



Preschool Handbook

McKEOWN PRESCHOOL
BEVERLY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Beverly Public Schools Mission Statement

The mission of the Beverly Public Schools is to maximize academic achievement and personal growth of every student

Preschool Mission Statement

Our mission for the Preschool Program of Beverly Public Schools is to enhance the development of all early learners by building a solid foundation for future learning. Our educational team embraces a shared responsibility with parents, administration, and community to provide the opportunity for the growth in all areas of development for our diverse preschool population. We are dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment that promotes independence and celebrates each child's individual learning style.

Preschool Philosophy

The Beverly Public Schools offers a high quality preschool experience committed to meeting the needs of all learners. The Beverly Preschool is based on a quality developmental education. The curriculum provides children with a positive introduction to learning and creates a solid foundation for future school success.

Our preschool program is designed to serve the city's population of children age three to five. Our classes welcome students with special needs, as well as their typically developing peers, to work and learn together in a school community that reflects the real world. Our classrooms include services from educational assistants, occupational therapists and/or assistants, physical therapists and/or assistants, and speech and language pathologists and/or assistants who work with our special education preschool teachers to provide support to all students.

Research suggests that combining special needs children in a preschool setting with age appropriate peers has important implications for both groups. Children with developmental delays begin to model their typically developing peers. Positive benefits for typically developing students have been identified in social interactions and play behavior. In addition, many teachers have observed that one of the primary advantages of an integrated program is acceptance and sensitivity to the needs of all children.

Program Description

The Beverly Preschool is designed to be a developmentally appropriate learning experience so that each child may progress at his/her own pace and achieve success on an individual level. Learning is achieved in an environment that encourages and rewards creativity, natural curiosity, and personal and cultural awareness. Emphasis on language and social development as well as emotional and intellectual growth fosters the development of independence and helps instill a positive self-image in all children.

The curriculum represents a balanced and integrated variety of activities, learning experiences and collaborative teaching methods. Learning experiences occur in individual, small group and large group settings. The preschool curriculum provides exposure to developmentally appropriate themes. Three to four weeks are typically spent exploring in detail the many areas of each theme. Exploration is encouraged through a variety of mediums in all areas of the classroom.

Therapies, including speech and language, occupational therapy and physical therapy are integrated into the classroom curriculum and are provided inside and outside of the classroom. These services are based on the needs of the individual student and reinforced by the staff throughout the child's day.

Preschool Classroom Models

The Beverly Public Schools currently offer two models of preschool education.

The Full-Time 5 day **Integrated Preschool Classroom**: This model is based on inclusion. Students with special needs are educated alongside their typically developing peers. Classes meet five days a week, for full-day sessions.

The Part-Time 4 day **Integrated Preschool Classroom**: This model is based on inclusion. Students with special needs are educated alongside their typically developing peers. Classes meet four days a week, for half-day sessions.

School/Days/Hours:

- Integrated 5-day program•Monday-Friday•8:15 AM-1:15 PM
- Integrated•4-day program•Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday•8:30 AM-11:00 AM
- Integrated•4-day program•Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday•12:00 PM-2:30 PM

Developmental Approach

Principles:

- Young children are active learners.
- Young children are "hands-on" learners.
- Young children learn through play.
- Learning should be focused on the whole child.
- Creative expression through the arts is encouraged.
- The teacher is a facilitator.
- The child is encouraged to be self-sufficient and independent in age appropriate ways.
- Both teaching methods and discipline techniques are positive in approach, building self-esteem.

- The teachers strive to understand the child in the context of family and the school community.

Learning Outcomes/Goals:

To develop each child's

- ability to make choices and decisions about what to do and how to do it, using his or her own time and energy effectively.
- self-discipline and ability to identify, pursue, and complete self-chosen goals and tasks with originality and responsibility.
- ability to work with other children and adults in group planning, cooperative efforts, and shared leadership.
- knowledge of objects, skill in the arts, and comfort with physical movement.
- ability to express thoughts, ideas, and feelings and to speak about, dramatize, and graphically represent experiences in order to communicate them to others.
- ability to comprehend others' spoken, written, dramatic, and graphic representations.
- ability to apply his or her reasoning abilities to a wide range of situations, using a variety of materials.
- creativity, initiative, spirit of inquiry, and openness to knowledge and the viewpoints of others.

Curriculum

The Beverly Preschool implements a developmentally appropriate curriculum aligned with the Preschool Standards and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Curriculum Frameworks.

The Beverly Preschool Program uses a comprehensive educational curriculum, Opening the World of Learning, OWL for short. OWL is based on extensive research of early language, literacy development and social and emotional development. The instructional principles guiding the development of the OWL curriculum include a comprehensive approach targeting all key early literacy abilities, focus on language and vocabulary, attention to phonological awareness and learning about letters. Also addressed is acquisition of social skills and immersion in a learning community where desire to learn and a sense of competence as learners is nurtured in all students. This early literacy curriculum weaves a child's natural curiosity about the world into an activity centered day. The day is broken into appropriate blocks of learning time, including Center Time, Small Groups, Conversations with Children, Story Time, Songs/Word Play/Letters, and Let's Find Out About It. Currently, there are six thematically organized units including Family, Friends, Wind and Water, The World of Color, Shadows and Reflections, and Things That Grow. Each theme is explored in all aspects of your child's day in school, including Language and Literacy, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, The Arts, Physical Development, and Social and Emotional Development.

OWL provides an instructional program that is comprehensive, and balances child-initiated with

teacher-directed activity as it systematically teaches children skills and concepts that are essential for long-term literacy success.

The preschool introduces Lively Letters. This program provides fun and engaging lessons to support letter/sound knowledge and letter naming skills. The program provides visual cues, stories and songs to support learning of the letter names and sounds.

The Social Thinking curriculum helps students understand themselves and others to better navigate the social world, foster relationships, and improve their performance at school and at home. The unique tools break down complex social concepts (like perspective taking) into understandable and doable parts that can be applied in any setting.

The Social Thinking Methodology addresses the questions: How does the social world work, and how can we help our students better navigate to regulate within it? How do our social emotional learners function within the social world? The methodology fosters the development of social competencies so foundational that our work applies across cultures, ages, races, religions, mental health diagnoses, etc., and has been adopted within communities around the world.

Touch Math is a curriculum used to develop counting skills, number identification and math vocabulary. It is based on extensive child development research and is uniquely designed to correspond to the diverse motor, cognitive and developmental abilities of children age 3-5 and their preference for tactile/kinesthetic learning. The workmat format offers the options of coloring and writing, or using manipulatives to learn a new concept. Young students with learning differences learn most effectively when all of their senses are involved. As they see, say, hear and touch using the signature TouchPoints, they begin to associate numerals with real values. This sequential, scaffolded strategy helps students achieve immediate success, building their self-confidence.

Operations

Sick Day Guidelines:

School policy (based on CDC recommendations) requires a child stay home if he or she has:

- Has a fever of 100.4 or higher
- Has been vomiting or has diarrhea (within 24 hrs)
- Sore throat if you suspect a strep infection, even if there is not fever.
- Drainage from an ear or eye (may indicate infection)
- Severe cough that may be uncontrollable.
- Frequent sneezing and coughing. This spreads sickness to others.

24 Hour Rule:

- Fever: Keep your child home until his or her FEVER has gone WITHOUT medicine for 24 hours. Colds can be contagious for at least 48 hours. Returning to school too soon may slow recovery and make others sick.
- Vomiting or Diarrhea: Keep your child home for 24 hours after last time he or she vomited or had diarrhea.
- Antibiotics: Keep your child home until 24 hours after the First dose of antibiotic for anything like ear infection, strep, or pneumonia.

Please consult your doctor promptly if there is any doubt about the condition of your child. Follow the directions from your child's physician or school nurse before sending your child back to school following a communicable disease. The nurse may ask for a note from your child's pediatrician upon returning to school. Whenever possible, the school nurse will notify parents of a communicable disease incidence as appropriate.

In the event of an absence, parents should report their child out sick by leaving a message with the secretary at school or with the preschool teacher. Please contact the Preschool to report your child's absence at the following number: 978-921-6100. At the prompts, press 1 for the Preschool and 1 for the Absence Line.

The preschool secretary and/or your child's teacher will confirm unreported absences. If your child rides the bus, please call the Transportation Dept to let them know that your child does not need to be picked up that day (978-921-6109).

Please make every effort to ensure your child arrives at school on time each day. Late arrivals are less prepared and less ready for their day. Late arrivals are also a disruption to the classroom.

Conferences and Progress Reports:

The teachers hold one scheduled conference a year for parents of all students. Your child's teacher will contact you to schedule a conference. Preschool Progress reports will be issued twice yearly, once in December and once in June. Children with Individualized Education Programs (IEP's) will receive trimester progress reports following the elementary report card schedule.

Emergency Cancellation:

The Beverly Preschool follows the Beverly Public School cancellation policy. If there is a snow emergency and school must be cancelled or delayed, it will be broadcast on the major radio and television stations as well as announced through our message system via phone, email and text. In the event of a school delay, the morning session of the Integrated Program will be cancelled. The afternoon and full day sessions will be held.

Fees:

The Preschool program is a tuition-based program for typical peers with fees being determined on a yearly basis by the school committee. Scholarships are available on a sliding-fee scale. Information on tuition fees will be provided at the time of screening and registration.

Payments are due monthly with checks made payable to:

Beverly Public Schools 70 Balch Street, Beverly, MA. 01915, Attn: Business Office.

Home/School Communication:

The Preschool staff encourages open communication between home and school. The children may carry a home/school communication book to and from school every day. The communication book is a way for parents, teachers, and therapists to convey comments, questions, or concerns. A daily sheet or weekly newsletter is provided to highlight activities.

Orientation, Preschool Picnic and Open House:

Preschool Staff invite parents into the classrooms for Orientation prior to the start of school. Orientation is held during the first few days of each school year. Parents and students are provided with an opportunity to visit the classroom and children are given a chance to familiarize themselves with the teacher and peers. At this time, the classroom teacher will provide parents with a program overview and outline of the curriculum.

The Preschool staff will host a Family Picnic within the first six weeks of school to provide an opportunity for parents to meet staff and other families participating in the preschool program.

An Open House is scheduled in the Spring to celebrate student work throughout the year. This provides the opportunity for your child to share his/her classroom with you.

No individual conferences with parents are provided during these events. If you have concerns that you would like to discuss with your child's teacher, please contact via phone, email or note to request a conference date and time.

Parent Involvement:

We encourage parent involvement in our Preschool. Our Preschool PTO is always looking for volunteers to participate in planning a variety of activities and events throughout the school year. The success of our PTO and the enrichment opportunities we can provide to our students depends on the involvement of parents/guardians/family members in our PTO. Our teachers welcome parent participation in the classroom to share special skills and hobbies, help with activities and to read to the class. Parents are required to submit a CORI form to participate as a volunteer in the classroom or school.

Registration of New Students:

Parents must provide completed registration materials prior to starting in our preschool program:

- Student Data Form
- Emergency Card
- Parent Questionnaire
- Proof of immunization and recent physical form, and lead screen results
- Two Proofs of Residency tied to the property (i.e.: rent/lease agreement, tax bill, utilities bill, mortgage)

- Original Birth Certificate
- Home Language Survey

Early Childhood Screening:

The Early Screening Inventory (ESI), revised edition, is given three times a year (September, December, and March) for children ages three to five for any parent interested in enrolling their child in preschool as a peer or any parent who may have concerns regarding their child's development in speech/language, fine and gross motor skills, or cognitive growth. Results are shared with parents by the assessment team and referrals to special education are made when deemed appropriate.

Please note that a birth certificate and proof of residency is required prior to participating in our preschool screening process.

Transition into Kindergarten

The Beverly Preschool Program provides opportunities for communication with Kindergarten teachers as our preschool students transition into kindergarten. Parents are notified about Kindergarten Registration through our Parent Information Night. Notices are sent home to all Beverly Public School preschool students and to private providers. Individual elementary schools hold events in the spring and provide opportunities for classroom visits before school opens in the fall. All incoming Kindergarten students participate in screening during the spring prior to their kindergarten year. Parents will be notified of the screening dates and times by their home school. This assessment instrument provides information to teachers for program planning. Special needs students are transitioned through the IEP process and individual plans are developed that are appropriate for each student.

****See the Beverly Public Schools Elementary Handbook for district policies and procedures.**