



Belmont Cooperative Nursery School

Parent Handbook
2025/2026

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HISTORY, MISSION, AND VALUES

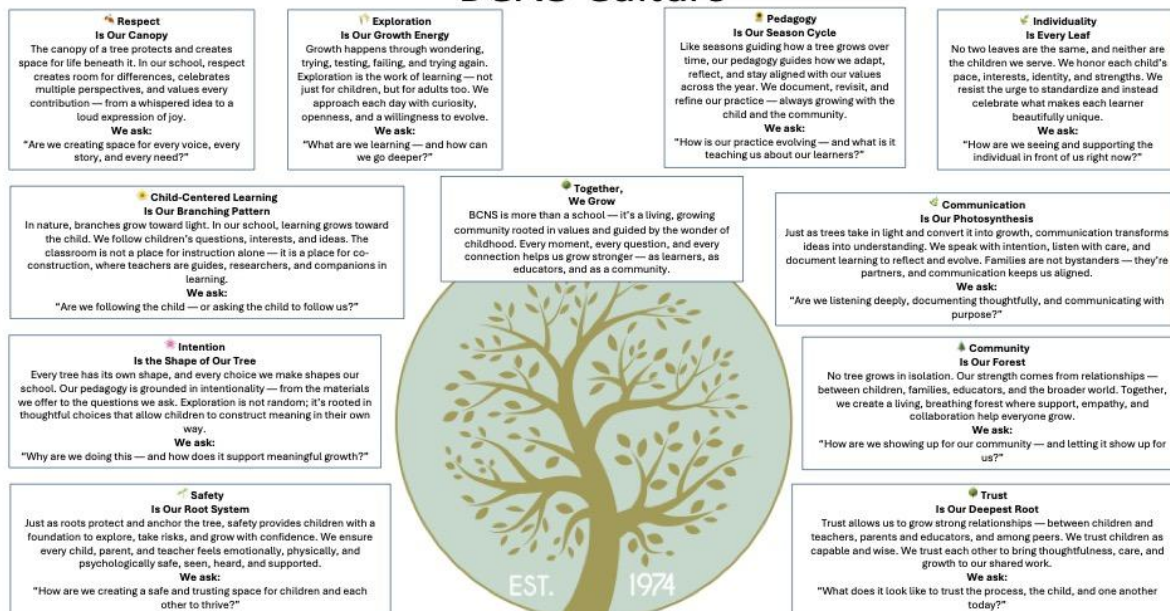
History

The Belmont Cooperative Nursery School (BCNS) was founded in the spring of 1974, largely through the efforts of members of the First Church in Belmont Unitarian-Universalist. Originally called the First Church Nursery School of Belmont, the school served one class of three-year-old children, expanding the following year to include a second class of four-year-old children. In 1975, the school was renamed the Belmont Cooperative Nursery School, Inc. to acknowledge its independence from the church and highlight its cooperative nature. In June 2003, the school moved to the Belmont United Methodist Church, and in June 2012, it moved to its current location at the Saint Joseph Parish.

Mission and Values

The Belmont Cooperative Nursery School provides a nurturing community grounded in a commitment to the Reggio Emilia educational philosophy and a cooperative model of family engagement. BCNS strives to uphold the values that were collaboratively created by families and staff during the 2019-2020 school year. These values include trust, respect, safety, community, communication, individuality, intention/exploration/pedagogy, and child-centrism.

BCNS Culture



ADMISSIONS

Application Process

Current families are asked to secure their space in the next year's class by November of the prior year. An application and all required fees must be submitted for a child to be considered for enrollment.

The application season for new families and alumni families begins in November and continues until school starts the following year.

Once current families have claimed their slots, the remaining applications are reviewed, and priority is given to siblings of current students and siblings or children of alumni. Once these priority children are enrolled, new family applications are considered on a first come, first served basis. Once a class becomes full, a waiting list is created and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Enrollment Criteria and Non-Discrimination Policy

The Belmont Cooperative Nursery School admits students of all families without regard to race, cultural or national heritage, religion, political beliefs, disability, marital status or sexual orientation. Toilet training is not required prior to enrollment and is not used in the enrollment decision making process.

If a child has a special need that will greatly impact their classroom experience, the needs of the child should be discussed with the Director prior to enrolling to determine if BCNS is able to meet said needs.

When class rosters are created, consideration is given to the age and gender of the prospective children to ensure that each class is complementary and well balanced.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition Rates

Three-day Class	\$6,631.00
Four-day Class	\$8,506.00
Five-day Class	\$10,340.00
Extended Day	\$57 per day
Early Care	\$31 per day

Please note that tuition may increase from year to year.

Non-Refundable Application Fee

A completed application and a non-refundable application fee of \$60 is required of all applicants to the school, regardless of if they are a new family or a current family who is continuing at school.

Non-Refundable Deposit

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 secures a space for a child in the next year's class. The deposit is subtracted from the first tuition installment.

Enrichment Fee

Every family will be assessed a \$350 enrichment fee that will be due with the first tuition installment. This is not an optional fee. The enrichment fee will cover supplemental educational experiences such as music, theater, and Mass Audubon Habitat programming. Enrichment fees will be used for the sole purpose of enrichment programming.

Tuition Payments

Tuition is billed in three installments during the year: June, October, and February. All tuition payments are expected on or before the due date.

Any payment ten or more days late will be subject to a late payment charge. Payments not made within thirty days of the due date may result in the child's dismissal from school. The school reserves the right to suspend services to families whose tuition account is in arrears. Details related to the tuition are handled by the Treasurer and Billing Consultant in collaboration with the Director. The Executive Board may get involved with tuition details in the event that families are excessively delinquent.

Non-Standard Tuition Agreements

Arrangements for monthly payments or alternative payment timelines must be presented to and approved by the BCNS Treasurer in consultation with the BCNS Co-Presidents. Any payment arrangement that does not involve the standard three tuition installments must be agreed to in writing and signed by the parent, the Co-Presidents, and the Treasurer.

Scholarships

Scholarships are offered based on financial need. Allocations are determined by the family's income as a percentage of the state's median income. Available funds are dependent upon the school's fundraising efforts. Application forms for scholarships are available to all families during the summer and must be returned with a completed tax form before the school year begins. Applications are reviewed only by the Director and Treasurer and are otherwise held confidential. The following are the median income scholarship standards:

- <50% median income=30% tuition discount
- 50-75% median income=20% tuition discount
- 76-80% median income=15% tuition discount
- >80% median income=not eligible for scholarship

Financial Hardship Appeal

If a family decides to withdraw from the school after the deposit is paid, it is highly unlikely that the non-refundable deposit will be returned. A Financial Hardship appeal can be filed with the Treasurer and Director if there are extenuating reasons as to why a refund may be appropriate. Families may qualify for a full or partial refund if there has been unexpected and recent unemployment, significant reduction in income, unusual and unexpected medical or dental expenses not covered by insurance, or a housing crisis. The purchase of a new home or the expensive costs of a household move are not typically seen as reasons for an appeal to be granted. Financial documentation such as tax documents, unemployment forms, or medical bills may be requested to make a determination.

FACILITIES

Overview

BCNS is located at St. Joseph Parish at 130 Common Street. The entrance is located at the back of the church. There are multiple classrooms, an office, a bathroom including 2 stalls, a storage area, and an adjacent outdoor playground. The classrooms are brightly lit with new windows, fresh paint, new floors, and sinks. The facility is fully inspected and approved for fire safety, lead abatement, and building codes.

Parking

If parking is required, families are asked to use the parking lot that is closest to the school door. Please note that there are several, marked spaces reserved for St. Joseph Church staff and BCNS teachers.

The BCNS parking lot is a no-idling zone. Drivers are asked to turn off their engines when their cars are parked to maintain a healthy and safe environment.

Outdoor Play Space

The play space at the St. Joseph church building belongs to BCNS and is open from 8:00a.m.–4:00p.m. Monday through Friday. Families are welcome to enjoy the play space with younger/older siblings at drop-off or pick-up time, but the school is not responsible for injuries that may occur during this time. Additionally, when a preschool class is on the playground, it is best if families are not playing on the playground at the same time. The play space should not be used on Sundays or during other times when church services are happening.

Off-Site Outdoor Play Space

BCNS will use the Underwood Playground, which is a public playground, as additional outdoor playspace for, primarily, the pre-kindergarten classes. Prior to the children's arrival at school each morning, the co-teachers will check the Underwood Playground for hazards. Broken equipment and trash will be removed. In addition, a safe play zone will be marked with cones. The teachers will have the choice between one of two zones. Zone one includes the structure and a portion of the flat of the hill next to the structure. Zone two is the lower part of the hill by the pool. Both zones will exclude all bushes and perimeter fences. The teachers have the flexibility to make adjustments to the spaces from day to day and even during their outdoor play period. The entire class will move as a group when a switch is made between zones.

CALENDAR

The school year typically begins the week after Labor Day and ends in early June. Vacation weeks, snow days, and weather-related delays and early dismissals correspond to those of the Belmont Public Schools (BPS). School closings and late starts for BPS can be found at www.belmont.k12.ma.us. Public school openings delayed beyond 90 minutes will result in morning programming being canceled at BCNS. School cancellations are not made up at the end of the year. If the weather deteriorates over the course of the morning and the public schools announce an early closing, parents will be contacted by the preschool. Closings due to COVID-19 will be at the discretion of the Director and not necessarily aligned with Belmont Public Schools. At the end of regular programming in June, two weeks of Extended School Year ("June Bugs") are offered. Following June Bugs, two weeks of BCNS Camp are offered in both July and August. The weeks are determined by staff and are released to families in January of each year.

CLASSES AND PROGRAMS

Classes

BCNS has the following four classes:

- Maple (M, W, F & optional Th), a preschool class with 15 children
- Oak (T, TH, F & optional M), a preschool class with 10 children
- Birch (M-F), a pre-kindergarten class with 22 children

Each class has at least two teachers for the Morning Program and may add an additional teacher to the roster for the Extended Day program. Class-specific information and schedules can be found on the school website.

Morning Program

The Morning Program takes place for three hours sometime between 8:45a.m. and 12:25p.m., depending on the class. The daily schedule includes:

- Drop-off, including health screening
- Class meeting or circle time
- Indoor play
- Outdoor play
- Snack time
- Bathroom usage
- Pickup

Habitat

For students in the Birch classes, the Morning Program will occasionally meet at Mass Audubon Habitat Education Center & Wildlife Sanctuary in Belmont for a day of outdoor education led by their regular teachers along with naturalists. Parents will be notified of these days in advance since pick-up and drop-off will be at Habitat. Students will have play time, morning meeting, snack, and exploratory walks.

Extended Day Program

BCNS offers an optional Extended Day program that runs daily for two and a half hours after the end of the Morning Program. During this time, children eat lunch, have quiet time, and play outside (weather permitting).

Students can sign up to attend one or more days of the week on their regularly scheduled school days for the entire year and the fee will be included in their standard tuition installments. Alternatively, students can sign up on a day-by-day basis, and even day-of, space permitting, and will be billed accordingly every other month. Cancellations for the week need to be made more than 24 hours in advance, or the family will be charged. A weekly roster is printed on

Monday so sign-ups that happen on the same day or after Monday morning for that week need to be mentioned to the teacher and the Director.

Extracurricular Program

Extracurricular classes are offered on most days of the week for one additional hour at the end of Extended Day from 2:30–3:30pm. There are three sessions throughout the year. Class topics may include science, cooking, dance, or active storytelling. These classes take place outside as they involve the mixing of students from various classrooms.

GOVERNANCE

Board of Trustees

BCNS is a non-sectarian, not-for-profit corporation. The school is governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of a Chair, Co-Chair, a Treasurer, a Secretary, a Health and Safety Chair, an Operations Chair, and two Staff Members. The Board meets monthly along with the school Director, committee chairs, and any other parents/caregivers that choose to attend. As a cooperative, the parents of the children enrolled at the school are members of the corporation, and as such, they are strongly encouraged to attend the Board meetings.

The monthly Board meeting schedules and agendas are publicized to the entire community well in advance. Currently, Board meetings are held remotely via Zoom at 7:30p.m. on the 2nd or 3rd Monday of each month. During the monthly meetings, minutes are taken and distributed electronically to the school community. Votes on official matters are taken at Board meetings and can only take place if a quorum (one half of the Executive Board of Trustees plus one) is present to vote. All members of the Executive Board are voting members, but the school Director is not a voting member.

Licensing Authority

BCNS is licensed by the Department of Early Childhood Education and Care for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, located at 360 Merrimack Street, Building 9, 3rd floor, Lawrence, MA 01843. The school's licensing agent point of contact is Michelle Haines, Group and School Age Child Care Licensur (978-826-1311, michelle.haines@state.ma.us).

STAFF POSITIONS

Director

The Director of the school is responsible for executing the values and practices of the school. As the supervisor of the teachers, the Director oversees all elements of the classroom program including, but not limited to, hiring, supporting and evaluating teachers, and developing and implementing curricula. The Director also ensures safety and licensing compliance, develops and oversees the budgeting process, and handles the administrative and logistical daily needs of the school and the children.

The Director is expected to attend all Board meetings and be available to parents for questions and consultations. The Director must also maintain a good working relationship with the church administration.

Teaching Staff

Certified and experienced teachers lead or co-lead each class and are responsible for executing a safe play-based classroom environment where the BCNS values are upheld.

Billing Consultant

The Billing Consultant manages accounts receivables for all invoices, coordinates payroll, and reconciles bank statements. The Billing Consultant also works in conjunction with the Director, Treasurer, and Executive Board to develop and manage the annual budget.

Student Interns

The school shall occasionally, at the discretion of the Director, utilize student interns from local high schools and colleges to assist in the classroom. Classroom teachers directly supervise the interns at all times. Orientation training, as well as ongoing evaluation, will be provided by the Director. The Parent and Teacher Handbooks will be provided as a reference tool. No intern will be allowed in the classroom without having been found in compliance with an EEC Background Record Check including a CORI and DSS Background check.

PARENT POSITIONS AND COMMITTEES

Overview

The cooperative nature of the preschool recognizes that all families have a vested interest in and commitment to the healthy functioning of the school. All families are required to participate in the operation of the school, either as a member of the Executive Board, member of a committee, or by holding a non-committee job.

Recognizing that families have different strengths, interests, and available time, the opportunities for involvement are diverse in scope, function, and commitment. Though the roles are assigned in a formal process at the beginning of the year, additional needs may arise during the year and parents are encouraged to take on additional responsibilities as needed. The nature of the cooperative experience is that people handle things differently and operate in ways that may be unique to their personality, style, and talents. BCNS honors these variations and different approaches to tasks and tries not to limit the ways that tasks are accomplished.

Executive Board

The Executive Board is responsible for the fiscal, legal, and administrative well-being of the school. The Board is charged with the following overarching responsibilities:

- Determine the mission and purpose of the school
- Select, support, and evaluate the school Director
- Ensure effective planning
- Monitor and strengthen programs
- Protect assets and provide financial oversight
- Build a competent and strong Board
- Ensure legal and ethical integrity
- Enhance the school's presence in the public

Co-Presidents

The Co-Presidents are responsible for overseeing the general governance of the school, attending to organization-wide matters, and ensuring the long-term financial stability and prosperity of the school. They oversee all committees, chair monthly Board meetings, and prepare the agendas for said meetings. They make some decisions in consultation with the Director, but bring major policy decisions to the full Executive Board for a discussion and vote. The Co-Presidents are responsible for overseeing transition governance issues between school years, updating the school handbook, and hosting a parent orientation. In collaboration with the Director, the Co-Presidents work on human resource issues and decide on changes in school policy. They work with external partners of the school, such as church administration, vendors, and town leaders. Financial issues are handled in

cooperation with the school Treasurer and include such things as setting the budget, establishing tuition, creating teacher contracts, and approving unexpected costs. Co-Presidents also assist with admissions.

The Co-Presidents should have some representation at and involvement with all events and Board meetings. The Co-President role requires significant time and effort throughout the year, with a more intense workload in the summer. A new Co-President is appointed by the current President and Director each spring, and the role is a two-year commitment so that there is continuity, shared responsibility of tasks, and an experienced leader each year.

Room Parents

Each class has a Room Parent who represents the class, serving as a liaison between the families in the class, the teachers, the Director, and the Board. The Room Parent plays an important role in fielding questions, disseminating information, and tending to the practical needs of families in the class. They are responsible for building community with the families of the class and taking a leadership role in other programming initiatives at BCNS.

Treasurer

The Treasurer works in conjunction with the Billing Consultant, Director, and Executive Board to develop and manage the annual budget, establish tuition, and set teacher salaries. The Treasurer writes checks to vendors and staff members for reimbursements and expenses. The Treasurer compares the BCNS budget against the actual results at all Board meetings. The Treasurer also assists with admissions.

The Treasurer role requires a fair amount of time throughout the year, and attendance at the monthly Board meetings is required.

Secretary

The Secretary records the minutes at all Board meetings, distributes the minutes to all families via email, maintains an archive of meeting notes, and researches inquiries regarding past Board votes. The Secretary also assists with admissions.

The Secretary position does not require a significant amount of time, although the Secretary is required to attend all Board meetings.

Facilities Committee

The Facilities Committee chairs work with the Director on maintenance-related issues in the classrooms and on the small playground that arise throughout the year. The committee chairs

also organize and supervise the bi-annual indoor clean ups at the school.

The Facilities chairs should be willing to work with their hands, have basic maintenance skills, and be available on weekends.

Members of the Facilities Committee are required to attend at least one clean up per year on a weekend morning for approximately three hours.

Health & Safety Committee

The COVID Committee consists of a chair, parents, staff members, and the Director. The objective of the COVID Committee is to provide detailed recommendations to the Director and Executive Board on actions required for the 2021-2022 school year to address all aspects of COVID-19 mitigation.

The COVID Committee will consult guidance and data from federal, state, and local authorities, as well as utilize community expertise to craft these recommendations.

The COVID Committee will meet remotely monthly or as needed throughout the year.

Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee is responsible for planning and carrying out the school's annual fundraising agenda.

This committee requires a fair amount of time throughout the school year.

Social Events Committee

The Social Events Committee organizes social events throughout the year, either virtually or in person. Events can include parents-only events and family events for individual classes or the whole school.

This committee requires a fair amount of time throughout the year. Members of this committee should be willing to plan and attend a variety of events.

Strategic Planning Committee

The Strategic Planning Committee develops and implements a long-term plan for all aspects of the school.

This committee will meet periodically throughout the year. Members of the committee should have a background in strategic planning, educational or organizational leadership, or

finance.

Publicity Committee

The Publicity Committee is responsible for increasing the school's visibility within the greater community. Responsibilities include contacting local media, developing an online presence using social media and other platforms, creating and coordinating the distribution of flyers, and working with the town on securing outdoor sidewalk signs.

This committee works in an ongoing way throughout the school year and requires a fair amount of time and commitment.

Health Care Coordinator

The Health Care Coordinator ensures that all state health care requirements are met. He/she oversees the processing of all student health forms prior to the start of the school year, updates healthcare policies, monitors the creation and posting of emergency contact lists, checks that the allergy list is current, and keeps the first aid kits properly supplied. The Director consults with the Health Care Coordinator on health-related matters.

The Health Care Coordinator must be a registered nurse or physician and be available for summer preparation and ongoing health conversations.

Webmaster

The Webmaster is responsible for making changes to the school's website throughout the year. This person is also responsible for designing and updating the website as needed. The Webmaster should have some experience with web design and maintenance, and be willing to spend time on web related tasks throughout the year.

Storage Organizer

The Storage Organizer will be responsible for monthly organization of the storage area in the office, the storage area in the basement, and all storage closets.

This position requires COVID vaccination, as well as monthly visits to the school that can be done on a flexible timeline.

Librarian

The Librarian is responsible for maintaining the BCNS onsite library on a weekly basis. The librarian will check the "to be shelved" bin in the office each week and shelve the books in alphabetical

order. In addition, the Librarian will be responsible for repairing any books in the "in need of repair" bin.

This position requires COVID vaccination, as well as a weekly visit to the school that can be done on a flexible timeline.

PARENT HELPING

Overview

The cooperative nature of BCNS allows parents to be an integral part of their child's early experience with school. Parent helping is a wonderful way to see the preschool in action, lend a hand in daily activities, and get to know the other children in the class.

All families are asked to help in the classroom about once every ten weeks over the course of the school year. Adults must be masked and fully vaccinated to participate in parent helping. If adults are unvaccinated or uncomfortable on account of COVID, they are not required to parent help, but can contribute to the cooperative in other ways.

Involvement at all comfort levels is welcomed, and parents are encouraged to share their talents and interests with the class. If a parent helper would like to lead a specific activity, it is important to check with the teachers ahead of time to ensure that there will be no conflict in scheduling and to determine the project's appropriateness for the class.

It is not appropriate to use parent helping time to discuss child-specific issues. However, parent helpers can use the time to mention to the teachers if they would like to schedule a time to discuss a concern.

Children have a variety of reactions to having a parent in the classroom. Some children completely ignore their parents, while others become clingy. If a child is having a difficult time separating, parents are encouraged to respond to the needs of their child while also promoting interaction with other kids or having their child assist them with their helping duties.

Parent Helping and Other Family Members

It is important that the helper is someone that the preschooler knows and loves, but it does not necessarily have to be a parent. Any relatives that are comfortable with the child and willing to help and have fun are welcome.

To minimize distractions, families are asked to leave younger siblings at home during parent helping. Parents may contact a teacher if they need an exception to this policy for a non-crawling infant.

Schedule and Conflicts

The class Vice-President is responsible for creating the parent help schedule and should

communicate the schedule with plenty of notice. If a parent is unable to help on a designated day, that parent is responsible for changing days with another parent. They must also inform the teachers of the change.

Daily Experience and Duties

Parent helpers should arrive five minutes before the start of the day and check in with the teachers. The teachers will give a brief overview of the day's activities. During the day, the helpers should circulate around the classroom at will, engaging with the children in activities and responding to the directions of the teachers.

Parent helping duties vary by classroom and lists of specific expectations are posted in each classroom. The following are typical responsibilities:

- Work at a table and support the project/activity
- Supervise safe free play practices in one of the classrooms
- Read quietly with children
- Participate in circle time activities
- Clean the classroom by wiping down tables, sweeping/vacuuming floors, taking out trash, and tidying up toys
- Help children get ready for the playground/dismissal
- Assist teachers on the playground

Parent-Student Interactions

BCNS encourages parents to align their own behaviors with the fundamental principles of the Reggio philosophy, and for this reason, parents are given training on the subject before parent helping begins for the school year. Asking open-ended questions, providing specific and thoughtful feedback, offering choices, and allowing the children to take the lead in their efforts and in problem solving are all examples of encouraged parent behavior.

We encourage parent helpers to use open-ended questions to stimulate thinking by our students. Some examples include:

- "What could we build here?"
- "How could we solve this?"
- "Have you ever seen/heard/felt anything like this before?"
- "What do you think might happen if we...?"

While we generally put out one or two special activities each day, the children may help themselves to whatever toys, writing supplies, etc. are on the open shelves that they might wish to use, and they are to replace them when they're finished.

BCNS likes to promote the following messages for these common situations:

- Spills happen, but too much sand or water on the floor means someone could slip so we need to try to keep it on the table
- Play dough stays on the table
- Wooden blocks are carried down low and other children should be made aware of tall structures in an area to assure adequate space if they were to collapse
- Taking out boxes of toys is fun, but dumping large numbers of different things in a pile on the floor is not a good idea because it's harder to find what you want to play with

Here are some ways parent helpers can foster a happy classroom space:

- Relax, be yourself, and have fun
- Express interest in the activities or concerns of the children
- Be cheerful and sympathetic when explaining limits
- Encourage children to clean up when they finish with something
- Try to anticipate something that the children would like to do next
- Listen to and acknowledge the children's feelings; show them an acceptable way to express their feelings ("You seem to be angry/sad at _____ for _____. Can you tell them how you feel and ask that they _____?")
- Put names on the artwork/papers that students are creating with you
- Encourage and model turn-taking when you are playing with a group

Student Behavior Management

While guiding children's behavior is a primary responsibility of the teachers, BCNS encourages parent helpers to adhere to the school's behavior management philosophy as outlined in the Behavior Management section of the handbook.

Toileting

Classroom teachers are responsible for handling the toileting needs of all children. However, it should be noted that BCNS expects all parent helpers to be respectful and supportive of the differing toileting needs and stages of all children.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Philosophy

At BCNS, children are always treated with respect even in moments of intense behavioral or emotional outbursts. BCNS believes that positive discipline works best, and teachers base their approach to behavior management on their understanding of the individual needs and development of the children. All children are approached in a kind, gentle, and caring manner. To this end, behavior management is handled in a way that ensures that the rights of all individuals within the community are respected and everyone can feel safe.

At the start of each year, the teachers have a discussion of community guidelines and their importance so that all children are aware of expectations. Teachers encourage the children to come up with expectations they think would be fair. This student-generated list becomes the foundation for classroom expectations. Typical class rules include: use quiet voices, use walking feet inside, use words (not bodies) to talk with friends and teachers, ask for help when it's needed, clean up when it's time, and take care of our things. Students are encouraged to adhere to these norms through positive reinforcement and modeling, as well as by being given appropriate choices and alternatives. BCNS believes children learn best when they are in a safe, predictable, and reasonably orderly environment; the rules help everyone feel secure.

Power struggles over noncompliant behavior that is not safety related are generally avoided. The adults in the room might actively ignore the children that are not complying while praising those who are helping, or they might engage them in a more personal way ("I notice you really like puzzles. I'll bet you could help me find the pieces that go in this one.").

The following are a few approaches to common problem situations:

- Tug-of-war: "I had it first!" "No, I had it first!"
When two children are fighting over a toy, the adult diffuses the situation and offers to hold the toy while the issue is discussed ("There's one truck here, and two girls who want to use it. What should we do?"). Sometimes, given a minute to think, the children can come up with a workable plan. Sometimes the adult needs to suggest turn-taking or timing one's turn ("You may use it for two minutes, then it'll be her turn."), and sometimes the adult needs to divert them to another related activity ("We have a truck, but no road. Is there anything around here we could make a road out of?").
- Hitting, biting, kicking, etc.

Safety is secured first and then the issue is discussed. It is important to acknowledge and name the feeling that precipitated the act, make it clear that the behavior itself is not allowed, and reinforce that the rules apply to all ("I know you're angry at George, but I cannot let you hit him, just as I won't let anyone hit you."). The adult may have to draw the antagonist aside for a quiet talk, but this is not labeled as a time out. The adult must then get in close, kneel down to their level, touch their shoulder, say their name, and keep the language simple. Children are never required to apologize but are supported in identifying how they can repair a situation or solve a conflict ("How do you want to handle this?").

- Transitions: "I don't WANT to...clean-up/come to circle, etc."

To ease transitions, teachers give a five-minute warning before clean up time or other transitions by using a signal or familiar ritual.

When situations arise, teachers encourage students to resolve conflicts by having meaningful discussions about feelings and behavior, with teacher guidance when needed. If children are having trouble getting control of their bodies, a teacher will hold them snugly, move with them to a calm place, and stay with them until they are ready to re-enter the classroom. Children that deliberately break a rule that has been reinforced regularly will be encouraged to play in another area.

On occasion, teachers may call parents during the day to inform them that their children are having a rough day and suggest that an early pick-up will give the children the parental TLC that may be needed. However, parents are not obligated to come and pick up their children.

Expulsion

When a child's needs cannot be met, after all supports and strategies have been exhausted, BCNS has the right to terminate the child's participation at the school. This decision to expel a child from the school is not made without extensive prior consultation and discussion with the parents. Grossly inappropriate behavior will be the only circumstance in which prior consultation and discussion will not happen, and expulsion will happen immediately.

If behavioral problems arise, a behavior management plan will be co-developed with the parents and teachers. Referrals to external support services may be integrated into the behavior management plan. Only if the behavior management plan and recommendations from the external services are not successful over a specified time frame or there has been non-compliance on the part of the parents will the conversation about expulsion be relevant.

Parents will be notified in writing of the reasons for the child's expulsion and teachers will prepare the child for departure in a manner that is developmentally appropriate. Tuition adjustments will be made on a case by case basis.

Similarly, adults may be barred from school premises for behavior deemed dangerous to the children, adults, or employees. The teachers and/or Director can make an immediate decision to ask a parent to leave based on the behavior of the parent and will consult with the Co-Presidents about long-term expectations about future visits to the school.

TOILETING

All children are encouraged to be toilet trained by the beginning of the school year, though their admission is not contingent upon that fact. Each child will be encouraged, but not forced, to use the toilet each day. BCNS works with the readiness and willingness of each child. Teachers will respect parents' wishes with regard to toilet training for their child. No child shall be punished, verbally abused, or humiliated for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet. Should issues around bathroom use arise, a discussion will occur with teachers and parents so that a positive, supportive plan can be developed that will be consistent and manageable both at home and at school.

Only teachers are allowed to accompany the child to the bathroom and help them use the facilities. Children who wear pull-ups or diapers will be helped into a fresh one should the pull-up or diaper become soiled, and the used one will be disposed of in a closed container in the bathroom. After using the toilet, children must wash their hands with liquid soap and running water. Adults must also wash their hands with soap and water after assisting the child. Hands are to be dried on towels.

In the event of a toileting accident, the teacher helping the child will get extra clothes from the child's cubby area. The teacher will help the child wash and change into dry clothing. The wet and/or soiled clothing will be sealed in a plastic bag, and stool will be discarded in the toilet beforehand if possible. The plastic bag will be labeled with the child's name and returned to the cubby to be picked up by the parent.

ATTENDANCE AND DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

Attendance

Once families are on school grounds, they are required to sign their children into school each morning using the ProCare app. Families should notify BCNS via ProCare if their child will be absent, and in the case of a planned absence, prior notification is preferred.

If a child has not arrived by 30 minutes after the scheduled start time and his/her absence has not been reported, BCNS staff will contact the parents to determine the child's whereabouts. If the parents cannot be reached, BCNS staff will contact the child's emergency contacts. If the emergency contacts cannot be reached and the location of the child cannot be determined, the local police department will be notified, as required by state licensing requirements.

Drop-Off

Drop-off for each class will take place at an assigned time and location. It is important that families are punctual. Any changes to the protocol will be communicated through ProCare.

BCNS offers a rolling drop-off where parents pull up to a designated location, and then a teacher helps the children out of their car seats and to the class meeting place. For families that walk or bike to school, there is a designated drop-off area where a teacher will meet the children and escort them to the class meeting place. BCNS staff will conduct a virtual health screening of all children upon arrival. Any student exhibiting any signs or symptoms of illness will be sent home immediately.

If a late arrival is anticipated, parents should contact the teachers and the Director via ProCare. If children are late and the class has already proceeded inside, families will be asked to wait in their vehicles in a parking space (or outside, if walking/biking to school) until a teacher is able to come outside to complete the screening and escort the children into school. The child's teacher will return to the parking lot as soon as possible, but this may be after an extended period.

Pick-Up

Pick-up for each class will take place at a specific time and location. Punctuality is encouraged. Please note that any changes to the protocol will be communicated through the ProCare app.

Parents will drive to the pick-up location, get out of their vehicles, meet their children, and then buckle their children into their car seats or booster seats. Walking families are asked to walk directly to their assigned pick-up location and a teacher will escort the children to the parents.

If parents anticipate being late, they must contact the teachers and Director via ProCare. If parents are late for pick-up from the Morning Program and the class has already proceeded

inside, the parents will be asked to wait in their vehicles in a parking space (or outside, if walking/biking to school) until a teacher is able to escort the children outside. If the Extended Day program has already begun and a teacher is unable to escort the children to the parking lot, the children may be asked to stay for the Extended Day program at the cost of \$35/day.

If a parent/caregiver will be late for Extended Day pick-up time, please contact the teachers and the Director via ProCare. If parents are late for pick-up from Extended Day, the children may have to move to another BCNS pickup location with the Extended Day teacher and this change would be communicated through ProCare.

COMMUNICATION

Summer Home Visits

Children will be visited by one of their teachers in the weeks preceding school. These visits take place outdoors and are a great opportunity for the students and teachers to build rapport.

Informal Communication

BCNS is committed to remaining in close communication with parents about their children and the general school community. Informal communication helps bridge the gap between home and school, giving teachers and parents valuable insight into the children's lives and allowing them to develop a team approach for ensuring the well-being of all children.

ProCare

BCNS uses ProCare, a child-care software, to sign students in and out of school, send and receive messages, and share photos.

Parent-Wide Communication

A Google Group listserv is set up each year to facilitate general communications from the school Director and the Board about school-related happenings. All parents are signed up as members of the listserv prior to the start of school. The listserv is only available to and accessible by the families currently enrolled at the school and cannot be accessed by the public.

Correspondence related to school updates, Board reminders, and general information is shared in this form, but parents can also initiate messages/information sharing on this listserv. Please note that the Google Group listserv is intended only for school business and school-related content.

Incident/Injury Communication

Parents or a child's legal guardian will be notified by phone as soon as possible if the following incidents or injuries occur:

- Head injury involving a significant bump or abrasion (minor bumps to the head will be reported immediately to parents via ProCare)
- Fall from equipment or playground structure that is more than 3' from the ground
- Injury that requires medical treatment, such as stitches or a hospital visit
- Injury resulting in ongoing bleeding (bloody nose, open cut)
- Illness onset, including vomiting, diarrhea, fever
- Bee sting or other insect bite, other than mosquito
- Use of medication for allergies (epi-pen, benadryl, inhaler)

- Ingestion of any foreign substance.

Please note that teachers must first assess the scene, administer first aid if necessary, and assure that all other students are safe and properly supervised prior to contacting parents. All other minor injuries will be reported via ProCare, at pick-up, or via email within 24 hours.

Conferences

There will be two parent-teacher conferences held during the school year. These conferences allow parents and teachers to discuss the children's strengths and areas for growth, set goals, ask questions, and share stories. Assessments, observations, discussions, and interactions with the children are all used as tools to understand the children's development.

In the Fall, parents will be asked to complete the Ages & Stages Questionnaire, a developmental assessment, prior to the conference. The results will be reviewed by the teachers and used to codify strengths and identify potential areas of growth.

A second parent/teacher conference will be held in March. Documentation of moments of learning in our four critical areas, which are Social Emotional Development, Physical Development, Cognitive Development, and Language Development, will be shared and discussed.

Additional Optional Meetings

In addition to the formal conferences outlined above, parents are welcome to request a formal meeting with all teachers and/or the Director at any time during the year. Teachers or the Director may also request a meeting with parents at any time, especially after a child has been evaluated by an outside agency that has provided specific recommendations about the care of the child.

Marketplace

Parents also have the option of subscribing to a Google group listserv, called the BCNS Marketplace, that allows families to connect to seek resources or recommendations, as well as to buy, sell, or trade.

Evaluation of BCNS

Parents are asked to formally evaluate the BCNS school program once a year. Evaluations are normally distributed at the end of the year and parents are strongly encouraged to offer their genuine feedback in an anonymous way. This formal evaluation is not in place of any feedback, comments, insight, or compliments that parents want to share during the year.

ALLERGIES, SNACK, AND LUNCH

Allergies/Nut-Free School

BCNS is a nut-free school, which means that tree nuts and peanuts, in any form, cannot be present in the school, including in snacks, lunches, or food that is stored in backpacks to be consumed later. Nut-free means that foods cannot contain nuts, be made with nuts, or be manufactured in a plant or on equipment that also processes nuts. This rule is in effect regardless of the specific allergies of each class. Parents will be informed about any other relevant allergies that exist within the school or class.

Snack and Lunch

There will be a snack time during the Morning Program each day and a lunch time during Extended Day. Students must bring a nut-free snack each day, and if staying for Extended Day, a nut-free lunch. All food brought to school should be prepared and packed so that it can be served independently as much as possible. Food containers should be labeled as "snack" or "lunch" if applicable.

Students will eat at their individual benches. Benches will be sanitized before and after eating. Children will be required to wash their hands before and after eating.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND CARE

Personal Belongings

The Belmont Cooperative Nursery School is committed to getting the children outside every day. Only extreme weather, which makes it unsafe for children to be outside, will prevent children from being outdoors. Seasonably cold temperatures and light rain do not constitute unsafe conditions. Therefore, children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes that can get dirty and that are weather appropriate. Sturdy, comfortable shoes are preferred.

In addition, parents are asked to leave two extra sets of clothing, including underwear, at school. These changes of clothes should be adjusted based on size and weather as needed. The school also has extra clothing that can be used in the event of the child's extra clothing not being available. School-owned clothing must be laundered and promptly returned to the school.

In accordance with licensing rules, BCNS has an inside soft shoe policy. Children are required to keep a pair of indoor shoes with rubber soles at school, and these are worn inside during the school day. Shoes should be able to be easily disinfected (i.e. EVA shoes or clogs).

Children are also required to bring a full water bottle each day, as well as two extra masks.

All personal belongings should be labeled with the child's name. The teachers make every effort to keep track of the children's belongings, but cannot be held responsible for missing items.

Administration of Sunscreen and Bug Spray

Teachers do not apply sunscreen or bug spray, and these items should not be brought to school. If parents want their child to wear sunscreen or bug spray, they must be applied prior to arrival.

Toothbrushing

Children participating in Extended Day are legally required to have the opportunity to brush their teeth after consuming lunch. Parents are asked to send a toothbrush and toothpaste in their child's lunchbox in an enclosed container. Teachers will assist children in this process. Alternatively, families may opt out of mandatory tooth brushing by signing the toothbrushing opt-out form in Guidestar.

CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays

Children's birthdays are celebrated with a song instead of a treat. Half birthdays are celebrated for children with summer birthdays. Typically, parents are assigned a parent help day on or near their child's birthday.

Holidays

Considering the many beliefs within our community, religious holidays are not celebrated at school. The two holidays that are celebrated are Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day with an emphasis on being thankful and being a good friend. Halloween is not observed at BCNS as costumes and customs may frighten some children.

TRANSPORTATION AND FIELD TRIPS

Transportation

Daily transportation to and from the Belmont Cooperative Nursery School is the responsibility of each child's family or authorized caregivers and not the school. This includes transportation to off-site locations, including field trips and Habitat.

Carpools are voluntary arrangements between parents; the school is not legally responsible for children during trips to and from school. However, parents must inform teachers about carpool arrangements so that children can be released to the appropriate adult. Please follow accepted safety measures while driving with children, providing them with the proper car seats for their age/weight and approved for safety standards.

Field Trips

BCNS is committed to getting children out of the classroom to explore the world. Typically, when an experience involves leaving the school grounds (not including trips to the Underwood playground), it is considered a field trip. Field trips will be communicated in advance and be mutually agreed upon by the COVID-19 Committee, BCNS staff, and parents.

Teachers will determine the scope of the experience and the need for extra parent volunteers to provide an adequate adult-to-child ratio.

Parents must sign an authorization form that gives approval for their child to leave the school grounds for a walk or to attend a field trip. Parents should speak with a teacher if they have concerns or questions. Without a signed form, the child may need to stay home from school for the day.

Most field trips are within walking distance, but if transportation is required, all children who are not yet five years old and less than 40 pounds must be in a car seat. Children who are not yet five and over 40 pounds must be in a booster seat. In addition, booster seats are strongly recommended for children over 5 years of age and 40 pounds. Teachers may not drive children. Transportation can only be provided by parents or any authorized caregivers of the children in the class.

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

Group Day Care Health Care Policy

The school's name and contact address on file is as follows:

Belmont Cooperative Nursery School
130 Common Street
Belmont, MA 02478
617-489-3259

Medical Documentation

BCNS complies with state regulations that require that all parents provide required medical documentation prior to the start of school. This documentation includes:

- Certification from a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant that the child has been successfully immunized in accordance with the current Department of Public Health recommended schedules
- A written statement from a licensed health care practitioner within one month of admission that indicates that the child has had a complete physical examination within one year prior to admission
- A written statement signed by a physician, or an employee of a health care agency, obtained within one month of admission stating that the child has been screened for lead poisoning
- Authorization of any medication and lotions that can be dispensed by school officials
- A written Individualized Healthcare Plan signed by a physician (for children who need medication administered or potentially administered during the school day)

Immunizations

Student Immunizations

BCNS recognizes that families have different philosophies and preferences related to immunizations. However, we are committed to maintaining a safe environment for our community, which not only includes the other children, but also pregnant mothers, elderly grandparents, and those with compromised immune systems. For that reason, we require that all children be up to date with their immunizations prior to their start at the school.

The only exceptions to this immunization policy are in situations where a medical doctor has deemed it to be medically unsafe for a child to have a particular immunization and writes a statement to this effect, or where the family provides a written statement indicating that immunizations interfere with their sincere religious beliefs. This documentation will be reviewed by the Health Care consultant and a third-party opinion may be sought to verify that an immunization is not possible.

Required immunizations for preschool include:

- DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) - 4 doses
- Polio - 3 doses
- MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) - 1 dose each
- Hib (Haemophiles Influenza) - 3 doses
- Hepatitis B - 3 doses
- Varicella Vaccine - 1 dose (or a written note from a physician indicating the date the disease was experienced by the child)
- Flu Shot – 1 dose by 12/31/2021

Staff and Parent COVID-19 Immunizations

BCNS requires that all employees are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Fully vaccinated is defined as 14+ days after the second shot of a two-dose vaccine or 14+ days after the first shot of a one-dose vaccine. Legally recognized exceptions for disabilities and religious beliefs are allowable and must be reported to the Director. Staff must provide documentation of immunization to the Director by July 1, 2021. Any staff member who does not share vaccination status will be considered unvaccinated.

Similarly, BCNS requires that all parents entering BCNS indoor spaces, including parent helpers, the Storage Organizer, and the Librarian, be fully vaccinated. Proof of vaccination must be submitted to the Director prior to entering the school. Parents that are unvaccinated or uncomfortable helping due to COVID can contribute to the cooperative through roles outside of the BCNS indoor spaces.

BCNS maintains the confidentiality of the vaccination status of staff, interns, and parent helpers. Vaccination policies are subject to change as more information and data regarding length of efficacy becomes available.

MANAGING AND PREVENTING INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Stay at Home Illness Policy

Sick children should remain at home for their own welfare and for the protection of other children. Prior to school each day, parents must monitor their children for any sign or symptoms of illness. If children have any symptoms, they should not attend school. Parents should inform the teachers of the illness, and the Director, Health Care Coordinator, and COVID Committee will help plan for a safe return to school for any children that have been ill. and the teachers will assist in planning a safe return to school. If children have symptoms that are caused by a chronic condition (e.g., seasonal allergies) they will need a doctor's note to attend school.

Additionally, all children will be screened at drop-off and sent home if they are exhibiting any signs or symptoms of illness.

The following is a partial list of symptoms for which a child should not come to school without a doctor's note:

- Fever over 99.9 (without medication)
- Sore/strep throat and/or swollen neck glands
- Undiagnosed rash or skin eruptions
- Earache, red eyes, or drainage from eyes
- Tonsillitis or any communicable disease
- Nasal congestion or runny nose
- Loss of taste or smell
- Cough
- Body Aches
- Unusual tiredness
- New onset of headaches
- GI Upset- nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Head lice (until treated and no nits are present for 24 hours)
- Other diagnosed communicable disease

There is a 24-hour requirement for antibiotic medication before returning to class.

If a preschool child or a family member contracts a contagious or communicable disease such as COVID-19, strep throat, conjunctivitis, scarlet fever, fifth's disease, head lice, or pinworms, parents must inform the Director and/or teachers and/or Health Care Coordinator. Without identifying the student, the Director will notify the community about the existence of a contagious disease within the school.

All health guidelines are subject to change.

Illness That Presents During the School Day

If children develop any of the above symptoms while at BCNS, they will immediately leave the classroom. Families will be contacted to pick up their children immediately. BCNS recognizes that retrieving a sick child during the middle of the school day can be inconvenient and stressful. Please carefully monitor for symptoms prior to drop-off to minimize the possibility of a child becoming sick at school.

If a staff member becomes ill or symptomatic, they must immediately cease childcare duties. A designated substitute teacher for that classroom will be asked to cover the class.

Illness Checklist

Please consider whether your child can participate comfortably in preschool activities for the duration of the school day, and then review the below list and determine if your child has presented with any of the symptoms. The presentation of any of the below symptoms will preclude your child from attending school.

- Fever over 100.4 in the last 24 hours
- Symptoms of gastrointestinal distress (nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea) within the last 24 hours
- Undiagnosed or contagious rash or skin eruption(s)
- Persistent cough
- Sore/strep throat and/or swollen neck glands that has not been treated with antibiotics for at least 24 hours
- Unusual fatigue/lethargy
- Persistent runny nose with yellow or green discharge
- Body aches
- Red eyes or drainage from eyes
- Ringworm, if the child has not been treated
- Impetigo if lesions cannot be covered
- Active tuberculosis, until the child's primary health care provider or local health department states child is on appropriate treatment and can return
- Scabies, if the child has not been treated
- Abnormal breathing
- Head lice (until treated and no nits are present for 24 hours)

BCNS Staff Illness Determination

When a child becomes ill while at school the staff will determine whether the child should be sent home. In addition to assessing the above symptoms, the staff will determine if the illness:

- Prevents the child from participating comfortably in preschool activities for the duration of the day;
- Results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children;
- Poses a risk of spreading harmful diseases to others.

The BCNS Staff are not trained medical professionals, and will make the best judgment possible with the information available.

Hand Hygiene

Throughout the day, children will be asked to clean their hands, either with soap and water or with hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available. Staff will teach the children proper hand washing and sanitizing. Age-appropriate instructions will be posted at every sink, and staff will supervise handwashing and sanitizing to ensure these actions are safe and effective.

Hand washing facilities with soap, water, and disposable paper towels will be readily accessible to all children and staff. Hand washing sinks are for handwashing only and not food preparation. Children are encouraged to cough and sneeze into their elbow.

Hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol may be utilized at times when hand washing is not available, such as prior to entering the school building, during outdoor play, and in between activities. Written parent permission is required for hand sanitizer use.

Hands of staff and/or children should be cleaned at the following times:

- On arrival
- Upon entry into and exit from the school building (including when returning to the school from outside activities)
- Before and after eating
- After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing (before and after assisting children with nose

blowing)

- After toileting and diapering
- Before handling food
- After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated
- After using shared equipment or toys
- After assisting children with handwashing
- Before and after administration of medication
- Before and after contact with face masks
- Before and after changes of gloves or other PPE
- Whenever hands are visibly soiled

PPE

Staff must wear gloves during the following activities:

- Diapering
- Food preparation
- Screening activities requiring contact
- Touching soiled laundry
- During cleaning/disinfecting of classroom spaces and items

Disposable gloves should always be discarded following use, anytime there is visible soiling or contamination, anytime there are signs of damage or degradation, after a maximum of 4 hours of usage, and anytime the gloves are removed. After removing gloves, hand hygiene should be performed with hand sanitizer or soap and water. BCNS will consult a child's medical records and identify any allergies when determining types of gloves used. Staff will also supply a personal change of clothes in case of soiling.

SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS

Specific Health Care Needs

The Health Care Coordinator or Director reviews each child's school health record and works with parents to address specific health care needs that have been identified. Special needs are also noted and verified (i.e. hearing loss, ADHD, sensory integration, speech). The Director and staff will also work with parents to create and implement a plan for any child needing extra assistance to adhere to the COVID guidelines.

Parents, with the written permission of their child's health care practitioner, can train staff in the implementation of their child's individual health care plan.

Hands-on Care for Children with Special Needs

Staff will wear PPE (gloves, mask, gown, hair tied back) when helping special needs students with meals, diapering/toileting, medication administration, washing, dressing, etc. The child and/or staff will be required to change outer clothes if soiled with bodily fluids.

Allergies

A list of all children with allergies, labeled ALLERGIES, is posted on the administrative board and in each classroom.

Referral Services

If teachers have concerns about a child's physical, developmental, or emotional health, they will talk with the parents and the Director to devise a plan. Some issues are easily identifiable while others may need a period of observation or a referral to a local resource for their expertise and guidance. If further assistance/evaluation is needed, a referral will be made to the appropriate Early Intervention program or public school for further exploration.

MEDICINE

Medicine Dispensing

Medication shall be administered by a trained professional to a child only with the written order of a physician as noted on the label of the medication and authorized by an "Authorization for Medication" form signed by a parent. All teachers and administrators shall be trained annually in accordance with EEC policies on the administration of medication.

The label should also state the name of the child, the dosage, the number of times per day, and the duration that the medicine is needed. Trained professionals will check that the 5 rights of administration have been addressed: the right medication, the right child, the right time, the right amount, and the right route. In addition, the trained professional will check to ensure that the medication has a safety cap, that the date of the prescription is current, and that the instructions on the medication are consistent with the instructions given by the child's parent.

Non-prescription medication such as those used in the treatment of allergies or rashes will only be given at the discretion of the Director when parents submit a signed statement from a physician that authorizes the use of the non-prescription medicine for the child.

A written record shall be maintained on the Medication Administration Record, which will list the time, date, and amount of the prescribed medication administered, and the signature of the teacher administering the medication. This form will be placed in the child's file and parents will be notified. Any unused medication will be returned to the parents.

Please Note: The first dose of new medication cannot be administered at BCNS except under extraordinary circumstances and with parental consent.

Medicine Disposal

The Director will contact the Belmont Health Department on a case-by-case basis for instructions on medication disposal. The contact person is Angela Braun, Director of the Belmont Board of Health, 617-993-2720.

INJURIES AND FIRST AID

Injury Prevention

Upon arrival at school each morning, the co-teachers check each classroom and the playground for hazards. Broken equipment is removed and the chairpersons for the Facilities Committee are informed about the required maintenance.

First Aid

If a child gets mildly injured during the day, the teacher and/or Director will attend to the basic medical needs of the child. The child will be assessed and likely moved to a quieter area where first aid will be administered. Universal precautions will always be practiced.

In compliance with the Department of Health, teachers are certified each year in first aid and CPR. First aid for minor injuries is provided by the teachers. A first aid backpack, which is located next to the exit door of each classroom, is brought to the playground and on all off-site walks and field trips. The backpack includes a copy of the emergency contact roster and a separate pack of individual children's emergency medicine. A log is kept with the classroom emergency binders and is used to record any injuries that were treated. The Director or Health Care Coordinator checks and initials the log. Parents will be notified at pickup if first aid has been provided.

In addition, a full first aid kit is kept in the office and will include any medication available for children who may be in need. First aid supplies are checked by the Health Care Coordinator before school begins in September and again in January. As supplies are used or expire, the Director is notified and supplies replenished. Contents of the first aid kit include:

- Cold pack
- Band-aids
- Adhesive tape
- Gauze pads
- Gauze
- Rolled bandage
- Cloth tape
- Scissors
- CPR mask
- Tweezers

- Non-Latex gloves
- Digital thermometer
- Thermometer covers

EMERGENCY INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

Emergency Telephone Numbers

- BCNS Health Care Coordinator
Ashleigh Lindsay
978-500-3863
- Fire
911 (emergency)
617-993-2200 (non-emergency)
 - o The Belmont Fire Department has licensed EMT providers and will likely be the first responders to any medical or health need.
- Belmont Health Department
617-993-2720
- Police
911 (emergency)
617-484-1212 (non-emergency)
- Poison Control
800-222-1222

Hospitals Utilized for Emergencies

- Mt. Auburn Hospital
617-492-3500
330 Mt. Auburn St. Cambridge
- Children's Hospital Boston
617-355-6000
300 Longwood Ave. Boston
- Cambridge City Hospital
617-665-1000
1493 Cambridge St, Cambridge, MA 02139

Fire Drills

In partnership with the Belmont Fire Department, the school conducts fire drills at least once a month during the year. This ensures that the school can practice getting the children out of

the building quickly and safely, and it is also an opportunity for children to learn about safety and community helpers. At the end of the drill, teachers will record the exit route, the time of day, and the number of children evacuated.

Meeting Potential Emergencies

The Belmont Emergency Management Agency (BEMA) was established by the Board of Selectmen and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to coordinate emergency services and ensure that the Town of Belmont is prepared to respond to any situation, be it an act of man (civil unrest, fire, chemical spill, etc.) or an act of nature (hurricane, severe snow, flooding, earthquake, extended power loss, etc.)

In the event of an emergency, the Town of Belmont uses a REVERSE 911 emergency communications tool to deliver emergency notifications to the community via phone.

In the event of a power outage where the phone is unavailable, BCNS will utilize its battery powered radio to receive information via the Emergency Alert System on the local radio station.

Medical Emergencies

In case of a traumatic injury, every effort will be made to contact parents and/or the designated person listed on the emergency form, but if no one can be reached and the injury requires immediate attention, the school reserves the right to take the child by ambulance to the appropriate medical facility.

In an emergency requiring immediate treatment or an acute life-threatening situation, such as difficulty breathing, unconsciousness, uncontrollable bleeding or hemorrhage, co-teacher #1 assesses the child's condition and cause of injury and provides suitable support and/or first aid while co-teacher #2 calls 911. Co-teacher #2 remains on the phone with 911 until emergency personnel arrive.

The EMT on site will make the determination as to which hospital the child will be transported. Co-teacher #1 will travel with the child to the hospital. The child's health records located in the file cabinet in the office, the emergency release form for the child from the RED file on the table in the foyer, and the Emergency Binder located in the classroom backpack will be pulled and transported to the hospital with the child.

Co-teacher #2 will tend to the needs of the remaining children while the Director will attempt to reach the child's parents. The phone roster in the emergency binders

includes all primary and secondary phone numbers for the children. The Emergency Contact List is posted by the telephone in the foyer. The home phone number is called first. If there is no parent at home, the cell phone number is called and then the work phone number is called. If neither parent is available, the designated contact person is called. If no contact people can be reached, the child's physician is called. Repeated attempts will be made to notify the parents of the situation and the hospital to which the child has been transported.

The Co-Presidents will be notified immediately of the incident and work in collaboration with the Director to support the child, their family, and the community. An Injury Report must be filled out and placed in the child's file, as well as noted in the Injury Log notebook.

Emergency Evacuations

Upon being informed of an evacuation by emergency officials or hearing the fire/smoke alarm, the Director or co-teachers will lead the evacuation of the building and follow any instructions given by emergency officials.

Children will be instructed to line up at the exit door of the classroom. One of the co-teachers will check to ensure that all children in attendance for the day are in line using the ProCare app as a reference. Once this has been confirmed, the children will follow that co-teacher downstairs and outside using the suitable exits, which include down the side stairs and out the back door into the upper parking lot or through the main door of the church. Each class will be led to the designated safe gathering spot where attendance will be taken again.

The class safe gathering spots are as follows:

- Maple Class - the grassy area between parking lots
- Oak Class - the grassy area by the lower parking lot
- Paper Birch Class - the clothing donation bin
- Silver Birch Class - the upper parking lot by the teacher parking area

The remaining co-teacher will assist as needed, ensure the classrooms are completely vacated, and leave the building last, shutting out the lights and closing all doors in the process. This co-teacher will procure the emergency binder as well as the first aid kit to take outside.

After the school has been evacuated, teachers will communicate with local authorities via cell phone, if warranted, to determine the appropriate next steps. As soon as possible,

teachers will notify parents by cell phone to apprise them of the situation and to instruct them on retrieving their children.

Children and staff will stay at the designated safe spots until notified to proceed to another location or return to school. This decision can be made by the Director, the fire or police department, or a BEMA representative.

In the event that the school is not habitable (i.e. a gas leak or flooding), the decision will be made by the Director, Co-Presidents and/or co-teachers to either cancel school or, if space permits, move the school to a temporary location until the situation can be resolved.

Shelter in Place

If BEMA emergency officials ask the school to shelter in place, the school will follow the instructions given. These instructions may include going inside if outside, closing all windows and doors, closing all vents on cooling, heating, or ventilating systems, moving to the basement of the function hall, and listening to the portable radio for instructions from emergency officials.

If we have been contacted by BEMA to employ emergency practices, we will not use the phone to contact 911 unless we are reporting an immediate life-threatening situation.

Town Emergency Shelters

The Town of Belmont has identified shelters in different areas of the town for sheltering its residents. Shelters are chosen to meet the specific needs of the given emergency.

If evacuations are warranted, BCNS will be instructed on what shelter(s) is open and accepting evacuees.

Shelter information will be made available on the town web page, Belmont Local Cable Channel 8, and the Emergency Alert System (local TV and radio stations).

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Belmont Cooperative Nursery School strictly adheres to the Massachusetts Department of Early Education guidelines regarding the privacy and confidentiality of family information.

All information contained in the child's file is considered privileged and confidential. This includes, but is not limited to:

- information related to the child and his/her birth/foster/adoptive parents
- information related to the medical/health/emotional needs of the child
- information related to the educational assessments that are conducted throughout the year

The Director and teachers will not distribute or release information about a child to any unauthorized person or discuss a child or his/her family information with any unauthorized person without the written consent of the child's parent or pursuant to a court order.

Photographs or images of children, whether or not they are identified by name, as well as personal information related to children and their families will not be posted on the publicly accessible portions of Facebook, Instagram, or any other similar online directories or social networking sites unless the child's parent has given written permission.

The Director and teachers may not discuss children and families with other parents at the school or with anyone who is not directly involved in implementing the child's educational program.

BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY

In order to ensure that employees or other persons regularly providing childcare or support services with potential for unsupervised contact with children in any program or facility licensed by the EEC, a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check, a DCF Background check, and state mandated fingerprint check shall be performed on any person employed, seeking employment or maintaining or seeking a regular volunteer/internship position throughout the course of the school year. The Director will hold authority as the CORI Cleared Employee Reviewer after successfully satisfying the requirements of 606 CMR 14.00. Said Director will also hold the authority of Background Record Check Coordinator, designated by BCNS to send requests and receive responses from the EEC CORI Unit. The Director shall ensure that each candidate signs a written request for a CORI/DSS investigation as part of his/her application and agrees to the periodic conduct of further CORI/DSS investigations during his/her course of employment, whether hired or a volunteer.

Parents may not, under any circumstances, have unsupervised contact with children other than their own during school hours.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY

According to Massachusetts law and Department of Social Service regulations (110 CMR, section 2.00), abuse includes the non-accidental commission of an act by a caretaker which causes or creates a substantial risk of physical or emotional injury; or the commissions of a sex offense against a child as defined by the criminal laws of the state, or any sexual contact between a caretaker and a child. Neglect includes failure by a caretaker, either deliberately, through negligence, or inability, to take actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth and other essential care.

As professionals working with children and their families, the full-time staff at BCNS are mandated reporters. As mandated reporters, they are required to help the Department of Social Services become aware of children who may be abused and/or neglected.

Any adult working in the classroom is instructed to report to the Director any suspicions of abuse or neglect against a child. The Director will immediately orally report the suspicions to the Health Care Coordinator and the Department of Social Services by calling the local DSS office at 617-894-4865. A written report must be sent to DSS within 48 hours.

If a staff member is suspected of abuse or neglect towards one or more children, the Director shall be notified. Said staff member will not be allowed to work unsupervised with children in the school until the Director has undertaken an investigation within the school community. If it is determined that there is sufficient evidence to support the allegations of abuse or neglect, said staff member will be suspended without pay and the Director will immediately report the alleged abuse orally to the Department of Social Services by following the above-mentioned procedure. After a 514A report has been filed alleging abuse and/or neglect of a child while in the care of the school, the Director will notify the Department of Early Education and Care.