a fundraising line item and in addition to fulfilling their 4 hour fundraising work commitment, all parents are expected to participate in fundraising activities. Fundraisers are planned by the fundraising committee, which is chaired by a board member. Over the years certain fundraisers have proved to be popular and fruitful and have become a tradition. Concerts or performances, tag sales, and an annual auction are opportunities for all Nonotuck parents to work together to support the school. In addition, all Nonotuck parents are asked to sell items like plants or gift items to their co-workers, friends, family and neighbors once or twice a year.

Other fundraisers have included Nonotuck T-Shirts, direct appeals to alumni and extended families, raffles, and bake sales. The fundraising committee always welcomes parents with creative fundraising ideas.

Nonotuck also explores grant opportunities to fund special projects.



ADMISSIONS

Nonotuck's Admissions Policy utilizes the following priorities:

1. Present children enrolled in Nonotuck.
2. Siblings of present children enrolled in Nonotuck.
3. Children of staff currently employed at Nonotuck.
4. Children of alumni families returning to Nonotuck.
5. Children of alumni staff
6. Applicants on waiting list

Nonotuck strives to achieve a balance of boys and girls in each classroom, with at least 1/3 of each classroom consisting of the least numerous sex.

Programs are open to children and families regardless of race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs,

national origin, disability, marital status or sexual orientation.

All enrollments are provisional for an up to 3 month trial period. The School reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any child whose needs, as determined by the staff, cannot be met.

ENROLLMENT AND SCHEDULES

All families may choose between a 7:30 a.m. or 8:30 a.m. drop off option and three pick-up options of 3:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m., or 5:30 p.m. Children may enroll for 3, 4, or 5 days. The minimum child care option for toddlers and preschoolers is 21 hours a week – 3 core (8:30- 3:30) days. Three day a week schedules must include a Monday or Friday. While the above schedules define your tuition commitment, you may pick up your child at any time.

New families wishing to accept a space for their child secure the available slot with a non-refundable deposit of \$300.00 which will be refunded if a family leaves in good standing after completing the current enrollment contracted period. This deposit applies to children enrolled for the first time as well as to children who leave the School and subsequently return. In both cases a \$50 registration fee is also required.

At enrollment, new families commit to a schedule and sign an enrollment contract through June 30 of the following year. In March of each year, Nonotuck will consult with parents to confirm enrollment for the summer (July, August) and next school year

(September – June). Children must remain enrolled at Nonotuck through the summer to continue for the next school year. Different schedules can be requested for the summer. Families who enroll for 4 or 5 days during the school year may reduce their summer hours (July, August) by 25% based on their previous years schedule.



SCHEDULE CHANGES

If a family would like to increase their hours or days, we will do our best to accommodate your needs. Reductions to a child's Nonotuck schedule shall require a minimum six-week notification. A family that fails to give timely notice of a decrease must pay 6 weeks of tuition at the previous rate after the date of notice. When a child is enrolled at the School, parents sign a contract reflecting the family's given schedule and fee. That contract remains in effect until a change is agreed upon between Nonotuck and the parent.

LEAVING THE SCHOOL

If the child is withdrawing from Nonotuck, parents must provide at least one month's written notice to the Director and are responsible for tuition for a minimum of four weeks before the scheduled departure from the School and after the Director is notified in writing. A family who withdraws a child from Nonotuck during the week before the December/January week vacation must pay through December even when advance notice of the withdrawal is given. Families who withdraw before the current contracted period will not receive a deposit refund.

CLOSURES

Holidays:

The following holidays and vacation periods are observed:

- Columbus Day
- Day before Thanksgiving – close at 1:30 p.m.
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Christmas Eve Day – close at 1:30 (This only applies if Nonotuck is scheduled to be open.)
- Winter Break - Christmas, New Year's Day, and the week in between
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day

Please see **STAFF WORK DAYS** for additional closings.

Inclement Weather:

If the Northampton Public Schools close due to inclement weather, Nonotuck will be closed. If the Northampton Public Schools delay opening, close early, or if the Northampton Public Schools are not in session, we will make a decision based on weather reports, area closings, and DPW and police recommendations etc. to either close for the day, delay opening, or close early. There will be inclement weather announcements on WRSI – The River 93.9, WWLP TV-22, WGGB TV-40 and on the school's answering machine.

Staff Work Days:

Nonotuck closes twice each year (the Tuesday after Labor Day and Patriot's Day) so staff may clean, organize and improve their classrooms. Full fees are payable for all staff work days. Parents of children who attend Nonotuck on three days or less per week may request to make up that day within the same month. These requests may be scheduled with the Director no earlier than four weeks before the staff work day. Requests will be granted on a first come, first serve basis space permitting.

Staff Meetings:

Nonotuck closes at 12:30 p.m. on one day per month in the following months: October, November, January, February, March, May and June for staff meetings and professional development related to accreditation. The particular days are scheduled yearly by the director and

the board and are scheduled as much as possible to coincide with public or private elementary school closings. Full fees are payable for staff meeting days. Extra time may not be scheduled on these days.

Make Up Policy for Holidays, Inclement Weather Days and Staff Work Days:

On holidays, inclement weather days and staff work days when Nonotuck is closed, parents of children who attend Nonotuck for three days or less per week may request to make up that day within the same month. Parents may request to make up one day of the six days when Nonotuck is closed for Winter Break. These requests may be scheduled with the Director no earlier than four weeks before the holiday. Requests will be granted on a first-come, first-serve basis, space permitting. Staff Meeting Early Closures are not eligible for the 3 day a week make-up policy.

LATE POLICIES

Children are expected to arrive at the school by 9:00 AM. Late arrival is difficult for the children and very disruptive to the program. Please call if your child is going to be late or absent. Please refer to LATE ARRIVAL POLICY below. If you cannot avoid being late for your child's pick up, call the school as soon as possible. Late pick-ups are subject to a fine. Refer to the LATE PICK-UP POLICY below for further details.

Please notify us in writing if someone new is picking up your child at any time or if you are picking her/him up at other than the regular time. If you

are unable to leave a note, please call ahead of time.

Late Arrival Policy:

The following policy has been instituted because of a sincere and professional concern that parents and staff have voiced about implementing a quality program.

Children are expected to arrive at Nonotuck and be participating in classroom activities by 9:00 AM. When children arrive late it is difficult for the child and disruptive to the program. If, due to occasional special circumstances a family will not be arriving at Nonotuck by 9:00 AM, they MUST call the school by 8:45 AM to inform the staff and the office of their delay. If a family consistently arrives after 9:00 AM, a conference with the Director will be required to determine if Nonotuck can meet the needs of their schedule.

Late Pick Up Policy:

The Board of Directors feels strongly that late pick-ups must be avoided and has instituted penalties to act as deterrents. Staffing patterns are based on scheduled numbers of children in the school at given times. When parents are late in picking up their children, additional staff members have to stay in the classrooms or after hours. It is costly to Nonotuck, inconvenient to the staff, and nerve-wracking to the children when parents are late. We appreciate parents' cooperation in upholding the following policy.

There is a fine of \$5.00 for the first 5 minutes or fraction thereof, and \$1.00 per minute for each minute late

thereafter. If you cannot pick up your child on time, please have a designated friend, neighbor, or sitter cover for you.

Teachers report late pick-ups to the Director who puts a fine notice and invoice in the parent's mailbox. Fines will appear on your next statement as well.

If a situation arises in which a family is chronically late to pick up their child, or in which there is late payment, or any controversy about the late fee, the Parent Liaison of the Board of Directors will be contacted. It is his/her responsibility to settle the dispute or refer it to the Board for further action.

The Board of Directors would like to remind parents that Nonotuck closes at 5:30 PM and families are requested to be out of the building by that time.



FEES

Registration Fee:

A fee in the amount of \$50.00 is due upon enrollment. It is also due upon re-enrollment after withdrawal from the School no matter how brief the period of withdrawal.

Tuition:

Tuition for the school year period is annualized monthly and based on the child's contracted weekly schedule of attendance. Tuition is not

abated for holidays or other Nonotuck closures, illness, family vacations, or snow days. The costs of operating Nonotuck are not lessened at such times.

Payment:

Tuition is due on the first of each month with a ten-day grace period after which a \$35 late fee will be charged. If the 10th of a month falls on a weekend, payment is due on the Friday before the tenth. A parent who is not able to make monthly payments may request permission from the Director to pay bi-weekly. In that case tuition will be due on the 1st and the 15th for the current month. There will be no grace period - a \$35 late fee will be charged on the day after the payment is due (2nd and 16th).

If a family is experiencing a temporary financial crisis and is in good standing with the School, Nonotuck will try to accommodate the child temporarily, within the limits of the School's resources at the time. Request for such arrangements must be submitted in writing to the Director prior to the 10th of the month.

Late Payments:

Any parent paying after the 10th of the month who has not made prior arrangements for an alternate payment plan will be charged a \$35 late fee as stated in the above payment section. This policy applies to bounced checks (any bank fees charged to Nonotuck will also be added). People who do not pay their fines or tuition by the last weekday of the month will be notified in writing by

the Board of Directors that their child may be denied attendance at the school effective immediately, until such time full payment is received.

Extra Time Policy:

Parents may request extra time, additional time above their child's weekly schedule, which will be granted if there is space available for the hours or days requested. Core days (8:30 AM – 3:30 PM) or longer can be requested. The hours from 7:30 – 8:30 AM, and 3:30 – 4:30 PM, and 4:30 – 5:30 PM on a day the child is already scheduled can also be requested. Parents are responsible for payment of all extra time requested and granted whether actually used or not.

We ask, if possible, that "requests for extra time":

1. Be made in advance of the day needed
2. For the early drop-off at 7:30 a.m., be made on the day before by 4:30 p.m.
3. For the same day, extra time requests be made by 1:30 p.m.

CLASSROOMS

There are four classrooms at Nonotuck. While we are a year round program, class placement is, in general, based on the age the child is by August 31. Toddler I (Polliwog room) generally serves children who are between 15 months and 2 when they enter the program. A maximum of 7 children a day are enrolled in this classroom. Toddler II (Frog room) is a mixed toddler/preschool room and generally serves children who are

between 2 and 3 by August 31. There are a maximum of 9 children enrolled each day. Preschool I (Possum) generally serves children who are between 3 and 4 by August 31. There is a maximum of 13 children enrolled in this younger preschool classroom. The Preschool II (Chameleon) classroom generally serves children who are between 4 and 5 by August 31. There is a maximum of 16 children enrolled in this classroom each day. Children are usually enrolled in a particular classroom from when they enter until the following summer or fall; therefore most children are in each classroom for 10 – 12 months. At times, due to the time of year or the age of the child upon entry, a child may be enrolled in a classroom for one and a half to two years.

ORIENTATION

Nonotuck has an established orientation procedure. A gradual increase in time of exposure to the physical environment and the new teachers is most successful for children. This gradual increase results in an orientation that is child-centered, and despite the potential inconvenience for parents, they are asked to participate in this process. The orientation differs somewhat for each age group:

Toddlers:

3 half days are scheduled for orientation:

- 1st day: 9:00 -11:30 AM – parent stays with child and both leave before lunch.
- 2nd day: 8:30 -11:30 AM – after child is settled in, parent leaves

for a trial separation but stays on the premises and returns to classroom to eat lunch with their child.

- 3rd day: 8:30 AM -12:30 PM – after child has settled in, parent leaves and comes back to pick up the child after lunch. (teachers must be able to reach the parent during the separation and parents are encouraged to check in as well)

Preschoolers:

2 Half days are scheduled for orientation

- 1st day: 9:00-11:30 AM - parent stays with child and both leave before lunch.
- 2nd day: 8:30 AM -12:30 PM - after child has settled in, parent leaves and comes back to pick up the child after lunch. (teachers must be able to reach the parent during the separation and parents are encouraged to check in as well)

Orientation days may or may not be scheduled on a child's regularly scheduled days but the contracted enrollment period begins with orientation and parents are billed for full days on orientation days. After orientation is complete child attends for a full day on their next scheduled day.

When you are in the class, you might try some of the activities that your child would like. Then, try to fade into the background as your child tries out

new toys and approaches new children, staying nearby for support, in case you are needed. Orientation is also a time to briefly communicate information about your child to the teacher, for example: "That's her word for milk" or "That's what he does when he is tired."



ADJUSTING

Often children find the separation from their parents at a child care or preschool program to be a difficult transition. Each child is an individual and what works for one may not be of help for the next. Here are some suggestions that some parents have found helpful for their children. One, some, or all may be useful to you.

- Visit Nonotuck with your child before he/she attends; make the visit short, talk about things to look forward to.
- Remember to project enthusiasm and confidence about the School and teachers since your child may pick up ambivalence or hesitation you feel about leaving your child.
- When it is time to go, make sure a staff person is nearby to provide support for your child. Please always say good-bye

directly to your child every day. If a parent slips away without telling the child, he/she may feel betrayed and afraid to become involved the next day for fear of the parent's leaving unannounced. If your child seems distraught at your leaving, you are welcome to call us to find out how your child is doing.

- If your child has difficulty in dealing with coming to Nonotuck, please arrange a conference so we can work out a support strategy to ease the adjustment.

CLASSROOM TRANSITIONS

In general, transition to the next classroom takes place during the summer as the children who are transitioning to kindergarten leave the program. Transitions are scheduled by the director in consultation with the teachers taking into consideration age of the child, child's readiness, friendships, and parent input. Individual attention is the key to the success of our transitions. Just as when children initially orient to Nonotuck, we feel it is important to be able to transition the group of children to their new classroom gradually. In this way we are really able to pay attention to the one or two children who are moving up and to adjust our schedules and routines to ensure that the transition meets their needs. Three days are scheduled for the classroom transitions. For the first two days of the transition, the child arrives in their old room and is brought by one of their

teachers to the new room. The length of time the teacher stays in the room with the child and the length of time the child stays in the room for these two days are adapted based on the needs of the child. During this time, teachers from both rooms are in close communication about how the orientation is going and when the child should return to their original room. During the transition period, children will get their new cubbies and bring their nap stuff over to the room. On the third day, the child begins in their new classroom and child, parents, and teachers begin their journey together - developing new drop off routines, etc.

On occasion, there may be an opening in a classroom during the school year. In that case, in consultation with parents, we may decide to transition a Nonotuck child to the next classroom.

When it is time for a child to leave their current classroom, parents are encouraged to have the child bring in something to mark the occasion – a snack to share or cards for the teachers, for example. These gestures help both the children who are leaving and the children who are staying to understand the process.

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN OR OTHER PROGRAM

In order to facilitate transition to kindergarten or another program, teachers fill out requests for information from the other programs when parents request that they do so. The office will copy and forward all progress reports with parent consent.

We welcome visits from teachers of other schools to our program. These visits are regularly scheduled by the Northampton Public Schools and have, on occasion, been scheduled by other schools. The Preschool II (Chameleon) classroom prepares children for their upcoming transition to kindergarten through informal conversations and planned activities throughout the year. When a child is leaving the school, teachers will prepare children in a manner consistent with their ability to understand. Parents are encouraged to have the child bring in something to mark the occasion – a snack to share or cards for the teachers, for example. These gestures help both the children who are leaving and the children who are staying to understand the process.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

We have various modalities of communicating at Nonotuck including the following:

Mailboxes:

All families and staff at Nonotuck have mailboxes which are used to distribute Nonotuck memos. Parent mailboxes should be checked daily for accident reports and other information. Parents are also welcome to use the boxes to communicate with the staff, director and with each other.

List-serve

The email list-serve exists to distribute information about Nonotuck-related business (i.e announcements, event-reminders, etc.) It is not an

appropriate site for personal announcements, or for complaints/suggestions/grievances. Because not all families may have email, it does not replace the mailbox as the primary site of Nonotuck memos.

Classroom Information:

Each classroom writes a daily report that is posted on the classroom information bulletin board and may also be disseminated individually. All classrooms also post the snack choices daily. The toddler classrooms also record and post detailed information on diapering/toileting and napping. The bulletin boards may also include announcements of upcoming curriculum and classroom events including ways that parents can contribute to the classrooms. There are also bulletin boards outside each classroom which display children's work or document classroom activities.

Bimonthly Newsletter:

The approximately bimonthly newsletter also includes information about classroom and afternoon program activities as well as other information about Nonotuck.

Daily Teacher/Parent Communication:

Parents are encouraged to have brief, informal verbal communications with teachers on a daily basis. Classrooms also have a notebook for parents to note messages about their child. If there is any information about any changes in the child or in their home life that might help

teachers understand the child's mood and behavior, please let them know.

Child Progress Report:

Twice a year parents will receive a written report on the child's progress. This report will be kept in the child's folder in a locked filing cabinet in the office. All files and information about the children are confidential and are only accessible to Nonotuck teachers and administrative staff. Records are released to others (kindergarten programs, for example) only with the parent's written permission. However, this information is available to the child's parents at any time.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled two times a year. Parents are encouraged to participate in these conferences. A sign-up sheet will be posted.

If you wish to confer with the teachers about your child's needs and progress at other times, please do so at a pre-arranged time and not casually during the school day. When in a classroom a teacher is responsible for all children and you deserve his/her undivided attention when discussing your child. You are welcome to schedule such a meeting with the teachers any time during the school year. Parents may also schedule a time to meet with the director to confer about their child.

Phone Calls:

Parents are welcome to call anytime during the day to briefly check in with

either the director or the teachers on how their child is doing. In addition if parents would like to have a longer discussion with teachers, but are unable to come to the school, they can set up a phone conversation with one of the teachers during nap-time.

Email:

Emailing the school is appropriate for questions or concerns that don't need immediate attention. Email to info@nonotuck.org will be directed to the appropriate staff.

PARENT VISITS

As a parent cooperative, we welcome a high level of parent involvement in our classroom activities and encourage families to visit whenever they can. Parents are involved with the School in a variety of ways and visit classrooms to share a talent or activity, explain a family celebration, share slides or pictures of a trip, or to prepare a favorite family dish. All of these are encouraged and enrich our program.

The Department of Early Education and Care mandates that parents have the right to make announced or unannounced visits to their child's classroom whenever their child is present.

CLOTHING

We encourage children to explore a variety of media, and while we try to use smocks and materials that do not stain, occasionally certain paints and markers do leave traces on clothing. Accordingly, we encourage parents to send their children in clothing other

than their best. Clothing should be selected with an eye to active play. Clogs, thong sandals, flip flops, and long skirts can be restrictive and dangerous when children climb. Additionally, children who are beginning to master independent dressing and toileting need clothing that they can handle on their own. High rise overalls, snap waistbands, body suits and leotards are very frustrating for them. Children do best with elastic waistbands on trousers and tights, and simple, easy-to-handle fasteners. Please make sure your child has the following extra clothes at Nonotuck: underwear, shirt (long and short sleeve), pants and socks. Soiled clothing will be bagged and placed in the child's cubby. Staff is instructed not to rinse soiled items. Please replenish the supply of extra clothing as your child uses them. Diapers and diaper wipes must be supplied for children who are not toilet trained. Please have at least three diapers on hand every day. Please make sure your child is dressed for the weather (rain or shine, we go out whenever possible) and that all items of clothing are clearly marked with your child's name (especially boots and mittens). Please attach mittens to jacket sleeves.

If you are purchasing winter clothing, please keep the following points in mind: Boots a size too large are easy to get on and off and leave room to grow. Try to choose clothing that is easy for your child to put on and take off (zippers in front, no snaps, etc.). Also, it can get chilly in the classrooms. Please layer your child's

clothes for indoor activities, and send a warm blanket for rest.

LUNCHES

Moderate amounts of food are best for most children. Nonotuck will provide milk each day, so please do not send another drink. Recommended lunch items include hot soup in a thermos, yogurt, sandwiches, fresh vegetables, crackers, hard-boiled eggs, fruit, cheese and so forth. Please label all plastic containers and lunchboxes. We do not have space to refrigerate lunch boxes. A small cold pack will keep lunches cold. We can store food brought in by parents that is required for a special diet (for ex. goat's milk, frozen non dairy treat substitute). All such food must be labeled with child's name and dated. Special consideration for toddlers: please send fruit in bite-size pieces, except bananas. A little lemon or orange juice keeps fruit pieces from turning brown. For safety reasons do not send raw carrots, celery, or grapes.

Nonotuck strongly recommends fruit for dessert, and we request that foods with high sugar content not be included in your child's lunch. The obvious sweets (candy bars, chocolate, cakes) are easy to identify, but "natural" foods such as granola bars and fruit roll-ups and drops can be deceptively high in sugar. Apart from the effect on the human metabolism, sugary items often produce conflict among children, in which case, teachers may exercise the option of returning such items to the lunchbox. Most parents

send around three items each day; for example, a sandwich, sliced vegetables, and a piece of fruit or yogurt, crackers or bread, and dried or fresh fruit. Teachers encourage children to put uneaten food back in the lunchbox to give parents an idea of what the child has eaten for lunch. If a child is still hungry or a lunch is forgotten, teachers may supplement with Nonotuck snack items.

Nonotuck serves two snacks each day that meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines. Daily menus are posted in each classroom. We do not serve meat, nuts, peanut butter. We do not serve raw peas, hard pretzels or popcorn to children under 4 years of age. We cut food for toddlers into 1 – 2 inch pieces, as appropriate for individual children. Nonotuck participates in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program. The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

PEANUT ALLERGY POLICY

- Nonotuck Community School does not serve children any snacks containing peanuts or peanut products, including peanut butter, oil, extract and flour. In addition, routine daily snacks served by Nonotuck Community School will not include any packaged food whose label includes warnings that the food was processed on equipment or in facilities that also process peanuts.

- Home or school-baked items provided by parents or teachers to be shared in the classroom, as well as sensory table items, will be free of direct peanut products, but will not be required to be restricted to ingredients known to have been processed in a peanut free environment. Parents of a child with a potentially life-threatening peanut allergy may bring in alternate snacks for their child when a shared food item is brought in from an outside/unknown source.
- Nonotuck Community School prohibits peanut products and/or dishes from being served at Nonotuck social events. Home or school-baked items provided by parents or teachers, will be free of direct peanut products, but will not be required to be restricted to ingredients known to have been processed in a peanut free environment.
- In the event of enrollment of a child with a physician-documented, potentially life threatening peanut allergy, the parent and/or Director and classroom teacher can request that students and teachers not bring for lunch any item containing peanuts or peanut products, including peanut butter, oil, extract and flour. Classroom families affected by this policy will receive at least two weeks notice prior to its implementation.

- A form regarding the details for managing the allergy will be completed by the child's physician or allergist and signed by both the parent and the physician or allergist. With parental consent, designated physician or allergist could be contacted by Director and/or classroom teacher if more information on the documented allergy is needed and/or if concerns or treatment related questions arise.

correspondence and at classroom meetings.



- Modification of Nonotuck's Peanut Allergy Policy for other types of life threatening food allergies (LTFA) (e.g. shellfish) may be considered if feasible without too much hardship to the school and parents of other children. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- All staff (regular and temporary) will be trained, informed and competent with emergency action plans for children with documented LTFAs. This includes knowing which children have LTFAs, staff competence in assessing a child's symptoms, knowledge of how to quickly access the individual action plan for each child, and where to locate and how to administer medications.
- Nonotuck will educate community members about peanut allergies and the school's Peanut Allergy Policy through written

FROM HOME TO SCHOOL

Please send a favorite blanket, sheet, and pillow for naps and, if you wish, a stuffed animal, all clearly marked with your child's name.

Children must have at least one complete change of clothing. This will be used for accidents as well as for times when their clothing gets wet during water play or outdoor play. All clothing should be labeled. Please check your child's extra clothes periodically to make sure they are seasonally appropriate and still fit.

For sanitary reasons the Department of Early Education and Care suggests that staff not be allowed to rinse clothing or other articles soiled by feces, urine, vomit, blood, or mucous. Any soiled articles will be bagged and placed in the child's cubby for you to take home.

Children often want to bring toys from home to school, which can be problematic as a prized possession could easily get lost or broken and children often have trouble sharing their toys from home. Please check with your child's teachers for their classroom policy about toys from home. Please refrain from sending

toy weapons at any time. If you bring in books or tapes to share with the class, please be sure that they are clearly marked with your child's name.

We recognize the very human desire to bring things to share with one's friends. Your child might enjoy fixing a favorite food at home to share at snack time, or bring in the ingredients from home to prepare the snack at Nonotuck with classmates. Please be sure that you inform a teacher that something is being brought in so that it can be incorporated into the day's plans and also to ensure there is enough to go around for the group.

BIRTHDAYS

Most children enjoy celebrating their birthdays at Nonotuck. Parents usually send a simple snack prepared at home for the class. (This is one of the few occasions when sugar-snacks are permissible.) Sometimes this special snack is brought in unfinished, giving the children a chance to participate in the celebration by decorating cupcakes or frosting cookies, etc. Each classroom may also have some special ways to acknowledge birthdays. Please check with your child's teachers if you would like to know how birthdays are observed in their classroom. A few guidelines should be mentioned. Nonotuck is not the place to conduct a real birthday party such as would be held at home and gifts are not to be exchanged in the classroom. Our guidelines are for the well-being of the group as well as for the birthday child. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

NONOTUCK HOLIDAY POLICY

The following summarizes the goals of Nonotuck staff when integrating holidays into classroom curriculum.

Teachers at Nonotuck:

- Will show that holidays reflect universal themes such as light, peace, and giving, or seasonal changes and will explore what they are commonly seen to symbolize: ex. harvest in the Fall, birth in the Spring
- Will not instruct on any specific religious doctrine.
- Will focus upon the holidays of different cultures, what each has in common, how they differ, what makes them unique.
- Will not knowingly exclude any culture's perspective nor lead children to believe that all people recognize the same holidays.
- Will draw on the families of Nonotuck as resources.
- Will attempt to foster in the children the desire to explore other people's beliefs and celebrations, as well as to help them feel pride and pleasure in their own family's traditions and practices.

HEALTH, SAFETY, FIRST AID

Handwashing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of illness or disease at home or in child care setting. Parents should have children wash their hands when they arrive at school each day.

We cannot provide care for a child who has a diagnosed communicable disease, or for a child who exhibits

symptoms of gastro-intestinal, respiratory, skin or direct-contact infections. Please see Health Care Policy for symptoms which warrant exclusion. If a child becomes ill during the day the teachers will confer with the Director about the severity of the symptoms and, if deemed necessary, the parent or emergency contact person will be called to pick up the child. In the meantime the child will rest on a mat separate from the rest of the group. The staff understands the inconvenience that a child's illness brings to a family and makes the decision to call a parent only when they feel the child's health, the health of the other children, or the health of the other staff is in jeopardy.

If a child is sick or otherwise absent on a day he is scheduled to attend, payment is still required.

In accordance with Department of Early Education and Care regulations we can give medication to a child if:

- We have written instructions from a physician to do so for over-the-counter (aspirin or Tylenol, cough medicine) or prescription medication. Medication authorization forms are available for parents to take to their doctor.
- We have written parental authorization.

Please do not send over-the-counter medications or vitamins to school with your child.

Each child must have an annual physical examination. Please make sure that staff is informed of any allergies or medical restrictions a child

may have. There is a place for this on your child's emergency card. The Department of Early Education and Care also requires that all children receive age-appropriate immunizations, prior to attending any child care program.

Staff members are trained in first aid and will administer minor treatment (Band-aids, ice for bumps, etc.) as needed. Parents are notified of any injury by written note, a duplicate of which is included in the child's file. In the event of a serious injury a child would be taken to the nearest most appropriate medical facility by ambulance and accompanied by a staff member. Parents would be notified immediately.

The staff regularly discusses and works to develop an environment that is free of safety hazards. All groups routinely practice fire drills and evacuation plans are posted in all classrooms. For further information on health and safety, please see Nonotuck's Health Care Policy.

VISITOR'S POLICY

All non-parent visitors to the school must report to the office, and are not allowed into the classroom or playground without the permission of the Director. Only Nonotuck employees and parents may accompany children on off-site trips. All others require prior approval of the Director. Teachers are responsible for enforcing this policy in their classrooms.

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Nonotuck benefits from volunteers from area schools, colleges, human

service agencies, and the community at large. References are checked on all volunteers. Volunteers are closely supervised by Nonotuck staff and by caseworkers or supervisors as appropriate.

FORMAL GRIEVANCE POLICY

When a disagreement or area of concern arises, the most effective means of communicating is through initial open discussion with the responsible teacher for classroom related matters (or the Director for school-related matters). If areas of disagreement are not resolved with this initial discussion, the next step is for the parent to discuss the concern with the Director (or with the Board President, respectively), or the parent liaison to the Board of Directors as appropriate. If this informal process does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, a more formal process may be initiated as follows.

The parent should present the grievance in writing to the Director, or should the grievance involve the Director directly, to the President of the Board of Directors. The writing should specify:

1. The facts on which the grievance is based
2. The policy or practice involved and
3. The remedy that is sought.

The Director (or Board President) will respond in writing to the parent within five working days of receipt of the grievance and will forward a copy of the grievance and response to the

Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

In the event that the member is not satisfied with the response from the Director (or Board President) she/he may appeal in writing to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors within 5 working days of receipt of such response. Upon receipt of the appeal, the Board President shall appoint a Resolution Committee to investigate the grievance, made up of the Board President and two other board members of her/his choice. In the event that the Board President issued the response being appealed, the Board Vice President shall appoint the resolution committee made up of the Board Vice President and two other board members of his/her choice.

The member shall be given one opportunity to meet with the Resolution Committee informally to explain his/her grievances. No further rights or opportunities will be available.

The Resolution Committee shall provide the Board with its findings and recommendations at the Executive Session of the Board of Directors meeting. The Executive Committee will vote on the recommendations and any other motions to resolve the grievance by majority vote. This will be the final resolution of the grievance. The Executive Committee will respond in writing to the parent. The President of the Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that any

action recommended by the Resolution Committee is implemented

The Director will keep a file of all parent grievances.

NONOTUCK'S POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (as required by The Department of Early Education and Care):

CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS:

In the event of a fire, natural disaster, or other critical situation (chemical spills, bomb threats, etc.) necessitating evacuation of the building, the staff will lead all children in an orderly fashion up the street to Highland Valley Elder Services at 320 Riverside Drive (less than 2/10 of a mile). The administration and office personnel will check all four classrooms, bathrooms and hallways to assure that all the children and staff have safely evacuated the building. The administrator and office personnel will then join the staff at Highland Valley Elder Services and contact any necessary emergency services (fire/ police depts./DPW) as well as all parents while staff supervise the children.

In the case of loss of heat, water or a power outage, during winter months (November - March) the School's intent is to contact all families to come and pick up their children as soon as possible. Children will remain in their classrooms until parents arrive. During the Spring, Summer or Fall (depending on the weather) the administrator will decide if it is necessary to send children home.

In the event of water loss: The director or designee will gather information about the length of time involved. In consultation with EEC and the Northampton Public Schools a decision will be made about closing the school.

In the event of heat loss: teachers will dress children appropriately in outer clothing and, if necessary, engage children in movement activities to warm them.

In the event of telephone loss during an emergency: The administrator will drive to Highland Valley Elder Services to call all families, if possible. If all telephones in area are unavailable, the administrator will drive to the Northampton Police Station to determine the location of a working telephone.

CHILD GUIDANCE POLICY:

Our goal at Nonotuck is to provide a secure environment for all of the children in our care. We recognize that we must have realistic expectations for each child based on their age and developmental level. While we are working toward common goals of cooperation and respect of others with all of our children, we realize that each child is at a different step along the way.

We work to provide a calm and supportive environment that supports children's growing independence. We accentuate and praise positive behaviors to encourage children in developing appropriate ways of relating. We set up the classroom environment and schedule to encourage pro-social behavior and are cognizant of situations that can

cause conflict between children (boredom, waiting, etc). We work with children to help them understand their needs in relation to group needs. It is our goal to encourage children to appropriately express their feelings and to develop self-control. We stress the importance of taking care of ourselves and each other as well as the environment and the materials. Whenever appropriate and feasible, children at Nonotuck will participate in establishing classroom rules, policies and procedures. In guiding children, we try to make it clear why certain behaviors are unacceptable, and offer more positive alternatives. We make it clear to the child that we care for them as a person even when we cannot allow him/her to engage in certain behaviors. In enforcing limits and expectations, we work to be clear and consistent with children in each group at Nonotuck. We work to anticipate possible problems so that we can provide preventive intervention. Teachers observe children with challenging behavior and identify events, activities, interactions, situations, and times of day, etc. that predict challenging behavior and strategize to support children at these times. In every possible respect we try to be respectful of children and realistic in our expectations, dealing with them in ways that help them to grow and to feel confident of themselves and trusting of others. Therefore, we understand that:

- Corporal punishment of any form will not be used.

- No child will be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse.
- No child shall be denied food as a form of punishment.
- No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or failure to use the toilet.

Behavioral problems that result in physical harm to other children or to adults or that require excessive one-on-one staffing to prevent frequent disruptions of the group routines and/or behaviors that result in frequent physical restraint of the child shall be responded to by either the Nonotuck Referral Procedures or Suspension/Termination Policies.

Procedures for Referral Services for Children :

The decision to admit a child who has been diagnosed by an appropriate professional with special needs is on a case by case basis.

Should the Nonotuck Staff feel that additional services might benefit a child enrolled at Nonotuck, the following guidelines shall be followed:

1. Teachers shall confer with the Director.
2. Teachers shall make 3 individual observations of the child and document child's behavior (including date, time & activity present).
3. Director shall make at least 2 individual observations and document child's behavior.
4. Director and Teachers will meet together to discuss observations.
5. Director will consult with the Teachers and the child's parents, who

will together determine the need for additional services.

6. The Director will refer parents to the appropriate social mental health or medical services that might benefit the child.

7. Written summary of this referral shall be completed by the Director: one copy to be filed in child's records at Nonotuck and one copy to be given to the child's parents.

8. Director will provide follow-up after written summary. Follow-up will include information to both the Teachers and the parents.

9. The Director shall follow-up the referral with parental permission, by contacting the agency or service for consultation and assistance in meeting the child's needs at the center.

Referral Recommendations:

Berkshire Children and Families
229 Russell Street – Suite 200
Hadley, MA 584-5690

Clarke School for the Deaf
46 Round Hill Road
Northampton, MA 584-3450

Children's Clinic
17 Brewster Court
Northampton, MA 587 -3265

REACH Program (Toddlers)
216 North King Street
Northampton, MA 585-1400

Northampton Area Pediatrics
193 Locust Street
Northampton, MA 584-8700

Northampton Public Schools
210 Main Street
Northampton, MA 586-6970

Dr. Howard Kantor D.D.S.
193 Locust St.
Northampton, MA 584-7773

Specialists working individually with a child enrolled at Nonotuck, such as a speech therapist, physical therapist, or occupational therapist are welcome to work with the child at Nonotuck.

PROCEDURES FOR SUSPENSION/TERMINATION OF A CHILD:

A child may be suspended or terminated from the Nonotuck Community School, Inc. with advance written notice to the parents for any of the following reasons:

1. Non-compliance with the policies of the Nonotuck Community School, Inc. or the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care licensing regulations. (i.e. failure to submit annual medical emergency forms or permission forms)
2. Non-payment of child care tuition - a termination of service notice will be sent by the Director and Parent Liaison of the Board.
3. Chronic late pick-up, defined as 5 times in one month.
4. Refusal to sign the "Enrollment Contract".
5. Failure of the parents/guardians to follow through on Nonotuck's "Procedure for Referral Services for Children".
6. Nonotuck's procedure for referral services may result in a plan for

suspension from or termination of enrollment. Nonotuck reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any child whose needs, as determined by the referral process, cannot be met.

7. All enrollments are provisional for an up to 3 month trial period. If a child is not able to successfully adjust to group care in that the child's emotional well-being is determined to be at risk, termination procedures will be followed.

8. Behavioral problems that result in physical harm to other children or to adults or that require excessive one on one staffing to prevent frequent disruptions of the group routines, and/or behaviors that result in frequent physical restraint of the child.

Parents will be notified in writing of the school's decision to suspend or terminate enrollment. The parent shall receive this notice at least two weeks in advance of the effective date of the proposed action, unless the child poses a risk of harm to him (her)self or others.

When a child leaves the center, for whatever reason, the teachers will prepare the children in advance by discussing and marking the occasion. Parents who are dissatisfied with the Center's decision may appeal to the Executive Committee.

TOILETING AND DIAPERING PLAN:

Toileting Plan:

1. Children will be assisted in toilet training in accordance with parental requests and consistent with child's physical and emotional abilities.

Children will wash hands after toileting.

2. Staff will use gloves when assisting children with toileting.

3. During toilet training children will be toileted at regular intervals and on request. Children will be praised for successes but will not be ridiculed for toileting accidents.

4. Older children will be assisted in developing independence in their toileting. However, teachers will remind children to use the toilets during the transition periods of the day.

5. Teachers will ensure that parents provide an adequate supply of extra clothing so that clothing that is wet or soiled can be changed.

6. Wet or soiled clothing will be packed in a plastic bag and sent home with the child to be laundered.

7. Any mat covers or blankets that are wet during a nap will also be bagged and sent home with the child.

8. Children will wash hands after toileting.

9. Staff will discard gloves and wash hands after assisting with toileting.

Diapering Plan:

1. Staff will change the diapers of all children regularly and when soiled or wet. Routine diaper checks and necessary changes will occur according to the following schedule:

9:00-9:30 AM

11:15-11:45 AM

12:45 PM before naps

2:30 PM after naps

4:00-4:30 PM

*Other changes will be provided as necessary.

2. Staff will wash hands and put on latex gloves before diapering each child.

3. A clean sheet of table paper will be placed on the changing table for each child.

4. Each child will be washed and dried with individual washing materials during each diaper change.

5. The teachers will ensure that parents provide an adequate supply of disposable diapers for their child.

6. Wet and soiled diapers are stored in a step can that is emptied every day.

7. The paper for the changing table will be disposed in the trash container. The diapering mat will be disinfected and wiped off with the paper towel after each use.

8. The gloves will be removed and placed in the trash container and staff will wash their hands after each diaper change.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR FIELD TRIPS:

When Field Trips are planned, Nonotuck parents volunteer to drive.

Parents of all children going on the field trip must sign permission slips and leave their children's car seats at Nonotuck. All children will be seated in car seats. Staff will go over guidelines with all parent drivers before departure. Emergency numbers for the children will be available in each vehicle. On occasion, children may ride on public transportation. Staff will follow state safety regulations when using public transportation. Permission slips will make it clear that this is the mode of transportation. Teachers will bring first aid kits, emergency information, Nonotuck's cell phone, and money for emergency phone calls on all field trips. Teachers and parent drivers will call Nonotuck if there is a difficulty with transportation and the director or administrative assistant will be ready to drive to transport the affected children. Nonotuck will make alternate arrangements for any children in a group who are not going on the field trip.

