

2023 - 2024 Parent Handbook



11 Church Street
Amherst, NH 03031
603-672-3168
Tax # 02-0491867
www.preschoolinthevillage.org

Tina Summers, Director



2023-2024 School Year

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The Preschool in the Village is an independent, non-profit early learning center, serving families in Amherst and surrounding towns since 1995. We offer half-day learning programs for children 3 to 6 years old, and speech/language therapy for children 2.5 to 7. PIV was first established as a mission of the Congregational Church of Amherst, but incorporated as a separate non-profit in 1996. PIV leases the space for its programs from CCA, and maintains a close working relationship with them in support of the community.




Hours of Operation

PIV is open during the public-school year, September to June, and follows the Amherst public school calendar (SAU 39) for all holidays, vacation weeks and snow days. Hours are 8:00-3:00pm.

If public schools close due to unexpected or emergency circumstances, PIV will consider if the reasons behind their closure apply to us before making our own decision to close or remain in operation.

Organization

The teaching staff and office administrator are supervised by the school Director, who is responsible for the daily management and financial operation of the center. The school Director reports to a Board of Directors comprised of parent and community volunteers who serve two (2) year terms. The Board meets monthly to address operational or personnel concerns, review finances, and organize fundraising events. PIV is regulated by the Child Care Licensing Bureau within the NH Dept. of Health & Human Services, not the Dept. of Education.

Mission Statement	Core Values
<p>Provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences in a safe and nurturing environment that support social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth, while encouraging positive self-image and cooperative engagement with others.</p> 	We believe children learn best through exploration, discovery, and problem solving.
	We promote developmentally appropriate practice in all we do.
	We believe time spent outdoors is important.
	We foster a partnership with families.
	We recognize the strength of our school is in the dedication of our staff and Board members.
	We teach three rules: Be kind to others. Solve problems by talking. Put away the things you use.



TUITION

Tuition is based on the full school year and is due regardless of absences, snow days or other cancellations. As a non-profit organization, all monies received are used for the operation of the preschool. The tuition rate is determined by the Board of Directors.



Payment Terms

Please note that the **first tuition payment is due July 1st and is non-refundable**. A minimum of one month's tuition must be received in order for your child to start the new school year.

The **last payment is due May 1st** (unless special arrangements have been made with the office) **and is also non-refundable**.

In the event of an unplanned school closure of one month or more due to circumstances beyond our control, such as extreme weather, a pandemic, a forced shutdown by local/state/federal governments, a facility malfunction, or any situation that jeopardizes the health or safety of PIV staff and students, the Board of Directors will review the financial stability of the preschool and may consider refunding a portion of tuition paid on account at that time.

Payment Schedules

Please indicate the preferred payment schedule when registering your child or submitting your first payment:

- ❖ One **lump sum** payment due on **July 1**.
- ❖ Semi-annual payments due on **July 1** and **January 1**.
- ❖ Quarterly payments due **July 1, November 1, February 1** and **May 1**.
- ❖ Monthly payments due on the first of the month, **July 1** through **May 1**.

Making a Payment

We accept personal checks or bank checks made out to: **Preschool in the Village**

Please record the month(s) for which you are paying and your child's name in the memo line. Checks should be mailed, or placed in the grey mailbox in front of the building, or brought to the school office. **Please do not put checks in backpacks and do not give to a teacher in the car line.**

Credit card payments and automatic bank transfers are accepted using our Tuition Express parent portal. There is a processing fee for these methods of payment. If financial or family circumstances change that will affect payments, please speak with the school Director to discuss special arrangements.

Other Fees

- ❖ **Registration Fee:** A non-refundable registration fee of \$150.00 is required per family.
- ❖ **Late fee:** \$10.00 charge will be imposed if payment is not received by the 5th day of the month.
- ❖ **Insufficient Funds:** \$20 charge will be imposed for returned checks.

Scholarship

The **Susan Drumm Scholarship Fund** is available to help our student families when they face a financial emergency, such as job loss or significant medical bills. It is our goal that every child enrolled at PIV be able to complete the school year with us. Fundraising events and donations contribute to this fund. Requests must be sent to the Director using an application form, and are reviewed by the Board of Directors on a first come, first served basis. Scholarship awards are also dependent on available funds.



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ENROLLMENT

Registration

Priority in registration is given to: (1) **current enrollees** (2) **siblings of current enrollees**. Currently enrolled families receive a pre-registration form that must be returned by the indicated January deadline with a non-refundable registration fee. The remaining spaces in each class are open to the public on a first-come first-served basis. Names are placed on a waiting list in the order they are received. Confirmation of enrollment is sent out in June via email.



Class Assignments

PIV makes every effort to respect parent requests for class assignments. However, we reserve the right to place the children where we feel is most beneficial or provides for a more even balance of boys and girls. Parents are consulted when a change is considered.

Withdrawal from PIV

If a family wishes to withdraw its child from the preschool, a four-week written notice is required. If such notice is not provided, four weeks tuition must be paid regardless of attendance. Beyond the amount of the first non-refundable tuition payment, the remaining tuition due will be prorated according to the percentage of the school year that has passed, including the four-week notice period. If there has been an overpayment, it will be refunded. **No tuition refunds will be made after May 1 of the school year.**

Expulsion Policy

The Board and School Director understands that our philosophy and the execution of it may not be in the best interest of every child who is enrolled. In the unlikely event of an incompatible relationship, the Preschool in the Village reserves the right to dismiss any child from our programs. Circumstances for expulsion from PIV include, but are not limited to:

- Issues with the child's behavior or developmental needs which cannot be met by PIV, or are disruptive to its programs
- Non-payment of tuition and/or fees by the child's parents or guardians
- Non-compliance with state regulation requirements or PIV policies and procedures by the child's parents or guardians

If there are ongoing challenges with a child's behavior, the following steps will be taken prior to expulsion:

1. A meeting with teachers, parents and the Director will be convened to discuss the issues and develop a support plan.
2. Daily communication with parents in the car line or via email, and a home-school journal may be employed to look for patterns.
3. Teachers will adjust routines and interactions, modify the environment, or provide sensory breaks as needed.
4. A reduction in attendance (hours or days) may be recommended to see if that helps the child to be successful in school.
5. PIV will make referrals to the appropriate school district, PTAN, mental health counselors, or developmental therapy services.

If PIV determines that the above steps have not resolved the disruptive behavior or that a child's developmental needs cannot be met, one weeks' notice prior to expulsion from PIV will be given to parents in a meeting, along with alternative preschools. Tuition will be charged through the last day of attendance.



PROGRAMS

Our theme-based curriculum balances school-readiness skills with a social and emotional foundation. The daily routine includes outside play, teacher-directed projects, group activities, and free choice time. Literacy, math, and science concepts are embedded in the learning activities, with many opportunities for creative exploration. Children learn pro-social behavior by being a part of the classroom community and participating in group activities. Speech-language therapy sessions are available during the preschool morning. There are two teachers in most programs, maintaining a student-teacher ratio of at least 1 to 8.



Curriculum Enrichment

- Music and yoga with Miss Tina
- Natural science with a teacher from Beaver Brook Association.
- Story time with a librarian from the Amherst Town Library.
- Field trips and walks around the village or the nature trails behind the school.
- Parents can make an important contribution to the curriculum by sharing their time and talents with the children.

Morning Classes

Children must be the age required for each program by September 30th.

Bumblebees	3-year-olds 10 children with Miss Elizabeth & Miss Carrie	M/W/F or T/Th 8:50 – 11:50am
Caterpillars	4-year-olds 12 children with Miss Mandy & Miss Rebecca	Monday – Thursday 8:35 – 11:35am
Dragonflies	4-year-olds 12 children with Miss Dianne & Miss Aila	M – Th or M - F 8:10 – 11:10am
Owls	Pre-k for 5-year-olds 8 children with Miss June	Monday – Friday 8:25am - noon

Speech-Language Therapy with Miss Gretchen

Communication is important for positive social/emotional learning, and PIV is pleased to offer early intervention for young children with developmental delays. This program is open to PIV students as well as non-student clients. Both individual and group therapy sessions are offered. Additional services include intake evaluations, IEP support and progress meetings. This program is for children 2.5 to 7 years old during the school year only. Insurance payments are not accepted at this time. Enrolled students receive services from Miss Gretchen during their school day. Afternoons are open to non-PIV clients.

- ✓ Individual 30-minute session = \$45
- ✓ Group 45-minute session = \$35 (2 or 3 children with similar goals)
- ✓ Integrated classroom supports

Notification of Absence

Please call the office (603-672-3168) or email your child's teacher and the office. If you arrive late, call the office and we will meet you at the main door.

Special Needs

If teachers and/or parents feel that a child is struggling with a developmental delay in speech, motor skills, cognitive processing, or social/emotional regulation or expression, PIV will assist with referrals to the child's school district for evaluation. Children with special needs are welcome at PIV if we are able to make the necessary accommodations without disrupting the integrity of the program for all students. Our goal is to include children of all abilities whenever possible. PIV staff will maintain communication with parents to determine our ongoing ability to support their child's special needs, and will assist with transfer to another school if it is in the best interest of all concerned.



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LUNCH BUNCH

The *Lunch Bunch* program is an option for Caterpillars, Dragonflies and Owls to extend their preschool day and enjoy extra social time with friends. Children may attend *Lunch Bunch* only on their scheduled preschool days. Advanced registration is required; no "same-day drop-ins" will be accepted.



Group Size

Capacity is **limited to 10** per day with 2 teachers. At least two (2) children must be registered for lunch on the same day in order for this program to be offered. PIV reserves the right to cancel *Lunch Bunch* on any given day.

Teachers

Miss Aila and Miss Rebecca

Pack a Lunch

Please label the lunch bag or container with your child's name. A hard surfaced container that can be wiped with disinfectant after eating, such as a Bento Box or hard surfaced lunch box (metal or plastic, no fabric) is preferred. Please do not send food that needs to be heated and do not send reusable silverware. Keep in mind that **PIV is a peanut-free school**

Cost & Dismissal

\$25.00 per day (no cost reduction for early pick-ups)

1:30pm

Attendance and Absences

Please schedule attendance 48 hours (2-days) in advance via email (pivamherst@gmail.com).

A same-day request to attend is contingent on group availability and staffing.

There is no charge for scheduled lunch days missed due to absence from school. You may reschedule for another day. However, please notify the office as soon as possible if your child will be absent from *Lunch Bunch*.

Snow Days

If Amherst Public Schools are CLOSED, the Preschool in the Village is CLOSED and there is no *Lunch Bunch*. You may reschedule. If Amherst public schools have a 2-hour weather related delay, PIV drop-off times will be delayed 1-hour with *Lunch Bunch* as usual.

Payment

Payment must be received the day of attendance or may be paid in advance when combined with monthly tuition. Please indicate the separate amounts in the memo space on the check.



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DAILY HAPPENINGS

Transportation

All students must be picked up from school by a parent or a designated driver listed on the transportation release form. Parents must notify PIV via email if there is a change of person picking up their child.

Drop-Off

- Please evaluate your child's health each morning before coming to school. A child will not be taken out of the car if they display signs of any illness.
- Using the car line is the safest way to drop-off and pick-up, rather than walking or biking.
- **Do Not walk or bike down the driveway towards the car line!**
- If you do walk or bike, please use the opening in the fence on the grassy side of the building (*not the parsonage driveway*), through the parking lot, and wait by the bench for your teacher to greet you.
- Please help your child use hand sanitizer before they exit the car.
- Your child should remain fastened in their seat for safety and insurance reasons.
- A daily online health form may be required during the winter months or if Covid cases increase in our community.
- It is important to arrive on time or you will be "caught" in the car line for the next class!



Car Line Procedure

1. Park across the street at the village green until your class time.
2. Line up on the right side of Jailhouse Road at your class time, keeping the actual road clear for our neighbors.
 - a. *If you are early, the cars in line are the previous class. Park along the village green and wait for your class time.*
3. Turn left to enter the school driveway, **taking care not to block the road.**
4. Please have your child remain in their seat and consider shutting the ignition as a courtesy to our neighbors.
5. Pull up to the teacher and put your car in PARK.
6. **Please refrain from using cell phones or other devices.** Your attention is required during these transitions.
7. Please remain in your car, the teacher will assist your child.
8. **At pick-up: Please pull up beside the building to buckle up.**

Outside Play

The children go outside in all seasons unless it is pouring rain, colder than 15°F, or the playground is too icy. Fresh air is important for good health, and it is our policy that children well enough to be in school are well enough to go outside.

Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play and changes in the seasons, with foot gear that is safe for running and climbing.

Snack

Please have your child bring a healthy snack to school each day, clearly labeled with their name. **PIV is a peanut-free school**, and it may be necessary to avoid other food allergens within a specific class.

Water Bottles

We request that all students bring a filled water bottle to school each day, clearly labeled with their name. Please wash the mouthpiece and outside of the water bottle with soap and water every day, before sending it back to school.



DAILY HAPPENINGS (cont.)



Clothing & Jewelry

Children should dress in washable, comfortable play clothes. Since toileting accidents and messy play activities may happen, please provide an extra set of clothing marked with the child's name in a Ziploc bag. When clothing is sent home, please return another complete set the next day.

Sturdy, closed-toe shoes that are securely fastened all around the feet (no open backs or flip flops) should be worn to school for active play outdoors. Children are encouraged to put on shoes themselves when changing from rain or snow boots, so it is helpful to send them with Velcro closures or slip-on options, rather than shoe laces.

Children cannot wear necklaces or rings to school, as they present a potential choking hazard to themselves and others.

Backpacks

Children must bring a backpack to school each day that is large enough to accommodate their water bottle and snack, artwork and winter clothing. We will provide a sturdy plastic folder to keep in the backpack. The folder is used to send papers from school to home, and you can put notes for us in it too! Please be sure that your child's name is clearly visible on the backpack. Your teacher may provide a picture name tag to help with identification.

Toys or Special Items from Home

Teachers cannot be responsible for the safety of objects brought from home, so we request that these not be brought to school except on show-and-tell days. **No guns or toy weapons of any kind are allowed.**

Emotional security items (ie. stuffed animal or blanket/lovey) can be brought to school if necessary, but will be stored in the child's backpack before going into their classroom. These items cannot be carried around, to avoid the spread of germs.

Birthdays

We welcome you to celebrate your child's birthday by sending in a favorite book for us to read on that day or coming by to read it to the class yourself! Your child will decorate a birthday crown on their special day and we will sing "*Happy Birthday*" at snack time.

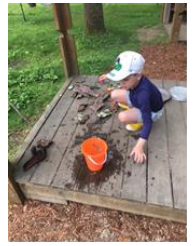
Please do not send in cupcakes or sweet treats, party invitations or goody/gift bags for the teachers to distribute to the class. You are welcome to use your classroom contact information to share these items on your own.

Field Trips

PIV asks each parent to sign a form before school begins which gives permission for walks around the village. The older classes may schedule a field trip in the fall and/or spring to learn about a community resource – such as a nature walk in Beaver Brook Association or a local farm. Field trips with PIV require a responsible adult to transport and accompany each child for this activity.



DAILY HAPPENINGS (cont.)



Behavior Guidance Plan

The types of inappropriate behavior most often seen in preschool-age children (such as temper tantrums, refusal to cooperate, hitting) are usually the result of the child's young social/emotional development or their inexperience with being part of a group. PIV views these instances as "teachable moments", and the following positive guidance techniques are used:

- ❖ Having age-appropriate expectations for children
- ❖ Discussing classroom rules and consequences of unsafe or unkind behavior
- ❖ Explaining to parents the importance of having the same expectations at home and school
- ❖ Helping children to recognize cause-and-effect of behavior choices
- ❖ Ignoring inappropriate behavior that seeks to receive negative attention
- ❖ Reinforcing desirable behavior with recognition and praise
- ❖ Assisting children in negotiation, sharing, or finding a compromise with peers
- ❖ Modelling appropriate behavior and kind words
- ❖ Using puppets to role play positive behavior or conflict resolution
- ❖ A child may be removed from the group setting or play situation temporarily, to give them the opportunity to calm down, talk about what happened with the teacher, and start over.
- ❖ Yoga poses to calm the body and deep breathing
- ❖ Parents will be called if their child is struggling to participate appropriately, and it becomes apparent that the school day will not be a positive experience for them. Parents, teachers and the Director will determine the best course of action, including a parent attending the remainder of the day to assist with behavior management, or going home to start over the next day.
- ❖ A child will be sent home if they bite another child, and a meeting with their parents will be held to discuss how to change this behavior in the future.

Snow Days or Delays

If the Amherst Public schools (SAU39) are closed because of inclement weather, PIV is also closed. Cancellations and delays for the Amherst school system are announced on the WMUR television station and website. PIV does not make up snow days, and tuition credits will not be given for snow days or delayed openings.

If public schools have a 2-hour delay due to weather or road conditions, PIV drop-off times are delayed 1-hour.

The PIV Facebook page is updated with closure and delay information by 7:00am.

Methods of Communication

- ❖ 603-672-3168
- ❖ pivamherst@gmail.com (Director and office administrator)
- ❖ pivboard@outlook.com (Board of Directors)
- ❖ www.preschoolinthevillage.org
- ❖ Preschool in the Village, PIV Parents, and PIV Community Facebook pages
- ❖ A quarterly newsletter, *The Preschool Post*, from the school Director
- ❖ Weekly email classroom updates from the teachers and a monthly email update from the Director.
- ❖ "Call-em All" emergency phone system
- ❖ Lending Library: books and articles on child development and parenting
- ❖ Bulletin boards in each classroom and outside the office display information about school events and community resources.
- ❖ Parent-teacher conferences: November and March
- ❖ Year-end developmental assessments for each child

Issues and/or Suggestions

Please feel free to contact your child's Lead Teacher or the Director in person or via email. A meeting may also be scheduled to allow for focused conversation. All feedback is helpful to us in planning future programs.



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HEALTH & SAFETY

Our policies concerning illness are based on a sincere concern to protect not only the ill child, but all the children entrusted to our care. Regulations require PIV to exclude any child with a diagnosed communicable disease (measles, chicken pox, Covid-19, etc.) or obvious acute illness. Please inform the school office if your child contracts, or is exposed to, a contagious disease such as chicken pox or Covid-19. A note from a medical professional must accompany a child returning to school after a serious illness.



Health Forms

Every student must provide PIV with a health report and vaccination schedule obtained from their pediatrician within the last twelve months, or the date of when their physical examination is scheduled. These health forms must be received by the first day of school. A notarized certificate of religious exemption from the NH Dept. of Health & Human Services is accepted in lieu of vaccinations.

Stay Home to Get Well

Please do not send a child to school with signs of a possible contagious illness. If a child becomes sick or displays signs of illness after arriving at school, they will be sent home for his/her own well being and that of the other children.

A child may attend school if the child meets all of the following conditions:

- ☐ Is able to participate fully in all school activities.
- ☐ Has been symptom-free for the past 24 hours without medication (*No fever, sore throat, ear ache, rhinitis/runny nose, sinus or bronchial congestion, coughing, headache, diarrhea, vomiting*).
- ☐ Is not waiting for Covid-19, flu, RSV or strep test results.
- ☐ Has not tested positive for Covid-19, flu or RSV.
- ☐ Has not been exposed to a positive case of Covid-19 within their household.
- ☐ Does not have a rash or is being treated for a non-contagious rash by a medical provider. (*Please provide a note to the office.*)
- ☐ Does not have conjunctivitis or has completed 24 hours of antibiotics and no longer has discharge from their eyes.
- ☐ Does not have skin sores or other symptoms of Hand/Foot/Mouth disease, Chicken Pox or Measles.
- ☐ Does not have head lice.

Common conditions for which children will be excluded from attendance:

- ❖ CHICKEN POX: exclude until all the skin lesions or blisters are scabbed over
- ❖ CONJUNCTIVITIS: exclude until the child has antibiotics for 24 hours and the discharge from the eyes has stopped.
- ❖ EAR INFECTION: exclude until the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours
- ❖ HAND, FOOT, MOUTH: exclude until 48 hours after sores appear
- ❖ HEAD LICE: exclude until child has received treatments and shows no signs of lice
- ❖ IMPETIGO: exclude until the child has antibiotics for 24 hours and lesions dried
- ❖ RASHES: exclude until rash has been identified, treated, and a doctor's note verifies it is not communicable
- ❖ STREP THROAT: exclude until the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours
- ❖ COVID-19: exclude for 5-days and until symptom-free for at least 24 hours



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HEALTH & SAFETY (cont.)



Covid-19 Health Policy

- The wearing of a mask is a personal choice (optional) for students and staff, unless a school policy change is necessary due to community health conditions during the school year.
- If a student or household contact becomes ill with Covid-19 or tests positive for Covid-19, please email the school Director to discuss the required quarantine period and projected back-to-school date. (pivamherst@gmail.com)

Hand Hygiene

PIV has always taught consistent hand hygiene, sneezing/coughing into an elbow, and using a tissue to wipe your nose. Children will wash hands upon arrival, when coming inside from the playground, before snack, after toileting, and at any other time a teacher feels it is needed. Hand sanitizer and hand sanitizer wipes may be used, with teacher supervision. **Please do not send your child with any hand sanitizer in their backpack.**

Peanut Allergy

PIV is a **PEANUT-FREE facility**. All parents must read labels when packing your child's snack or lunch for the day, to avoid any peanut ingredients. If your child has a peanut or nut allergy, it is your responsibility to inform the school and provide an action plan.

Allergy Action Plan

A child that has a food allergy, asthma or any other allergic condition must have on file a form that explains the symptoms of the reaction and outlines the course of action to be taken in an emergency. If medication is part of the action plan, this is kept in the child's classroom in a sealed plastic bag, labelled with the child's name.

AIDS/HIV Infection Policy

As required by Federal law, PIV does not exclude children with an HIV infection. However, each case will be evaluated for conditions that may pose a risk to others, such as aggressive biting behavior or open sores. Such conditions may require restricted attendance.

Building Access

The doors to the church building are locked during school hours. All visitors to the building must ring the buzzer and be admitted by the Director or office administrator.

Communication Devices

Lead Teachers carry a walkie-talkie on their person at all times for communication with the Director or other staff members as needed. Lead Teachers also bring their cell phone to the playground or on nature walks in the community, in case of an emergency. A panic button directly connected to the Amherst Police Department is located in the school office.

Emergency Procedures

The School Director will conduct fire drills every month with all students and staff members. Teachers select a safe meeting place on the playground for their class. Safety procedures for other types of emergencies are reviewed once per quarter by the staff, and an *Emergency Operations Procedure* brochure is provided to parents at the start of the school year. Other evacuation sites:

Offsite in the neighborhood = Town Hall (2 Main Street)

Offsite away from the neighborhood = Clark Elementary School (14 Foundry Street)

Emergency Communications

If neither parent can be reached, PIV must have the name of an individual who can be called in case of a medical or environmental emergency. In addition, two individuals must be designated as emergency back up or alternate pick-up persons. PIV has the "Call-em All" emergency phone calling system. Parents receive a test call in September.

