



Riverdale Temple Nursery School

# Parent Handbook

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Dear Riverdale Temple Nursery School Families,

It is my joy to welcome you to Riverdale Temple Nursery School! We are looking forward to a wonderful year with you and your child. The most important thing about our school is that it is a loving and caring place for children and families. I think you will feel that when you walk through our doors.

We are a mix between a Progressive and Traditional School. When you walk into the classrooms you will see children at play at the sand table, painting, collaging, building, playing in dress up and reading books. That is their work. It is our work to support them when they need support and celebrate their strengths and passions. The rooms will be filled with a hum of children immersed in their discoveries. Our school will be a place where children will experiment, take risks, and make mistakes, and sometimes discover that their mistakes are even more magical than what they had planned.

You will also see children doing projects and working on themes and studies. They will learn to work as a group, follow directions and try new activities that are designed by their teachers.

We feel it is important to have the balance of open ended activities and structured activities in the school day.

Friendships are very important in our school. This is where your children will make friends, learn to take turns, work with friends on projects and learn to work out difficulties. Your child's friends at Riverdale Temple Nursery School might be friends that last for life. These are the children that your child will be with all day, they will go to your child's birthday parties and go on play dates. Our work is to not only support children in school, but

also families out of school. We will have all school events, pot-lucks, book fairs, grandparent visiting days, book signings, support groups and talks. Riverdale Temple Nursery School is not only a loving community for children but also a wonderful community for families.

The following pages are to help you with questions you might have about school and school policies. Please know that my door is always open. There is never a question too small when it is about your child.

Much warmth always,

Linda Herman  
Director



### Riverdale Temple Nursery School Mission Statement

Our Mission at Riverdale Temple Nursery School, is to create a loving and caring place for children, families, teachers and community. At Riverdale Temple Nursery School children learn kindness, mutual respect and cooperation.

Our work is to support the social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth of each child. We nurture children's innate love of learning, awaken their curiosity and encourage their creativity through our caring, developmentally appropriate and challenging programs.

When children leave Riverdale Temple Nursery School we believe they will be independent thinkers and good friends, who will grow up to make the world a better place.

## Starting the Year

There will be a phase-in time for children. We want children to feel comfortable and safe in our school. The phase-in time is different for different ages. All families will get a phase-in schedule at the beginning of the year.

Our work is to support each child with this transition. It would be wonderful if you can share any information that will make it easier for your child.

Transitional articles are welcome. Sometimes children need a special teddy, blanket or doll to get them through. If they also need this special item at home, please remember to take it home at the end of the day.

## Things to Bring

- Photo of your child and your child with his or her family.
- Fully labeled extra clothes.
- A blanket or a small sheet for sleeping
- Diapering supplies - one bag of diapers and wipes.

## Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival is a very important time for your child. It sets the tone for the day for your child and a smooth separation helps to create positive feelings about coming to school. It is always hard to say good-bye to a parent, and so we have just a few thoughts on making it easier.

1. Please try to come to school on time. It can be hard on a child to come to school late and have to enter a classroom where play is already happening.
2. Please walk your child into the classroom. If you can develop a routine with your child in the morning, that always helps in the separation process. You might come in, read a story, draw a picture and then say good-bye. If you have the same routine each day, your child will become comfortable in being able to predict what will happen next.
3. Please remember to say good-bye to your child. Sometimes it might seem easier just to leave and not disturb your child's play, but it is important that your child knows that you are leaving. If your child is upset when you leave, it is our work to comfort him/her. Please always feel comfortable about calling the school later to see how your child is doing.
4. As soon as your drop off your child, the school is responsible for your child.
5. Conversely, as soon as a teacher hands a child to a parent, the parent is responsible for their child.

### **Sign In/Sign Out Policy**

Parents or caregivers are required to sign their names next to their child's name whenever bringing their child to school and when picking their child up. These names will be recorded with the exact arrival and departure times, in a class attendance book for The New York City Department of Health licensing purposes.

These books will be located just inside the classroom. If a child is not picked up on time, he or she is brought to the office where the parent or caregiver must sign him or her out.

## **Change in Pick-Up Forms**

If someone, who is not on your Child pick-up sheet is going to pick up your child, please give a written note to the child's teacher or to the office. In an emergency, you can also send an email or call the office. Please know that we will check identification.

## **Visitors**

Anyone visiting the school, must come to the front desk and sign a visitor's Sign-in Book. When they are ready to leave they must also sign out and write down their departure time.



## **Clothing**

Children will play each day with sand, paint glue, markers, flour, water and dirt. Children should wear clothes that they feel comfortable getting dirty in.

Children should have an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothing at school, including socks, underwear, pants and a shirt.

Please put your child's clothes in a labeled zip lock bag.

Clothes need to be replaced periodically to allow for growth and weather.

Please label all of your child's clothes.

Sneakers are the safest shoes for children's activities.

When boots are worn to school, please make sure that rubber-soled shoes are available to change into.

Please be aware of the seasonal changes when sending your child to school. They will be going to the playground in weather above 32 degrees. Hats, mittens, snow pants, warm jackets and boots may be necessary. It is always fun for the children to play in the snow.

### **Toilet Training**

When a parent feels a child is ready to begin toilet training, we recommend that the process begin at home. We then will follow through and encourage the child to do the same at school.

Because it is common for a child to be distracted with various activities at school, they should continue to wear diapers/pull-ups until they can control his/her bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement.

When children are fully trained, and have naptime and bedtime control, of course they can wear underwear to school.

### **Assessments**

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled twice yearly, in the fall and spring. Additional Parent/Teacher conferences may be

scheduled at any time during the school year as needed, and may be held in-person, on the phone at mutually convenient times.

All assessment forms are confidential. Sharing of forms with special needs assessors will require parent permission.

Teachers will observe children in all areas of the classroom during different times of the day.

Assessments will be sensitive to a child's native language and family culture, as well as abilities or special needs.



### **Birthdays and Special Snacks**

The school provides daily snacks. Parents are welcome to bring in a special snack to celebrate their child's birthday in school or for a special treat for their child's class. Please be sure to notify the teachers in advance when you would like to celebrate.

If you have a child with special dietary/medical needs, please discuss this with his or her teacher and the Director.

Party invitations are allowed to be passed out in the school if all the children in your child's class are invited. We never want a child's feelings to be hurt.

**WE ARE A OU KOSHER AND A NUT AWARE SCHOOL.  
PLEASE CHECK WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER BEFORE**

**MAKING AND BRINGING IN ANY SNACKS. PLEASE CHECK LABELS TO MAKE SURE THAT FOOD IS NOT MADE IN A FACILITY THAT MAKES NUT PRODUCTS. WE HAVE CHILDREN WHO HAVE SEVERE FOOD ALLERGIES AND CANNOT EAT CERTAIN FOODS OR EVEN CERTAIN INGREDIENTS.**



### **Pet Policy**

Animals (with the exception of reptiles due to the risk of salmonella) are permitted to visit classrooms.

- They must be accompanied by an adult and for a specific period of time.
- They must be healthy.
- Teachers will supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on appropriate behavior with animals.
- Teachers will make sure that any child who is allergic to an animal is not exposed to that animal.

### **Communication**

It is very important to keep the lines of communication open. We really believe that home and school are a team.

- Please share your thoughts, concerns, and insights regarding your child with the teachers and the Director. You are your child's first teacher and know your child best of all. We want school and home to be a team, to support your child in his or her growth.
- At drop off and pick up, teachers will be focusing on helping your children transition to school and home, but please do not hesitate to share any important information. If you need to have a longer conversation, please don't hesitate to set up a time for a conference.
- Please inform the Director if there is a change in address, phone number, pick up person, Nanny or emergency numbers.
- Please make sure that your emergency numbers are local numbers, so that your child can be picked up quickly, if he or she is ill or hurt

The Teachers and Director will also communicate with you throughout the year both formally and informally. You will have the opportunity to participate in Parent/Teacher Conferences during the year. You will also receive newsletters and other notices regarding what is happening in your child's class and within the school.

### **Discipline Policy**

At Riverdale Temple Nursery School, we strive to provide children with a positive and nurturing environment. An atmosphere of co-operation and community is established early in the school year, so that children understand that they are part of a school "family."

They are encouraged and guided to express their feelings through words and make appropriate choices for their behavior. Teachers use positive reinforcement and model appropriate behaviors and manners. Children learn to behave in ways that allow them to be safe and respectful of their classmates.

Redirection and distraction are often used to avoid inappropriate behavior. When children forget about appropriate behavior, they are verbally reminded of the rules and encouraged to think of more appropriate ways of expressing themselves.

### **School Closures**

Our goal is to remain open when at all possible. We will follow the New York City Department of Education decisions about school closures in inclement weather.

There might be times when our school will be closed due to the condition of our parking lot and whether or not we have a sufficient staff to work with children. In those cases, you will be notified by phone and email.

In case of sudden inclement weather during the school day, you will be notified by phone of an early closing.

### **Emergency Management Plan**

The safety and security of our children is of the utmost importance. Should there be any need for action due to internal or external threats, Riverdale Temple Nursery School has an

Emergency Plan in place. A staff member is trained in First Aid and CPR.

Monthly fire drills and escape plans are conducted.

An evacuation sight within walking distance of the school has been assigned. If necessary, children will be transported to this sight and a sign will be posted on the Riverdale Temple Nursery School door, advising parents of the location. Parents and/or authorized persons will also be notified by phone calls and/or emails about where the children are to be picked up. Under no circumstance will a child ever be left unsupervised. The school has emergency supply kits.



### Medical Policy

**At this time, Riverdale Temple Nursery School is not certified to administer medication to children. Only parents are allowed to administer medication.**

We are able to administer emergency medications such as an epi-pen, an asthma inhaler or a nebulizer as long as we have the proper paperwork filed out by the child's pediatrician and by you.

No cough drops, gum or sucking candies are allowed at school.

Teachers will apply over the counter topical ointments or creams for diapering.

### **Health Forms**

The Department of Health's Bureau of Childcare, which is our licensing agency, requires that every child in the center has a physical evaluation prior to entering Riverdale Temple Nursery School and yearly thereafter. The completed health form must be in our files by the first day of school. No child will be admitted until this form is received with complete immunization information.

Parents are also required to submit medical forms to Riverdale Temple Nursery School after every "well visit" for your child and each time your child is immunized throughout the year.

If your child is under a physician's care for any special health problem, is taking medication, or has any allergies, be sure that these items are noted.

### **Accidents/Incidents**

In case of minor accidents (cuts, bruises, scrapes, falls) the teacher will tell you when you pick up your child. All classrooms and the office are equipped with First Aid Kits and staff is certified in CPR and First Aid. A First Aid Kit is taken on all outdoor trips.

In case of a more serious accident or if your child becomes ill, we will contact you at a phone number you have given us. If we

cannot contact you, the emergency contact will be called. We follow all mandated and recommended New York City Department of Health procedures.



### **Illnesses**

All children are exposed to illness in a school setting. If your child is not feeling well, please keep him or her home. If you are in doubt as to whether or not to send your child to school, please do not hesitate to call the Director before the start of school.

Illness spreads quickly in a school setting. Washing hands does help with the spread of germs. We will ask you and your child to wash hands when you enter school. Thank you so much for remembering to wash hands for the benefit of your child, the other children and the teachers.

If a child becomes sick at school, parents will be contacted to take the child home. If parents are not available, emergency numbers will be contacted to ensure that the sick child's needs are met and that he or she can rest and recover.

Please make sure that you have provided us with two local emergency numbers, so that someone can pick up your child quickly.

Please notify the school if your child will be absent. And please report any communicable disease contracted by your child immediately to the school, so that notices may be sent home to other parents in your child's class and we can notify the Department of Health.

### **Guidelines About When to Keep Your Child Home**

These are some helpful guidelines about when to keep your child home.

- If your child has a persistent "green" runny nose.
- If your child has conjunctivitis (pink eye). He or she may return the day after treatment begins or if you choose to not have treatment, when his or her eye is no longer pink.
- If your child has a fever of 100 degrees or more. Your child may return when he or she has been fever-free for at least 24 hours.
- If your child has diarrhea and /or has vomited. He or she may return after he or she has no symptoms for at least 24 hours.
- If your child has strep throat. He or she may return 48 hours after starting antibiotics.
- If your child has scabies or ringworm. He or she may return 24 hours after treatment begins.
- If your child has coxsackie (hand, foot and mouth). He or she may return when well enough to participate in all activities.
- If your child has head lice. He or she may return the day after treatment begins, as long as they are nit free. (Parents should check for lice after every vacation, including summer, on a regular basis.)

- If your child has a communicable disease. Your child may return after the stage of contagion has passed. Whenever there is evidence of a contagious illness or identified rash, please provide the school with a doctor's note stating that your child can return to school.

If your child has bronchitis. He or she may return 24 hours after treatment with antibiotics

### **Mandated Reporting**

New York State law requires that any suspicion of child abuse or neglect be reported to a central hotline. All teachers as part of their New York City Department of Health requirements take a course in child abuse and neglect.

Child abuse is defined as when a parent or guardian inflicts serious physical injury upon a child, creates a substantial risk or commits a sex offense against a child

Abuse also includes situations where a parent or guardian knowingly allows someone else to inflict such harm on a child. Maltreatment (including neglect) means that a child's physical, mental or emotional condition has been impaired or placed in imminent danger or impairment by a parent or guardian:

- Failing to provide sufficient food, clothing shelter, education or
- Failing to provide proper supervision, guardianship or medical care (refers to all medical issues, including dental, optometric or surgical care) or

Inflicting excessive corporal punishment, abandoning the child, or misusing alcohol or other drugs to the extent that child was placed in imminent danger.

### **Nursing Mothers**

The school wants breastfeeding mothers to feel comfortable and have privacy while nursing their babies. Mothers are welcome to nurse in our Library.

### **Notice of Nondiscrimination**

Riverdale Temple Nursery School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, ethnic origin or disability. Riverdale Temple Nursery School is dedicated to supporting the American with Disabilities Act. If your child may require special accommodations for participation, please call us to discuss how we can support your family.

### **Smoke Free Environment**

Riverdale Temple Nursery School is a Smoke Free Environment. Tobacco use is prohibited inside the building. Please do not smoke in front of the school. We want all of our children and community safe and healthy.

