



Parent Handbook

Updated: September 01st, 2022

WELCOME TO MAPLE HILL PRESCHOOL

WHO WE ARE:

Maple Hill Preschool is a Parent Cooperative preschool. This means that as parents we are responsible for the successful management of the preschool. We, as parents, are responsible for everything from setting preschool policies, hiring teaching staff, providing snack, to cleaning the refrigerator. While some jobs are more time consuming than others, no job is unimportant. It requires the cooperation of us all to run this school successfully. Your participation is important to both the preschool as a whole and to your child individually.

Administrative needs of the Preschool are met through the Executive committee (or Board). The Board meets monthly at the Preschool to discuss business matters, policies, planning and any other issues that may arise. Parents are invited to attend and provide input at these meetings. Meeting dates and times have been provided on the school's calendar and will be posted on the "parents bulletin" board in the entryway (Holding Tank). Attending the meetings is a very effective way for parents to keep informed and to get further involved in the preschool. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the Board meetings at which voting on our budget, elections of our Board officers and revisions to our Constitution will take place. The dates of these meetings will be well publicized, and minutes will be posted on the "parents board" as well.

Maple Hill Preschool operates under the charter of our constitution. A copy of the constitution can be emailed to you at your request.

Maple Hill Preschool leases space from The Sisters of The Resurrection. Our lease allows us the use of the classrooms, the grassy areas surrounding the building for outdoor play, and the parking areas. Please keep in mind that this is The Sister's home and to treat it with the utmost respect. This means keeping youngsters from jumping on the furniture, preventing them from running or yelling in the hallways and keeping tires off of the grass outside. The Sisters truly appreciate your courtesy.

ORIENTATION:

A "Parent Information Hour" will be held the first day of each designated program. Maple Hill Preschool starts its school year, the Monday after the Schodack Central Schools begins its school year.

During this time the children are in the classroom with the teachers, and the parents gather in a separate

location for the information hour. At this time, the Registration Chair (or Board member) will check to make sure that you have submitted a Personal Data Sheet and Health History Form. Additionally, we will review Preschool policies, discuss our fundraising goals, answer questions, learn who will be doing what jobs and perhaps, most importantly, start getting acquainted.

Over the course of the next ten months, the faces in this room will become familiar to you; many friendships have begun at Maple Hill Preschool, for both parents and children. This is a great time to ask about possible carpools and after school care, if you are in need or interested.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES:

Your preschooler needs a backpack or tote bag large enough to carry library books, crafts and his/her folder. Your child should bring this bag every day. A school supplies list is emailed out to parents prior to the first day of school.

We work very hard to maintain a very reasonable school supplies list. Other supplies needed for the school and/or teachers will be posted in the “Holding Tank” or through SignUp Genius. We ask that each family choose an item off the supply list to bring into school. We use this method in place of charging an additional supply fee and overstocking.

In addition to the school supplies, please also send in a complete change of clothes in a plastic bag labeled with your child’s name. Not only are bathroom accidents a possibility, spills may happen too during snack or class lessons when they work with some messy mediums (paint, glue, even water). When these accidents happen, it’s much less upsetting for the child if they have their own clothes to change into (including socks).

ARRIVAL:

Please bring your child to Preschool promptly. All class sessions will run from 9:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m. for the morning classes.

- Monday, Wednesday and Fridays for the 4-year-old program
- Tuesday and Thursday for the 3-year-old program

Please note: To protect the children, the outside doors to the preschool will be locked promptly at 9:10 a.m. (and 12:10 p.m. for the afternoon class) and will be kept locked at all times. If you need to contact the teachers or need to be let in, please call the school phone at 518-732-4760.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation with this safety measure.

PARKING:

When you are picking up and dropping off your child, please abide by the following guidelines:

1. Do not drive through the cones.
 - a. They are in place for the children’s safety.
 - b. Please do not remove or bypass the cones.

2. For the safety of the children never park on the loop (unless otherwise directed by your teacher for a fieldtrip) or in the grass.
 - a. Use the far parking lot if the small lot is full. Do not park in roadways. Or block the intersection as that's a fire lane.
3. Out of consideration for the Sisters, please make sure your tires always remain on the pavement. Be especially careful in the spring when the ground is soft. Tires leave unsightly and sometimes labor-intensive indentations in the grass.
4. If walking from the far lot is a problem for you (due to medical/physical problems or other children, etc.) please speak with your Parent at Large (PAL).
5. The parking spaces in the lot closest to our entrance are diagonal, please **IGNORE** them.
 - a. Please back your vehicle in and park perpendicularly.
 - b. It is easier to get in and out of the parking lot that way.
 - a. We also gain two parking spots this way.

CHILD SEAT LAW & PRESCHOOL POLICY

*New York State Law and preschool policy requires ALL children under the age of 8 to be restrained by an appropriate child restraint system. Children under 4 must be in a child seat unless they are over 40 pounds - at which point a child restraint booster seat system is allowable. Children age 4-6 must also use a child restraint system appropriate for their weight and size. Furthermore, in circumstances when your child rides with another parent, **for liability reasons**, your child's restraint system must be installed in the driver's car by you or your child's caregiver.*

CHECK IN:

The doors of the preschool will be unlocked and children may start coming into school at 8:45 a.m.

1. First step to is to check in utilizing Brightwheel
 - a. You can scan in with the QR code (or)
 - b. Enter your log in code into the Brightwheel Kiosk
2. When prompted please complete the required Health Screen and sign.
3. Locate the name tag/ hook for your child(ren) and help them hang up his/her belongings.
 - a. Your child can now remove their mask, if you'd like.
4. Accompany him/her to the bathroom to try to go potty and wash hands.
5. You can now proceed to the classroom.

DISMISSAL:

To protect the children, the outside doors to the preschool will be locked while class is in session.

- The doors will be unlocked at 11:20 a.m. for parents to wait in the "Holding Tank".
- At 11:20 a.m. one of the teachers will come out and do a debrief.
- After the debrief, at 11:30 a.m. the students will be dismissed.
- PLEASE REMEMBER TO CHECK OUT YOUR CHILD VIA BRIGHTWHEEL

Please note: If it is necessary to pick up your child earlier than the usual dismissal time, please advise the teacher(s) when you are dropping your child off.

- It is also asked that you write the information on the dry erase board outside the classroom door and/or send a note to the Teacher's through Brightwheel.

- Additionally if someone other than the child's parents or regular caregiver(s) is to pick up your child from school; the teacher(s) must be notified and the information must be written on the dry erase board and **that individual must have a NYS driver's license to prove their identity and if possible added to the child's Brightwheel profile. There are no exceptions to this policy.**

We understand situations change, so if you need to contact the teachers, please call the school phone at; 518-732-4760. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation with this safety measure.

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR:

Maple Hill Preschool follows the calendar of the Schodack Central School District, including snow days and holidays. Early dismissal days and conference days for Schodack Central Schools do not affect the preschool.

SNOW DAY POLICY

Please listen to local radio and television stations for announcements of snow days and other emergency closings. If Schodack Central is delayed by two hours, the morning session is cancelled. If Schodack Central is closed, we are closed. If you have a question as to whether your child's class is being held, you can call your PAL or the Chair of Administration for more information. Additionally, we will be able to send out "Alerts" through Brightwheel in regard to school closures.

Regardless, we recommend that you use your judgment concerning road travel on days with poor weather conditions, whether Schodack is delayed, closed or not.

Other closing may be made at the discretion of the Executive Committee, such as road conditions thought to be hazardous for passenger car travel, epidemic child illness or inadequate supervision of the class. An "Alert" will be sent out through the Brightwheel app and the Room Parent would then activate the telephone tree (a calling system used to pass information quickly to parents).

Emergency data (caregiver's phone number, work number etc.) will be obtained at the beginning of the year so that all parents can be reached easily. The telephone tree can also be utilized to pass along less critical information (reminders from the teacher or Executive Committee for example).

HEALTH INFORMATION:

In order to maintain a healthy environment at Preschool, we ask that you do not bring your child to school if he/she is showing signs of illness. If your child becomes ill during school hours you will be contacted immediately and requested to pick him/her up. The following guidelines should be used to help determine whether or not your child should attend preschool:

They **should not** attend in the following circumstances:

1. Temperature over 100.1 degrees orally
2. Discharge from ears or eyes and/or red eyes

3. Vomiting and/or diarrhea
4. Any rash or skin lesions that blister
5. Excessive signs of cold, tiredness, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing or coughing
6. Sudden loss of the sense of taste and/or smell
7. Suspected (or confirmed) head lice or pin worm

If your child demonstrates any of the above, we ask that you keep him/her home for 24 hours following a return to normal. So that measures to avoid transmission may be taken, and to allow parents to look for possible symptoms, please let the teacher know what illness is keeping your child from school. This information will be kept confidential. Please alert the Chair of the Board and the Teachers through a Brightwheel message any time of day or night to keep them informed.

**** Please note that if you, your child or anyone that your child recently came into contact with, tests positive or is under quarantine under suspicion of being positive for COVID-19, it is required to immediately alert the Board Chair 631.680.9973. All information will remain confidential ****

COMMUNICATION:

As we all know, the success or failure of a business (or any endeavor, for that matter) can be predicted by how well the involved parties communicate. Bearing that in mind:

- **Brightwheel-** This preschool communication app will provide us a streamlined approach to communicating and engaging between our teachers and what our little learners do each day.
 - a. Updates of the day and activities, including pictures.
 - b. Milestone tracking when/ where applicable.
 - c. Messages, reminder and alerts.
- **School Folders-** Your child's school folder will contain important information and should be checked each time your child returns home from preschool. Please be sure to send your child's folder with him/her to preschool each day.
 - a. Note, due to the current pandemic we will be working towards shifting our exchange of important information to being primarily electronic.
- **Newsletters-** There are two separate newsletters distributed by Maple Hill Preschool through the course of the year.
 - a. "Hot Topics" distributed by the Board Chair/ Co-Chair through the Brightwheel app.
 - Information will include: Board meeting highlights, reminders, fundraising and sick child policy updates, school closing/vacations and upcoming events.
 - b. The teacher(s) will also distribute a weekly newsletter wrapping up the in the classroom, upcoming important dates and classroom events. These may be sent home and/or sent through Brightwheel.
- **Bulletin Board-** The bulletin board in the entrance area is an avenue for both the teachers and the Executive Committee to communicate with parents.
 - a. A variety of information can be found there including but not limited to: extra supplies or volunteers needed, future fieldtrip details, sign-ups and notices of upcoming events, minutes of the meetings, the newsletter, fundraising notices and other relevant information.

Please look it over or advise your child's caregiver to look for you. Please be advised that the Board must approve all information posted on the bulletin board.

- **Parent at Large (PAL)** - Your classroom PAL is your link with the Executive Committee. He/she will keep you informed of upcoming meetings, relevant issues, and needs of the preschool. Likewise, if you have any questions or concerns that are not classroom issues, (we ask that you address those with the teacher) please direct them to your PAL. He/she will direct you to the proper person if they are unable to answer your question satisfactorily. Of course, all members of the Executive Committee are available to parents in the Cooperative.

TUITION:

Tuition payments are used by the Preschool to meet expenses necessary for its operation, such as staff salaries, rent and numerous supplies. Every effort is made to keep our tuition as low as possible while at the same time providing our children with a high-quality preschool experience.

Because tuition is the Preschool's only predictable and certain income, it is very important that tuition payments are made in a timely manner. The current Executive Board Policy regarding tuition is as follows:

- An initial tuition payment is due September 1st and subsequently will be due the first of the month through June.
- Invoices will now be sent via Brightwheel 15 days before the payment is due.
- Your account statements and proof of payment can easily be accessed through Brightwheel for your reporting convenience.
- If no payment has been received by the 10th of the month, the Treasurer will contact the parent/guardian stating that the payment is 10 days late, if their payment is 15 days late, a **\$5.00 late fee** will be charged and a letter will be sent.
 - When your payment is late (received by the Treasurer after the 15th of the month) a \$5.00 late fee will be added to your amount due.
- If this is the first late payment, the letter will be sent First Class. If it is a second or subsequent late payment, the letter will be sent via Certified Mail and the cost of mailing the certified letter is then added to the late payment (\$5.00 + cost of the certified letter + tuition due). The letter will state that **if no payment has been received by the 25th of the month, the child will not be allowed to attend Preschool until payment in full has been received.**
- **After the third late payment in that same year, the late fee goes from \$5.00 to \$15.00 for the duration of the school year.** This late fee must be paid to rectify your account with the Preschool. **You will be held accountable for this amount and failure to pay it will prevent you from enrolling your child or additional children in Maple Hill Preschool at any time in the future.**
- For your convenience, payment can be made in multiple ways to Preschool:
 - You can place your payment (check or money order) in the locked box marked "Tuition" in the "Holding Tank".
 - Mail your payment to Maple Hill Preschool, Atten: Treasurer, 35 Boltwood Avenue, Castleton, NY 12033. Checks can be made out to Maple Hill Preschool.

- Venmo app and pay from your phone with your debit/credit card. (Venmo will charge a certain amount if a credit card is used) Search for us on venmo: @maplehillpreschool. Please enter your name and month(s) that you are paying tuition for.
 - Brightwheel direct payment from checking account, you can pay monthly or sign up for autopay. There is a 0.60 cent charge for transactions.
- A bi-annual art supplies fee of \$50 will be charged to your account in September and January. These funds go directly into the teacher expense account to support the activities they do all year round.

If you have any question about tuition, please contact the Treasurer, treasurer@maplehillpreschool.org

FUNDRAISING:

As a parent run cooperative, the only substantial way we can supplement tuition, is through fundraising. Throughout the year, you will be presented with various fundraising activities. Your participation is needed and the preschool counts on everyone to support and participate in the fundraising.

Profits from fundraising help limit tuition increases and cover unforeseen expenses that arise during the year. To keep you knowledgeable of our fundraising goal and where we are in meeting that, we'll communicate 3-4 times this year showing how close we are to our goal!

We want to say a huge THANK YOU ahead of time for playing your part in helping with our fundraising! We're always looking for new ideas and assistance in fundraising, please let your PAL know if you'd like to help coordinate an event.

- **BUYOUT:** Maple Hill Preschool offers a fundraising buyout to families. This amount will vary year to year, depending on enrollment and our fundraising goal. The buyout will exclude families from participating in fundraising only. All other classroom duties and committee obligations remain intact.

BUDGET:

Maple Hill Preschool presents its annual operating budget at the June Parent Corporation Meeting. All current and incoming parents are invited to provide input and vote. Monthly updates are given at the Board Meetings.

PARENT PARTICIPATION:

On your child's snack/ volunteer day, you will be required to come to school with your child and spend the day. Caregivers are also invited into the classroom for special activities/presentations. Anytime you are in the classroom, it is important to remember to respect confidentiality where the students are concerned.

If you attend preschool as a visitor/ extra volunteer, please always keep in mind that any additional children you bring into the classroom are your responsibility. Siblings (and other children in your care) can only continue to be welcomed into the classroom if they are healthy and are not a disruption. *Please*

understand that if the additional children you bring into the classroom prove to be disruptive and/or destructive, you will be asked to make other arrangements for your children for future visits.

We ask all parents/ caregivers staying for the day to please avoid using their cellphone, unless absolutely necessary. In that case please step into the “Holding Tank”.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS:

- **Snack/ Volunteer Parent-** Parents and/or Caregivers are required to join their child’s preschool class on their snack day. If you are unable to come in as parent helper on your snack day, it is your responsibility to find a replacement (switch with another parent) and notify the room parent of any changes.
 - a. The classroom Phone Tree will be sent out to all parents before school starts and periodically updated as needed. Please make certain to keep your PAL or the Board Chair updated if your contact information changes.

It is the responsibility of the Snack/ Volunteer Parent to arrive 15 minutes early on your snack day. This is to help the teachers make certain the classroom is ready for the arrival of the other children and to be up to speed on the activities for the day.

You’ll engage with students during free-play and circle time. Assist with setting up snack, following the daily snack calendar. Provide assistance to the students, as needed throughout snack. Afterwards, you’ll wipe down tables and clean up around the area.

During story time, sit with the children and encourage participation. For art, the teachers will ask you to sit with a group of children and assist with a project. Encourage the students to be creative but do NOT complete the project for them. When we are outside, please help assist with helmets and keeping children safe. You’ll then remain with the class until dismissal and help with coats and backpacks as needed at the end. If you have any other questions regarding Snack Day, please speak to the teachers or a Board member.

- **PARENT AIDE- aka. Teacher(s) substitute**
 - A. Assume responsibility of Teacher’s aide taking instruction from Teacher
 - B. Remember the basic functions of the aide are to:
 - a. Lend an extra pair of hands for classroom activity
 - b. Keep preschool facilities and equipment in order
 - c. Assist the preschoolers with bathroom functions and apparel
 - C. Avoid asking questions about the progress of the preschoolers
 - D. Maintain confidentiality with the activities of all students

FIELDTRIPS:

During the course of the year, each class will go on various fieldtrips to enhance your child’s preschool experience. Your PAL works with the teacher to distribute permission slips, collect any monies needed for the trip and to organize drivers. If you are able, please take this opportunity to share in this experience with your child. Please read the following Fieldtrip Guidelines carefully and completely. It is very important, for the safety of the children and the overall enjoyment of the fieldtrip, that these guidelines are followed. Please take the time to become familiar with them.

FIELDTRIP GUIDELINES:

1. The teacher will hand out notification and permission slips between 2 weeks and one month prior to scheduled trip date.
2. Signed permission slips must be placed in the room parent's folder one week prior to the field trip date.
3. If your child is not attending, this information must be placed in writing and given to the room parent when the permission slips are due.
4. You are responsible for transporting your child to the location. Please note you are welcomed to carpool.
5. If your child is suddenly unable to attend the field trip, you must notify the teacher by calling the preschool at 732-4760 as soon as possible before departure time.
6. If your child will not be attending or does not have a signed permission slip, please have your child stay home for that day. There will be no supervision in, or access to, the Preschool when the class is away on a fieldtrip.
7. The teachers will oversee the group as a whole; but the parents must keep a watchful eye on those children of which they are responsible for. Parents are asked to act as a role model of appropriate behavior for the children to follow.
8. Drivers must have:
 - a. Valid driver's license
 - b. Current automobile insurance
 - c. Valid vehicle registration sticker
 - d. NYS inspection sticker
9. The vehicle must have properly working seat belts for the number of children and must adhere to NYS law in regard to child safety seats.
10. Absolutely no smoking while transporting other children. There is a No Smoking policy on any field trip or school property
11. Please limit cell phone use while on class field trips.

LIBRARY:

A source of true enjoyment to our children, the Preschool's library has grown over the years through purchases and donation of books. These books should be treated with respect. The covers and pages should not be marked or torn. If you receive a book in damaged condition, please report it to the Library Chairperson for your class so that it may be repaired.

Teach youngsters to enjoy literature and to respect personal property. If a book is damaged or lost, the cost will be passed on to you. If you have not already done so, now is an excellent time to get into the habit of reading with your child daily. The feeling of closeness as you read together can develop into a love of reading that will benefit your child throughout their school experience. Give your child that head start and read!

OUTDOOR PLAY:

Throughout the year, the teachers bring the children outside as often as possible.

- In the winter, they will go outside if the temperature is above 30 degrees and weather conditions

are good. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately: hats, mittens or gloves, warm jacket, snow pants and boots as necessary. It is helpful if your child has clothes that he can manage independently. The teachers will work throughout the school year to develop each child's dressing skills.

SCHOOL PICTURES:

MHPS allows parents to come to the school and take pictures. These pictures can be used for the end of the year slideshow, however it is prohibited to post any photos of any children other than your own on any social media without their specific approval.

- Please feel free to tag Maple Hill Preschool in your social media posts.

GRADUATION:

It's hard to believe now, but that day will be here before you know it, and with it, Preschool Graduation. Each class has its own very special closing celebration to provide teachers, children and parents with the opportunity to celebrate the many accomplishments of the school year and to say goodbye to the friends they have made over the course of the year.

The Preschool will also have a separate Graduation/Moving Up ceremony for all classes and families at a central location on a day shortly after school ends.