

# Parent Handbook



11 Church Street  
Amherst, NH 03031

603-672-3168

Tax # 02-0491867

[www.preschoolinthevillage.org](http://www.preschoolinthevillage.org)

*Tina Summers, Director*

## 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. PIV was first established as a mission of the Amherst Congregational Church but incorporated as a separate non-profit in 1996. PIV leases the space for its programs from ACC, 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, snow days, and the start and end dates of school. Two weeks of summer camp are offered in June as well.

## Organization

Our experienced, caring teachers are credentialed by the State of New Hampshire as early childhood professionals or master teachers. Every teacher is also CPR and pediatric first aid certified. 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 of Directors meet monthly to address operational or personnel concerns, review finances, and organize fundraising events. PIV is licensed by the Childcare Licensing Bureau of NH, within the Department of Health & Human Services.

## Philosophy

- ❖ We believe children learn best through exploration, discovery, and problem solving, and that a strong social and emotional foundation is necessary for successful learning experiences.
- ❖ We respect each child as a unique individual, and promote the principles of developmentally-appropriate-practice in all decision making and curriculum plans. Every child will have the time and opportunity to learn at their own pace and in their own way.
- ❖ We utilize the concept of “Universal Design for Learning” in the implementation of our curriculum activities and the physical environment. We provide multiple options for representing a learning skill or engaging in a learning activity, so children of differing abilities can all be active participants in the classroom.
- ❖ We follow three important rules: ***We are kind to others. We solve our problems by talking. We put away everything we use.***
- ❖ We acknowledge a responsibility to develop a partnership with families that supports and enhances each child’s development. We strive to work together as a team, to guide the children’s growth as thoughtful, curious, caring, and responsible individuals.
- ❖ We believe being outdoors is important for physical, cognitive, and emotional development.
- ❖ We seek teachers who have competent training, professionalism, and expertise in the field of early childhood education, as well as a natural love for children. We recognize that the strength of our school is in the commitment and dedication of our teachers.

# INTRODUCTION

The tuition rate is determined by the Board of Directors. 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.

### **Payment Term**

Please note that the first tuition payment is due July 1 and is non-refundable. A minimum of one month's tuition must be received by PIV, in order for your child to be enrolled for the new school year. The last payment is due April 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **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 **December 1**.
- ❖ Quarterly payments due **July 1, October 1, December 1** and **March 1**.
- ❖ Monthly payments due on the first of the month, **July 1** through **April 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 payment basket in the school office. **Please do not put checks in backpacks and do not give to a teacher in the car line.**

Credit card payments are accepted in person via Square. There is a 2.75% processing fee for this method of payment.

If financial or family circumstances change that will affect payments, please speak with the Director to discuss special arrangements.

### **Other Fees**

- ❖ **Registration Fee:** A non-refundable registration fee of \$75.00.
- ❖ **Late fee:** \$10.00 charge will be imposed if payment is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> 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 made in writing or email to the Director, and approval is determined by the Board of Directors. Applications are reviewed on a first come, first served basis, and monies are distributed based on financial guidelines and the individual need of the applicant.

# TUITION & ENROLLMENT

## **Registration**

Priority in registration is given to: (1) **current enrollees** (2) **siblings of current enrollees**. Each currently enrolled family receives a pre-registration form that must be returned by the indicated December 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 in January. 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 April 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.

# **ENROLLMENT**

Our theme-based curriculum balances school-readiness skills with a social and emotional foundation, grounded in developmentally appropriate practices for each age group. 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 and expression. Children learn self-regulation and pro-social behavior by being a part of the classroom community and participating in group activities. There are two teachers in most programs, maintaining a student-teacher ratio of at least 1 to 8.

### **Curriculum Enrichment**

- Music class with Miss Nancy Wight.
- Natural science with a teacher from Beaver Brook Association.
- Story time with Miss Sarah & Stevie the Snail 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. We encourage your participation!

### **Morning Classes**

*Children must be the age required for each program by September 30<sup>th</sup>.*

<b>Bumblebees:</b>	3 year olds 8:45-11:45am	Monday + Wednesday + Friday OR Tuesday + Thursday + Friday
<b>Caterpillars:</b>	4 year olds 8:35-11:35am	Monday – Thursday
<b>Dragonflies:</b>	4 year olds 8:15-11:15am	Monday - Friday
<b>Salamanders:</b>	Pre-k for 5 year olds 8:25-11:55am	Monday - Friday

### **Notification of Absence**

Please call the office (672-3168) or email your child’s teacher if they will be absent from school. If you arrive late, you will be asked to bring your child to their classroom. If you need to pick up your child early, please visit the office first.

### **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 appropriate community services 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 serve their child’s special needs, and will assist with transfer to another school if it is in the best interest of all concerned.

### **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.

# **PROGRAMS & LUNCH BUNCH**

Our extended day program is called “*Lunch Bunch*”. Children bring a lunch from home and enjoy extra social time with new friends.

### **Group Size**

Capacity is **limited to 16** children per day, with two teachers.

A minimum of 3 children is required for *Lunch Bunch* to be offered. PIV reserves the right to cancel *Lunch Bunch* on any given day, if the scheduled attendance is less than 3 children.

### **Dismissal**

Car line pick-up is at 3:00pm.

An earlier pick-up time of 1:30pm is available, but parents must come inside for their child.

### **Cost.**

1:30pm pick-up: **\$20.00** per day (includes pick-up anytime between noon - 1:30pm)

3:00pm pick-up: **\$30.00** per day (includes pick-up anytime between 1:30pm - 3:00pm)

### **Buy 5 Days, 6<sup>th</sup> is Free!**

A “*Lunch Bunch Card*” can be purchased in advance for 5 lunch days, and a 6<sup>th</sup> is free! Days used are tracked by the office, and you will be notified when you are using your last (free) lunch so that you can purchase another card.

“*Lunch Bunch Card*” for 1:30pm pick-up = \$100.00

“*Lunch Bunch Card*” for 3:00pm pick-up = \$150.00

### **Attendance and Absences**

Please schedule attendance 24 hours’ in advance via email ([pivamherst@gmail.com](mailto:pivamherst@gmail.com)) or phone call (672-3168). A same-day request to attend is contingent upon space availability.

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*.

Your child may also join *Lunch Bunch* on days they are not scheduled to attend their preschool program.

### **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 by using a pre-paid day from a “*Lunch Bunch Card*”. Payment for *Lunch Bunch* may be combined with monthly tuition, but please indicate the separate amounts in the memo space on the check.

# **LUNCH BUNCH**

## 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 to be a change of person picking up their child.

## Car Line Procedure

1. Line up on the right side of Jailhouse Road at your class time, keeping the actual road clear for our neighbors.
  - *If you are early, the cars in line are the previous class. Park along the village green and wait for your class time.*
2. Turn left to enter the school driveway, taking care not to block the road.
3. Pull up to the teacher and put your car in PARK.
4. **Please refrain from using cell phones or other electronic devices.** Your child needs your attention during these transitions.
5. Stay in your car.
6. At pick-up: Please pull up beside the building to buckle up.

## Outside Play

The children go outside in all seasons, weather permitting, when the temperature is 15°F or above. Fresh air is important to good health and it is our policy that all 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

Snack time in the classroom is an opportunity to practice polite manners and social skills in a group. Due to food allergies, children should bring in a healthy snack from home along with a water bottle labelled with their name. We are happy to provide a list of suggested healthful snacks that children like. Snacks that are high in sugar are not appropriate at school and will not be served.

## Clothing & Jewelry

Children should be dressed in sturdy, 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.

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

## Backpacks

Each child should have a backpack to carry things to and from school. Backpacks should be of the size to hold snow clothes and boots, but still small enough to be managed by a young child.

## 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.**

## Birthdays

Children may celebrate by having a family member read a favorite book to their class, or they can bring a book to school and the teacher will read it to the class. We do not accept birthday treats, as we feel this is something special to celebrate with family and friends outside of school. The birthday child also decorates a crown to wear and their classmates sing to them at snack time.

Invitations to birthday parties or goody/gift bags will not be distributed by teachers at school. Please use your classroom contact information to share these items on your own.

# DAILY HAPPENINGS

## **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. The teaching staff at 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
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Bears Bears, Everywhere! by Lesley Koplow: help children connect to their feelings and express them in a constructive way.
- ❖ I Love You Rituals by Dr. Becky Bailey: build social/emotional bonds in the classroom

## **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 the preschool require a responsible adult to transport and accompany each child for this activity.

## **Snow Days or Delays**

If the Amherst Public schools (SAU39) are closed because of inclement weather, PIV is also closed. **If the public schools have a 2-hour delay due to weather or road conditions, the PIV drop-off times will be delayed 1-hour.** Cancellations and delays are announced on WMUR and posted on our Facebook page. PIV does not make up snow days, and tuition credits will not be given for snow days or delayed openings.

## **Methods of Communication**

- ❖ 603-672-3168
- ❖ [pivamherst@gmail.com](mailto:pivamherst@gmail.com) (Director and office administrator)
- ❖ [www.preschoolinthevillage.org](http://www.preschoolinthevillage.org)
- ❖ Facebook page
- ❖ *The Preschool Post* monthly newsletter from the office.
- ❖ Classroom newsletters distributed monthly from the teachers.
- ❖ Weekly email classroom updates from the teachers.
- ❖ Monthly email update from the Director.
- ❖ 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. An annual survey is sent to parents electronically at the end of the school year. All feedback is helpful to us in planning future programs.

# **DAILY HAPPENINGS**

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. New Hampshire child care licensing regulations require PIV to exclude any child with a diagnosed communicable disease (measles, mumps, chicken pox, etc.) or obvious acute illness. Please inform the school office or teacher if your child contracts, or is exposed to, a contagious disease such as chicken pox. A note from home must accompany a child returning to school after a serious illness.

### **Stay Home to Get Well**

***Please do not send a child to school with signs of a possible contagious illness (runny nose, cough, sore throat, fever, rash, or diarrhea), or if they have vomited or had diarrhea the night before or that morning.*** 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.

### **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.
- ❖ DIARRHEA: exclude until gone and the last episode was not within 12 hours
- ❖ EAR INFECTION: exclude until the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours
- ❖ FEVER: exclude at 100.5 degrees or higher and until fever-free 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
- ❖ VOMITING: exclude if episode occurred within the last 12 hours or fever is present.

### **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.

### **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 an emergency phone calling system. Parents will receive a test call in September.

# **HEALTH & SAFETY**