

Our School Mission

Sierra Madre Community Nursery School strives to provide a program for young children and their families where each individual can grow and unfold at his/her own rate. Each person is aided in reaching his/her highest potential for humanness through interpersonal relationships involving loving, caring, trusting. Children develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually in an environment which features freedom within limits.

Greetings to our New Parents

We welcome you and your child to our Nursery School Association!

The Sierra Madre Community Nursery School Association is made up of YOU – the parents – our staff and community leaders. Together, this cooperative group serves the interests and needs of young children through our nursery school program. When you enroll your child in the school, you automatically become members of the Association and are entitled to vote at member meetings.

Because of our longevity, our rich history, and our continued commitment to providing the highest quality of education, we believe that our nursery school is among the most outstanding in the country. Our greatest strength has always been the involvement of our parents. We value parent participation so highly that our tradition has been to hire teachers who are not only qualified professionals, but who also have been parents at the school. This commitment results in a low staff turnover rate, greater continuity of program goals and philosophy, and the assurance to you that each teacher you come to know has also been in your shoes.

We trust that you too will be proud of our achievements, and will want to contribute your unique talents toward our continued growth and influence in the

community. By joining SMCNS you join a continuum of families who for more than sixty years have built and sustained this school – physically and philosophically – from the ground up. Congratulations on your choice!

Because all school families donate services to the program, we are able to maintain high standards at a minimum cost. Your responsibility as a member of this Association is explained in the following pages.

We are a Family

SMCNS is family-centered. Parents literally “go to school” with their children. Our desire is to provide the best possible environment for the growth and development of young children and for the education of their parents. We learn together and believe that in working together our children receive the greatest benefit.

On your workdays, take the opportunity to notice how the teacher interacts with the children. You will be pleased to see how a teacher’s kind, respectful, but clear choice of words and expectations can help a child choose for himself a good plan of behavior. Likewise, you may see an insightful parent help a child who is angry express her feelings in an effective and constructive way. You, too, will find yourself growing in confidence in your abilities to teach and supervise children. And, happily, you

will observe your child achieving self-control and mastery over her environment in our nurturing atmosphere.

Children graduate from our program well prepared for the academic challenges ahead in elementary school. Parents graduate to feeling empowered to assist in their children's further intellectual and emotional development. Both emerge with lifetime friendships formed at SMCNS.

Our History

SMCNS was organized in 1947. Through the tireless efforts of its founding families – parents who wanted a creative, experiential education for their children – the Association contracted with the City of Sierra Madre for use of the City-owned land on which the school now stands. Fathers completed construction of our present buildings in 1950, which were then deeded to the City. In 1961 the City Council extended our agreement to include an adjacent piece of park property, and that summer an additional building was erected by the fathers of the nursery school. The building was named the **MARJORIE GREEN CENTER** in honor of the school's first director who guided its growth for twelve years.

In 2006, the Association committed to the purchase of the land underlying the school buildings, including the Lillian Burke Memorial Garden and the parkway area to

the west of our buildings. This purchase was consummated in 2009. Property ownership will help to guarantee a secure future for the Nursery School which has been such beloved institution in this small foothill community.

Our grounds were designed so that each individual group has its own play yard. This allows for an almost-constant mingling between indoor and outdoor learning. Respect for the natural environment is also apparent in the construction of much of our play equipment. Climbing structures are built around soaring oaks and mulberry trees encouraging children to dream and play in their very own “tree houses”. The same mulberry leaves feed our annual yield of silkworms.

Honoring our commitment to the community that has so generously donated its lands, as well as our pledge to teaching children about the value of the natural world, SMCNS secured in 1993 land north of the Green Center and transformed once-barren, weed-choked land into a garden. This garden learning space, with its fruit trees and vegetable crops, provides children with the opportunity to participate in the planting and harvesting of their own nutritious snacks. The garden attracts a variety of birds and insects which children observe and delight in. This is one way that science is integrated into our curriculum.

Publications

SMCNS is privileged to share our educational expertise and experiences with other educators and the community at large through the following publications and productions:

- ◆ A Nursery School Handbook for Teachers and Parents, by Marjorie M. Green and Elizabeth L. Woods. This now-famous book has been reprinted several times.
- ◆ Nurturing Human Growth by the SMCNS Association, 1978. All current families receive a copy of this updated manual.
- ◆ Nursery School, A Chance to Be, a film by the SMCNS Association, 1974.
- ◆ Planning Creative Play Equipment for Young Children, a film by the SMCNS Association in conjunction with UCLA, 1959.
- ◆ A Time to Grow – The Sierra Madre Community Nursery School Experience, an instructional video
- ◆ Path to Play, a video production about history and curriculum of SMCNS
- ◆ Volunteering in the Classroom, an instructional video for classroom participants

Accreditation

You'll be happy to know that SMCNS is an accredited school through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This means that our nursery school has voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self-study and invited outside professional review to verify compliance with NAEYC's Criteria for High Quality Early Childhood Programs. Our school has been found to be in substantial compliance with the Criteria established by the nation's largest organization of early childhood educators. We renew our accreditation with NAEYC every five years.

Association Meetings

The Association meets each year in April to elect its officers for the coming year and to discuss the activities of the school.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees holds all corporate powers of the Association and acts as the representatives of the members. The members elect the Board of Trustees at the Annual Meeting from a slate prepared by a nominating committee and from nominations from the floor. The elected Board carries on the business of the

school for the following fiscal year. The Board consists of:

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| President | Membership, AM (2 positions) |
| First Vice President | Membership, PM (2 positions) |
| Second Vice President | Public Relations Chair |
| Treasurer | Publicity Chair |
| Recording Secretary | Scrip Chair |
| Corresponding Secretary | Bulletin Editor |
| Ways & Means I & II | Personnel Chair |
| Facilities Chair | |

The Board of Trustees meets once a month as announced in the monthly Bulletin. All parents are welcome to attend these meetings. Concerns of the members at large may be brought up at any regular board meeting by contacting the President at least one week in advance of the meeting, but only members of the Board of Trustees may vote on issues. The Director of the school serves as a consultant to the Board. You are invited and encouraged to nominate yourself or someone you know for a position on the Board.

Copies of the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws are in the office and open to inspection by all members.

Advisory Council

Our school is honored to have professional persons serve on our Advisory Council, as well as three community representatives who are former members of the school. Those serving on this Council, as well as other professional people, may be called upon from time to time to assist the Board and Staff. Some of the professions represented are early childhood education, psychiatry, medicine and law.

Staff

The staff consists of a director, teachers, assistant teachers, and an office manager. The Director is responsible for the educational policies of school and for the implementation of Board policy as well as for the daily operation of the school. The Director is included in long-range fiscal planning and in preparation of the operating budget, reconciliation, and review. All staff personnel are responsible to the director. Certain individuals may be hired to carry on maintenance of the school, e.g. gardeners and cleaning persons. They too are responsible to the director.

Enrollment Policies For Preschool

General Guidelines

Children 2.5 years old through kindergarten age are eligible for enrollment, subject to the following conditions:

1. The child must be medically able to participate in school activities, as stated by a physician on a school form.
2. The child must, in the opinion of the director and teacher, have sufficient maturity to benefit from the nursery school experience.
3. All new parents who will participate regularly in the program must present a statement from a physician that they are “free from infection and medically qualified to be in contact with young children.” In addition, they must submit a report of a negative TB test taken within the prior year. This TB report will be required upon admission only.
4. Parents must be willing to cooperate with the director and teacher in all matters governing the child’s welfare in compliance with state regulations.
5. A legal parent of each child will need to sign a contract with the school indicating that they

have read the school policy book and accept the terms therein and that they will meet all of the parent obligations.

6. Children shall be admitted in order of application except in special circumstances when the director shall use her own judgment.
7. After capacity enrollment is reached, a waiting list is established. Enrollment cannot exceed the number of children designated in the license issued by the State Department of Social Services.
8. All required registration forms must be turned in before the start of school.

Regular Session

All enrollments are on a permanent basis. Children enrolled are expected to stay the full school year, from September to June. Contribution for September fees is due June 15th.

Enrollment Policies For Kindergarten

To apply for our kindergarten for a child who is already at SMCNS, a parent should submit an application card accompanied by a nonrefundable deposit of \$75. This should be done during the month of January. The parent will be asked to indicate a preference for an AM or PM

schedule. In the past, we have found that the AM schedule is requested more often than the PM schedule. In the event that we have more AM requests than the 12 openings, a priority will be established based on the following criteria:

1. Whether or not the child is a continuing student;
2. The number of years the family has participated at SMCNS;
3. Whether or not the child is a Sierra Madre resident.

Based on this ranking, students will be placed in their schedule of choice or in the alternate schedule and on a waiting list for the preferred schedule.

To secure a space in kindergarten, a family must sign a contract obligating them to payment of tuition for the full school year. This contract must be returned by April 1st. The financial terms of the contract will be in effect even if the family has a change of plans as to kindergarten attendance. This is necessary in order to clarify enrollment status for those on our waiting list and to make plans for staffing. The signed contract must be accompanied by payment of the first two month's tuition.

After placement of all current student applicants, applications from those outside the school are accepted and placed on a first come-first served basis.

Summer Session

You may sign up for the full summer session in April. Our relaxing summer session runs for six weeks in two three-week sessions beginning the week following the close of the regular session. No financial adjustments can be made for withdrawals after May 1st.

Summer Leave of Absence

Summer enrollment is not mandatory. Children on summer leave are automatically enrolled for the following regular session, and their parents are responsible for the September tuition unless the school is notified of withdrawal by August 1st.

Change in Schedule and Withdrawal

A one-month notice **MUST** be given in cases of permanent withdrawal or decrease in schedule. Increasing your child's schedule usually means waiting for a vacancy, and requires that an application for an increase be made with the director.

Parent Participation Policies

Orientation

Along with inviting your questions and providing answers on school policy, this important session helps to familiarize parents with the school's effective techniques for working with children and fostering their growth. All new parents are required to attend orientation meetings, which are usually held before school opens in September. Other arrangements will be made for parents who enroll late.

Participation in Children's Groups

We couldn't do it without you! SMCNS parents help us to offer more choices to our children – choices in art, tactile play, and indoor/outdoor experiences. Because of your consistent presence, we are also able to focus on providing children with effective tools for social interaction and conflict resolution – tools that will prove to be invaluable as your child enters the larger world of elementary school.

All mothers or fathers are welcome to work in the classroom as either **Parent Teachers** or **Parent Helpers**. Each child must have a parent who participates regularly in the classroom. In some cases, by

prearrangement and at the discretion of the Director, another adult family member may do the participation for up to one-half of the required days. A parent must do a minimum of one-half.

Any person unrelated to the child must complete the Livescan fingerprinting process and have DOJ clearance before being allowed to work in the classroom, per Title 22 regulations. These potential participants should attend the orientation and be familiar with our philosophy as explained in the handbook, Nurturing Human Growth.

Every adult wishing to work in the classroom must have a health screening and TB test on file at the school.

Whether you opt to fulfill your workday commitment as either a Parent Teacher or Parent Helper, the number of days you are required to work varies according to the number of days your child is enrolled in the program. The workday requirements are listed as follows:

2-day program = 1.5 days per month.

This is done by working 1 day in Sept., Dec., Feb., April and June; 2 days in Oct., Nov., Jan., March and May.

3-day program = 2 days per month.

5-day program = 3.5 days per month.

This is done by working 3 days in the short months and 4 days in the long months.

What if I am sick on my workday?

We realize that from time to time illness or other conflicts prevent parents from being able to fulfill a workday. These occurrences are understandable. However, in order for our classes to be sufficiently staffed for the day it is your responsibility to find a replacement. Consult your copy of the group lists. All of the contact information for families is also on the website (smcns.org) which has a handy search feature if you know the child's name but not the parent's. If you cannot find someone, call the Office Manager for her assistance. The office manager can be called at home until 9 p.m. about or after 7 a.m. Please make a personal contact rather than just leaving a message on the school's answering machine. Always notify the Office Manager of the substitution. Days missed should be made up the following month.

How do I schedule my participation days?

We have a large calendar that indicates the number of parents needed to work in each group, for each day of the week. Every month the calendar for the following month is posted on the porch before the start of the

morning school session. You may sign up on a first-come, first-serve basis next to the numbered slots in the group you desire. It sometimes may be necessary to sign up and work in a group other than your own child's. The white board near the entrance of the school announces when the next month's calendar will be posted. Watch for this announcement.

Parents who are expecting confinement or other hospitalization or who are planning travel may build up an advance credit of a maximum of two month's working days.

Maintenance Workdays

How do we keep our nursery school looking so beautiful?

It's the cooperation of our parents! Families are responsible for contributing to the maintenance of the school according to the following yearly requirements:

Three workdays (12 hours total): Parents with one child enrolled for two or three days.

Four workdays (16 hours total): Parents with two children enrolled, or parents with one child attending five days per week.

What are maintenance workdays like?

These spirited days are held once a month on a designated Saturday or Sunday from 8 a.m. to noon. Parents clean, paint, build and repair while enjoying delicious refreshments and the camaraderie of other parents. Fathers are especially encouraged to attend because there is often heavy lifting.

Can I bring my children with me to maintenance workdays?

Sorry, but we do not permit children to attend these workdays because of safety issues related to construction and other tasks performed.

Can I offset our monthly fees by working extra maintenance workdays?

Absolutely! We encourage it. Financial credit can be built up at an hourly rate. Credit will be applied to the monthly fees.

What if I can't attend any of the maintenance workdays during a quarter?

You will be billed the fee for a missed day as a reminder. This can be made up by coming to two workdays the next quarter. Or you may simply elect to pay the fee which not a fine but a perfectly acceptable alternative.

We use those funds to give credit to those who work extra days or to hire outside workers to do the needed tasks. Please consult the director about the possibility of performing maintenance work outside of the scheduled hours. We will do our best to accommodate your talents and skills.

Ways and Means Projects

All parents are expected to give full support to the Ways and Means projects that are held during the year. These provide the primary source of funds for new equipment, improvements and major repairs. Monthly fees do not cover the cost of operating the school, and this deficit must be made up through Ways and Means projects. Currently the three major fundraisers are a Fall Live & Silent Auction, a Spring Carnival, and the ongoing sale of scrip. Each family is required to donate an item to the Auction. Likewise, families are required to donate the following items to the carnival:

A handmade item

A dessert

A plant

These events have proven to be fun, festive and successful. There are many opportunities for you to show your pride in SMCNS and participate in the planning of these events.

Parent Education Meetings

Throughout the school year we offer meetings that feature discussions and talks by specialists in the field of child guidance and family life. These meetings help us to strengthen and enrich our community of families. Each parent is required to attend a minimum of two parent education meetings a year. Both parents are welcome to attend all meetings. Single parent families are responsible for only two meetings. Credit is also given for approved lectures held off campus. If you have any questions concerning this requirement, please talk with the director. Sometimes it is possible to make alternative arrangements. Notices of the meetings are in the monthly *Bulletin*.

Parent Teacher Meetings

These meetings are primarily for parent teachers, but all other parents are welcome and **ENCOURAGED** to attend, either on an intermittent or permanent basis. They are held one evening each month at the school, usually on the second Tuesday.

Failure to Meet Participation Requirements

If for any reason you fail to fulfill the designated responsibilities, you must discuss your predicament with the director. Alternatives may consist of making up missed participation at another time or paying a financial fine. The Board of Trustees makes the final decision in these matters.

Additional Policies

Financial Policies

There is a non-refundable Registration Fee. Expenses are on a cost-sharing basis determined by the Budget Committee which meets once a year. The annual tuition is billed in nine and one-half installments with the September tuition billed the previous June along with the one-half fee for June. The September payment is due by June 30. If payment is not received by that date, your child's space may be relinquished to someone on a waiting list. Please refer to the enclosed sheet for current fees.

Families who do not live or pay taxes in Sierra Madre pay a monthly non-resident fee of \$2 per child/schedule.

A statement will be given to you each month. No adjustments can be made for a child's absences during the month. If you have any questions please call the Office Manager. Please remit your contribution as soon as you receive your statement. It is not possible to pay our bills unless we receive the contributions promptly. If you must be late in paying for any reason please notify the director.

Families must be up to date in their financial obligations in order to begin the new school year.

Each family purchases a copy of the handbook Nurturing Human Growth for \$10 when they register. Additional copies are available for purchase. Income realized from the sale of the book goes into our scholarship fund.

Health Policies

A comprehensive explanation of our health and safety policies and procedures can be found in the booklet entitled "Health and Safety" which is a companion to this policy booklet and should be read by each parent at the school.

At SMCNS we strive to keep the school environment healthful and the children as healthy as possible. If a child shows symptoms of illness during the school session, the child will be isolated and the parents notified.

Smoking is not permitted on the SMCNS campus.

A parent health screener is on duty at the school to check each child upon arrival. Please stay with your child until he has been checked, then accompany him to his group. The health screener leaves at 8:50 a.m. and 12:50 p.m., so please bring your child in on time or check in at the office before entering class.

Listed below are the illness and injury criteria. These are reasons for which a child should be kept at home, or for which a parent would be called to pick up a child from school:

- ◆ Fever of 100°F and above - exclude until student has been fever-free for 24 hours
- ◆ Conjunctivitis (pink eye), Strep infections, ringworm, and impetigo are all infections and must be treated with medication for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school
- ◆ Rash of unknown origin (especially if accompanied by fever)
- ◆ Head injury or extremity injury that has not been evaluated
- ◆ Severe coughing or difficulty breathing
- ◆ Colds – a child with thick or constant nasal discharge should remain home
- ◆ Diarrhea or vomiting – exclude until student has been symptom-free for at least 24 hours

- ◆ Stiff neck associated with a fever and/or a recent injury
- ◆ Inadequate immunizations with known disease outbreak in school

The health screener abides by the policies of the L.A. County Health Department and the California Department of Health regarding admissions or exclusions of both children and parents. The health screener's judgment is final in all health matters unless the parent presents a written statement from a doctor giving a different diagnosis. Please call the school if your child has a contagious disease or condition such as chicken pox, impetigo or head lice.

Please inform the health screener and the teacher if your child shows any unusual symptoms such as refusal to eat breakfast, disturbed sleep...etc.

Safety Policies

Any accident shall be reported to the director and teacher.

Broken play equipment shall be removed. Other hazards discovered on the premises shall be reported to the director.

Firearms and other weapons are strictly prohibited on the school site.

The adult bringing your child must sign his/her name next to the child's name on a sheet which will be in the group. You may not sign the child in and out at the same time. You are then responsible for picking up the child unless you have signed the sign-out sheet in the child's group indicating who will pick up the child.

No child may be released to any person not known to the teacher or director unless the parent notifies the school in advance by means of the state form in your child's student file. If someone else is picking up your child, please sign him out to that person on the sign-out sheet in your child's group. This helps us know who to call if you child if the pick-up person is late.

Teacher Conferences and Staff In-Service Day

You will notice on our calendar that we have a "Staff In-Service Day" designated on one day each month from October through May. There is no school on those days. However, those days are important for all of us. During the morning of In-Service Day, teachers are available to meet with parents of individual children to discuss the school program and their particular child's developmental growth within the school setting. They also want to hear about the child's life in the home

environment so that school curriculum can be individualized for that family's situation.

We ask that each family sign up for a conference at least one time per school year or even more frequently if there is a need. Conferences offer a chance to exchange information as we become better acquainted with the needs of families; and families can increase their understanding of the SMCNS goal of creating a loving, caring, trusting environment where human growth can take place. You should arrange for childcare during the time of your conference.

The afternoons of In-Service Day provide the staff time for enrichment and learning experiences that benefit our children. There is time for discussion and planning by teaching teams as well as continuing education for all staff members.

Conferences with the Director, for any reason, may be arranged by calling the school any weekday. Please do not call or contact the teachers at their homes. Teachers will be happy to arrange an appointment with you upon request. A conference with your child's teacher can also be scheduled on any of the monthly teacher in-service days between 8:30 and 11:30 a.m.

Child Assessments

Throughout the year children in our program are assessed formally and informally by their teaching teams. Information obtained through these assessments is used to gain insight related to children's interests and needs. We use observations to support children's learning by adjusting curriculum and adapting teaching practices to meet those needs and interests. In early Spring of each year, a brief written record is made to denote developmental milestones observed at school for each child. Through conferences as well as frequent contacts with parents, teachers receive input from parents about their child both in the school environment and at home. This collaborative effort helps ensure that each child's developmental progress is noted with appreciation for their individual unfolding process.

The annual written assessment checklist is placed in each child's file as a record which may be referred to by the child's next teacher if indicated. Also, a parent may view any contents of their own child's file if they wish.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessments

As a tool to help parents make a decision as to whether to send a child to kindergarten immediately or to wait another year, a readiness assessment may be requested. This brief one-on-one session is intended to determine

developmental age. It is not a measure of intelligence or of achievement (knowledge attained), but rather a gauge of maturity. Children should be developmentally aged five and one-half at least to benefit from the kindergarten experience; while the tool is administered some months before the start of school, it is a good indicator of where a child could be expected to be as regards maturation at the start of the next school year.

This assessment is done by the child's teacher or by the director at the parent's request. The follow-up is a personal conference between the tester and the parents. It is intended to be one of several sources of information to be used by parents to make the kindergarten decision.

Parent Teachers

What is a Parent Teacher?

A Parent Teacher commits to working one or two regular workdays per week in a particular group. Because this parent works the same day/days each week there is no need for her to sign up on the monthly workday calendar. Parent Teachers assume responsibility for the group while the teacher is at her daily meeting. They are especially valued for the continuity they provide each group. Additionally, they are asked to attend a monthly Parent Teacher meeting held in the evening with the

teacher and other Parent Teachers to discuss issues relevant to the group. The Parent Teacher receives workday credit for this meeting.

What are the benefits to being a two-day Parent Teacher?

Two-day Parent Teachers are especially beneficial to the teacher. Children come to know them well and enjoy the consistency they provide. Thus they are better able to help with the program goals set by the teacher as well as help address unique concerns and challenges with individual children. Another benefit is financial. It is possible for a two-day Parent Teacher to earn enough tuition credit to offset the monthly fees for one child.

Some More Parent Teacher Information

- ◆ Parent Teachers must arrive at 8:15 a.m. or 12:15 p.m. to help the teachers prepare the play areas before the children arrive. They may leave after everything has been put away and they have checked with the teachers.
- ◆ Parent Teachers are expected to continue working in these positions for the full school year. If a parent teacher must resign from this position she is asked to give as much notice as possible to enable the director to arrange for a replacement.

- ◆ Parent Teachers should let the Office Manager know as far ahead as possible if they are unable to work on a scheduled day.
- ◆ Two-day Parent Teachers are not required to find their own substitutes, if it becomes necessary for them to miss their workday, after they've informed the Office Manager.

Parking

Please park in marked parking spaces in the lot west of the school or along the street on Sierra Madre Boulevard. Use great caution because there is no area set aside for pedestrians.

Visiting School

Parents of enrolled children are welcome to visit at any time without an appointment. Other visitors are welcome but by appointment.

Telephone Calls at School

Our school phone number is (626) 355-1655. An answering machine takes message during non-school hours. Our fax number is (626) 355-7730. Call the Office Manager any morning between 8 a.m. and 3:30

p.m. about all routine matters such as finances, workdays...etc.

Cellular Phones

Parents who are working in our classrooms need to focus their complete attention on the children and their safety. **We cannot allow classroom workers to use cell phones to converse or to text.**

Emergency calls may be made in the office after you check with the Teacher to get your area supervised by another adult.

Monthly Bulletin

Please read the school bulletin provided for you each month. You are responsible for knowing the information about school affairs contained in it. Please keep it for reference.

Bulletin Board

The bulletin board on the school porch is for educational notices. Personal notices about matters such as needing a babysitter as well as business advertising may be placed in the three-ring binder "Bulletin Book" located near the bulletin board on the porch. It is not for commercial use.

Every notice must be cleared with the Director before being posted.

Cubbies

The children's cubbies in the classrooms are for their school projects and personal belongings. They are not for parent correspondence, party invitations, valentines or private fundraisers. Such items should be mailed or distributed outside the school gate. Check with the Director before depositing anything in the cubbies. Parent information files for each family are located on the front porch.

All-School Emails

All-school emails may be used with discretion to disseminate information that is: *urgent and/or time sensitive and is relevant to the entire membership*. Such emails must be pre-approved by the Director and will be sent out via the school website by the website manager. Parents should not use “reply all” in response to all-school emails.

Board members or other SMCNS members who are responsible for coordinating school events and who wish to utilize the “all-school” email process are expected to confer with the Board President regarding the overall publicity plan for their event. If it is deemed necessary

and appropriate to send an “all-school” email, a draft will be reviewed by the Director and forwarded upon approval to the website manager to be sent out to the membership.

As in the case of our printed directory, email contact information of school families should not be used for advertising by members or shared with others who may use it for that purpose.

It is acceptable for parents to make use of the group email list to solicit coverage for a shift they must cancel or to make their availability known if they are in need of shifts. However, only sending an email is not considered a sufficient effort to secure a substitute for oneself. If the email is not successful, the parent is still expected to make other timely attempts to get their shift covered.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

All staff members working with children are mandated by the State of California to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Reports, by law, are made without prior notification to parents, to the Protective Services Division of the local Department of Social Services. Signs of abuse and neglect include, but are not limited to: bruises, burns, prolonged inability of the child to interact with or relate to staff and/or children, or inflammation or other abnormal appearance of genitals.

We ask that you tell your child's teacher the cause of visible bruises, etc. that have been sustained at home, and we will in turn notify you of the circumstances surrounding any injuries sustained at school. Be assured that the school earnestly wishes to work in partnership with parents to keep children safe and healthy.

General Program Information

Your Child's First Day

This is an exciting day for you and your child! Please plan to stay with your child if they need you because a good beginning makes for a more valuable nursery school experience. Your child's teacher will help you decide when you should leave.

Check with the teacher regarding extra clothing depending on the child's age and control. Please write your child's name on jackets, rainwear and sweaters.

Suggestions for Parent Helpers

What is a Parent Helper?

Like the Parent Teacher, a Parent Helper also assists the teacher in the group, overseeing activities and supervising children. Parent Helpers sign up for their workdays on

the school calendar each month on a first-come, first-serve basis. The school calendar is posted on the porch.

The main responsibilities of Parent Helpers are as follows:

- ◆ To be in the group no later than 8:20 a.m. or 12:20 p.m. on your workdays.
- ◆ Ensure that the children are safe.
- ◆ Set up paint easels, supervise the sandbox, or other activities as directed by the teacher or Parent Teacher.
- ◆ Clean up and remain with the group until excused by the teacher. If one parent leaves early it puts an extra burden on the remaining parents.

On Your Workday

We Value Your Skills!

Parents have a wide variety of backgrounds and can enrich our program with their unique talents. Prior to your participation day, please notify the teacher in the group of any activity you wish to share. We welcome your leadership in music, art, dance and movement, science or other activities that interest you.

We Can Help!

If you need help, ask the teacher. If you feel uncomfortable in a situation with children, ask the teacher or Parent Teacher for help. If you find no one immediately available, do the best you can. Later, discuss the situation with the teacher who may have suggestions for you.

Interacting With the Children

Try to be positive when directions to the children are necessary. For example say, “Do this...” instead of “Don’t do that...” Or say, “Leave the shovel in the sandbox,” instead of “Don’t take shovels out of the sandbox.” Please carefully read this policy book and the handbook, Nurturing Human Growth. They explain our philosophy and practices. Reviewing and recalling these texts can set the mood for your day at school.

Snacks

The school provides a daily snack. A typical snack would be crackers, fruit and water. Parents may bring a snack for their child’s group, but should check first with the teacher about their plans. Parents are encouraged to contribute fresh fruit to their child’s group for snack. Snacks should be simple, ready to serve, and nutritious. We recommend fruit, cheese or vegetables. Please do

not bring cookies, cupcakes or other sugary treats. We are also a “peanut-free” school. We like to encourage more healthful eating and do not wish to interfere with the nutrition plan you have set for your child at home.

Clothing, Shoes and Personal Toys

Send your child to school in simple, washable play clothes.

- ◆ We encourage old clothes because children are allowed to play in sand and mud.
- ◆ Shoes should be rubber-soled for safe climbing. Cowboy boots, thongs, leather soled shoes or Mary Janes are unsuitable.
- ◆ We discourage the wearing of super hero shirts because children tend to “act out” the part of these heroes and become over-stimulated. They also tend to engage in more scripted play – drawing on film or T.V. dialogue and actions – rather than play of their own imaginative creation.
- ◆ Please do not send children in costumes, masks or hats other than sun hats. It is difficult for children to share these special possessions. We do provide ample school dress-up items.
- ◆ Please have children leave the play guns and other toys at home. A favorite cuddly toy or a

blanket, however, is fine for a child needing this reassurance.

Television Viewing

The staff would like to remind parents to show discretion in their children's T.V. viewing habits, both in quality and quantity. What they see on T.V. can affect their behavior and lessen the benefits of the nursery school experience.

Birthdays

Children's birthdays are acknowledged at school, usually at rug/song time. Each teacher has her own tradition for birthday recognition. Parents may bring a special birthday snack that the teacher has approved of in advance. Again, we request a nutritious choice such as bagels and cream cheese, sugar free muffins, and fruit. With the large number of classroom birthdays we would find ourselves serving sweets on a regular basis if we allowed cake and other sugary treats.

Honorary Endowment Fund

Our goal is to enable families of all means to benefit from our nursery school experience. To that end, in 1992 the SMCNS Board of Trustees established an Honorary

Endowment Fund. This Fund provides tuition scholarships to current students and, if feasible, new students. Parents, alumni and friends are invited to contribute to this fund at any time. Special occasions, such as a child's birthday, graduation or the recognition of a cherished teacher are especially appropriate times to make a tax-deductible donation. Donors and those in whose name contributions are made receive recognition in our Honor Book.

Lunch Bunch and Stay & Play

This afternoon program is offered to our morning schedule families who wish to extend their child's nursery school day on either a regular or occasional basis. The Stay & Play program is located in Group III and begins immediately after the morning program ends at 11:30 a.m. with "Lunch Bunch". Participating children are escorted from their morning groups by their teacher or by a parent who is working in Stay & Play. Children eat the lunches they bring from home, are offered a rest period and spend the remaining time engaged in self-guided play.

Children may stay for the entire four-hour session until 3:30 p.m. or may participate in just the Lunch Bunch hour from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. as their parents choose. Parents are not required to participate in staffing the Stay & Play program, although some parents assist in

Stay & Play in exchange for future Stay & Play days for their own child or towards Maintenance credit. Stay & Play is staffed by one or two of our regular teachers as well as parent assistants, depending on the number of children attending.

To sign your child up to participate in Stay & Play please contact the office or indicated that your child is staying for Lunch Bunch (11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.) or for both Lunch Bunch and Stay & Play (11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.) on your child's sign in sheet in your group. Please see the enclosed fee sheet for the current Stay & Play rates.

Toddler Program

If you're looking for an introduction to SMCNS for your younger child, our Toddler Program is an enriching first experience. This class is held one day per week during the school year or on Fridays in the summer from 9 - 11 a.m. A SMCNS teacher leads the child and parent/caregiver in guided play, arts and crafts, stories, music and snack all in the park adjacent to our school, Sierra Vista Park, or in one of our classrooms during summer session. Enrollment is open to children between the ages of 15 months and 30 months old. Please contact the office to register. Please see the enclosed fee sheet for the current Toddler Program rates.

We Can Work It Out – Grievances

Things run pretty smoothly here at SMCNS. But should you find yourself frustrated with a practice or policy, or concerned with any school-related issues, we suggest the following steps for addressing grievances. First, we ask that you speak to the teacher directly. Often she can clarify a misunderstanding or help to direct you further for assistance. Second, if you still feel that your concern has not been resolved to your satisfaction, please speak to the Director. Third, if your concerns are still not allayed, we ask that you speak to the Board of Trustees Personnel Chairperson. She serves as a staff-parent liaison.

Again, welcome to you and your family. We look forward to learning with all of you! Remember that teachers, staff and board members are always eager to help you.

Revised September 2010