



Duck's Nest
PRESCHOOL

Parent Handbook

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WELCOME TO DUCK'S NEST

Whether you are new to our preschool or returning for another year with us, we welcome you aboard and look forward to a happy and exciting school year ahead.

Your child's time spent at Duck's Nest is important to all of us. Years of practical experience have shown us that the best results occur when we work closely with you to establish rapport and common goals for your child in the year ahead. Let's coordinate to make this a wonderful season of personal growth and discovery for your child! Your input is very much appreciated and is one of our most valuable resources.

Please read this Parent Handbook in its entirety and keep it on hand for reference. In the pages that follow, you'll find just about everything you need to know about our schools. Be sure to file this with your other school records for easy access. When the Parent Handbook is updated you will receive a current version.

About Duck's Nest Emergent Curriculum

Duck's Nest Preschools follows a play-based philosophy with an emphasis on Emergent Curriculum. As teachers, we observe children in their play and reflect on the following: who, what, when, where and why. For example: What are the children fascinated with and why? What are they exploring and why? What are they challenged by and why? Observing how the children play and listening to what the children are interested in, are the foundation for our curriculum. With the children, we enthusiastically explore concepts or topics of interest in developmentally appropriate ways. We let the children inspire us and when a project is picked, we will use our creativity to start an exploration that will take us to unknown territory. We will all learn together! We answer questions, research, explore, experiment, and reflect as a group of lifelong learners!

We focus on the process rather than the product, to encourage children to freely express their creativity. We believe that education and the academic process are experienced as a continuous interaction between the child, teacher and parents. In that sense, our school takes on the form of a community where each member

and the environment contribute to the educational process and development of the child.

Our classrooms and outdoor spaces are considered the third educator. Through these inviting and engaging environments, we foster the child's natural enthusiasm and curiosity for learning. Your child's natural curiosity leads to an exploration and discovery of new experiences and endeavors all the time. We are prepared for the challenge! We intentionally design areas in the classrooms to encourage art, science, math, reading and writing skills. Through free choice and open-ended play these skills can be practiced at age appropriate levels, paving the path to kindergarten readiness. In providing our children these experiences they develop an excitement for learning and an awareness for the environment they live in.

We sincerely believe this approach will elevate the quality of early childhood education.

Anti-Bias Values & Building Cultural Diversity into the Preschool Experience

We believe that compassion and tolerance are among our highest virtues. At Duck's Nest we encourage children to appreciate and respect human differences. Our schools employ a multicultural and anti-bias approach to teaching by presenting positive images of gender, race, and ethnicity and through the exploration of cultural diversity. Preschoolers also benefit from exposure to concepts of differences, similarities, and fairness.

What Kind of Duck Do You Have?

Duck's Nest has long since established the tradition of giving each classroom and its students a special group name. From youngest to oldest, Berkeley campus houses Ducklings, Wood Ducks, Puddle Ducks, Mallards, and Mandarins; 41st Street and Telegraph campuses house Ducklings, Wood Ducks, Mallards and Mandarins.

Each of our campuses has carefully designed classrooms. All classrooms are providing an excellent teacher-to-child ratio.

Items Needed for the First Week of School

1. Lunch in a lunch box. Please pack food in re-usable containers. Also a water bottle or sippy cup. Duck's Nest has a "no-sweets policy" (see page 9). We recommend to provide healthy food with a good balance of protein, grains, and fruits/vegetables.
2. If your child is resting at school, a small crib size blanket and comfort object if desired.
3. A couple sets of extra clothing (please remember clothes will get dirty, be practical!). If your teachers ask about a backpack to store your child's clothes, please bring in a child's size backpack.
4. If your child is currently dependent on a pacifier or bottle, teachers will allow its use during rest time but will encourage independence throughout the rest of the school day. Now is a good time to start thinking about weaning. Most children grow out of these comfort items easily and rather quickly, especially when surrounded by peers who have outgrown them.
5. If your child is not potty trained, please bring diapers for Berkeley and 41st Campuses. Due to storage restrictions, Telegraph will provide diapers for a monthly fee.
6. Completed forms (see page 15 for list of forms.)

***Please label all of the clothing, lunch box, water bottle carefully.** A good permanent marker pen is a fine point Sharpie. Your child's initials are all that are needed, preferably on the manufacturer's tag.

First Days of School

We are here to support you and your child during this transitional period. Since you have gone through the important step of choosing the best school for your child, it is your job to trust your choice. With your trust, your child will be able to adjust to his/her new environment. You know best what will work for yourself and your child. Please keep in mind that our goal is to help your child be able to stay in school without you.

Some children will adjust immediately, others will need more time. Our staff is

experienced and skilled in helping you and your child with separation. Please ask your child's teachers when you need their support. We will always call you if your child is unable to calm down—or you can call us at any time to see how your child is doing.

Morning Arrivals and Departures

Here are some ideas to help smooth out your process of arrival and subsequent departure from school in the morning. First, make it a top priority to arrive on time regularly. We ask that children are dropped off by 9:30am. This not only benefits you and your child, but also the whole class by supporting our classroom schedules and routines. Morning free play is a very important part of the day for learning and friendship. If a child is dropped off late, he/she misses that opportunity. When you enter the classroom in the morning, first sign your child in, then take a moment (but no more than 10 minutes!) to help your child settle down and get acclimated. Many parents have found that a predictable routine is helpful when leaving the school. Some children even make a happy game out of pushing their parent out the door! Your routine departure will take the edge off of a potentially challenging situation and bring some familiar fun into saying goodbye for both of you. Chatting with other parents off-site rather than extending your stay in the classroom will help minimize distraction to the students as you leave. Please do not use your cell phone on site!

Appropriate School Clothes

Sometimes, in the name of creativity, we get really, REALLY messy! Our days are filled with varied activities for every age group. Please dress your child in practical clothes (no best designer clothes) that are suitable for art projects, garden work, and visits to the chicken coop or rabbit hutch.

In spite of our best effort to use washable art materials, you might find occasional paint on your child's clothing as a reminder of his/her creative genius at work. Even so, we can't absolutely guarantee that every color will come out equally easily. Your child should have a complete set of extra clothes at school at all times. Even an extra pair of shoes is recommended, since shoes get wet.

When the School Day is Over

Duck's Nest considers you officially in charge of your child once you enter the classroom or play yard and you are with your child. Upon your arrival, please sign out and then your teacher will work with you and your child to ensure a smooth transition to leave the group.

There is an art to picking your child up at day's end. When you pick up your child please minimize the time you spend in the process of departing from the school. It is alright to wait while your child is finishing up a project or a teacher finishes reading a story, but then please leave the school campus. Remember, transition time is difficult not only for your child, but the rest of the children and the teachers. The program continues on after your child leaves and the teachers need your cooperation. If you have a nanny picking up your child, please talk this over with her/him. Visiting with other parents can be done off campus. Thank you for your understanding.

41st and Berkeley campuses close for the evening promptly at 5:30 pm. Telegraph closes at 6:00pm. In Berkeley, our Duck's Nest campus transforms itself into the private home and yard of our 41st Duck's Nest Director, Kristen Traynor and her family. Please note that Duck's Nest campuses and playgrounds are closed nights, weekends, and holidays.

Extended Hours of Care

Programs run from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, and 8:00 am to 5:30 pm (or 6:00 pm Telegraph). Extended care is available from 8:00 am to 9:00 am, and 1:00 pm to 5:30/6:00 pm at \$10.00 per hour rate.

Any care during the 8:00-9:00am and 1:00-5:30 pm that has not been pre-arranged is considered a late pick up. For changing your schedule please contact the office.

The Late Pick-Up Policy

We understand that there might be an unforeseen emergency; however our late pick up policy is necessary to deal with people who repeatedly arrive late:

1. First time will be a verbal warning.

2. Second time a written notice plus \$1.00 per each minute you are late.

* It is important to have additional authorized individuals you can call to pick up your child if you are unable to arrive by closing time.

Lunch and Snack Time

Over years of working closely with young children we've had an opportunity to observe the significant effect of their daily diets. These preschool years are a time of remarkable physical and mental growth! A wholesome, well-planned diet is essential to your child's development.

Lunch should be brought from home daily. Please pack a balanced and healthy lunch. We cannot guarantee we can warm up or cook the food you send as not every classroom has a kitchen, so be sure to pack a ready-to-eat meal. Consider using a thermos if you want a warm lunch regularly. Your child's food intake will be supplemented with healthy Duck's Nest snacks, but please remember that the basic nutrition needed must be supplied through the lunch sent from home.

The No Sweets Policy: We ask that you forego any candy, cookies, and other sweet treats, including fruit rollups/fruit snacks, in your child's lunch. If, by chance, such food turns up in someone's lunch, the teacher will remove it and send it back home. Yes, it's true. This policy may appear to be extreme, but suffice it to say that the problems created by treats at school are enormous. This includes birthday celebrations. As a rule, if sugar is one of the first few ingredients, it is probably not an appropriate item for school.

Please note: We are sensitive to children with allergies. Due to the increase in nut allergies in students, Duck's Nest is a nut free school.

The Daily Register: Signing In and Out

California's Department of Social Services requires an accurate daily attendance log in each classroom. Please sign your child in with your full name and sign out with your full name.

You are also asked to provide the phone number where you can always be reached on a daily basis. This will allow the school to reach you directly, or at the very least, another person who can locate you. School personnel will contact you in case of an emergency, or if your child becomes too ill to remain at school.

In either case, be prepared to pick up your son or daughter within 30 minutes of receiving a call from the school. **In the event that you are more than 30 minutes away from the school, you must arrange in advance for someone else who will be able to pick up your child for you.** Make sure your designated pick-up person's name is recorded on your emergency card in our school office. This standard school-wide policy is to safeguard the security of each student and there can be no exception.

Happy Birthdays

We like to observe every child's birthday and acknowledge their special day. You may bring a healthy treat such as fruit, fruit juice popsicles, or a non-sugar snack. Please remember our NO-SWEETS policy. If you choose to bring a homemade item you will need to bring list of ingredients to help us protect children with food allergies. We appreciate your sensitivity to those children's needs.

Please don't feel that your participation has to be around food, it could be your presence in the classroom sharing an activity, or reading a book.

Consult with your teaching team ahead of time to determine what sort of celebration is most appropriate and will work best with your child's classroom.

Also, please note if you are planning a private party, be sure to send private mail or digital invitations to avoid hurt feelings when not inviting all of your child's classmates. If inviting the whole class, you are welcome to distribute invites by way of cubbies or parent folders.

Diaper Policy

Parents will bring disposable diapers each week for their own child. The teachers will remind you regularly to bring enough diapers to cover your child's need. (exception is for Telegraph where diapers are provided for a fee).

Toilet Training: Life Beyond Diapers!

The good news: When your child is ready, he/she will actually train him/herself. This is a significant step towards independence for both you and your child. Our teaching staff is ready to help you and your child when the time is right.

Duck's Nest's toilet training policy is that when your child shows signs of readiness or interest, our teachers will work to reinforce and encourage toilet training here at school. Please let your teachers know if your child appears to be ready, based on at-home behavior. Working together with your teachers, a consistent and successful plan for your child can be developed. The children will be encouraged to wipe themselves independently, but will be assisted by a teacher, if needed. The job is made easier if, during the training period, your child wears simple pants or dresses without straps or any unnecessary complications. And, please, no pull ups! All bathroom doors will remain open during a child's use, for supervision purposes.

Rest and Quiet Time

Each child needs rest on a daily basis in order to be refreshed for the afternoon and evening ahead. Our daily program includes a quiet time for all students. School-wide "quiet time" takes place at approximately 1:00 pm to 2:45 pm every day. Each child's need varies for sleep versus resting of his or her body. Occasionally parents request that a child not sleep during rest time, however a child's "Personal Right"(LIC 613A) prevents us from interfering with a child's daily functions (i.e. eating, sleeping, toileting) and preventing any child from falling asleep. Children who do not fall asleep after a 30 min quiet time on their mat will be given the opportunity to do quiet activities either on their mat or a designated area in the classroom if available. The children are usually so active and engaged during the morning that they benefit tremendously by lying down and taking a relaxing break after lunch.

Graduation

The last week of school, each campus plans a special certificate ceremony acknowledging the children's time at Duck's Nest. It is followed by a small celebration. Parents, family members and care givers are welcome to attend. It is an exciting time when children are ready to make that next big step to elementary school. We wish all of our families the best as their children make this transition. We want you always to come back to visit and keep us informed about how everyone is doing.

ENROLLMENT POLICIES

Classroom Assignments

Prior to your child's first day of school at Duck's Nest, you will be notified which classroom your child will attend. Classroom assignments are primarily based on children's ages, but we take into consideration gender balance, a child's development and classroom dynamics. Although it is very uncommon, it may be appropriate for a child to be reassigned to a new room and teaching team during the course of the school year.

Children can be reassigned for a number of reasons. For example, occasional fluctuations in enrollment can result in the lowering of the median age in a class, in which case, the older or more developmentally mature children in the classroom may be moved to a different classroom.

Preschoolers are remarkably adaptable! This is especially apparent when a classroom situation indicates a move is in a child's best interest. Just as natural bonds form with first teachers, in time, preschoolers come to feel equally at home with new teachers and classmates. If this should be the situation with your child or his/her classmate, we take great care to ensure that the transition is smooth and in everyone's best interests.

Please do not anticipate that your child may be placed in a certain classroom or with a certain teacher. We ask for your trust and support in our ability to make these decisions.

Teacher Assignments

Duck's Nest teachers will work with certain age groups according to the needs of the class and their abilities. The administration and the staff take great care and time to create teaching teams each year, please do not expect final teacher assignments before the end of school year.

Sometimes teachers are reassigned during the school year. Teachers sign a yearly contract with Duck's Nest, but unforeseen circumstances may require changes in teaching assignments during the school year.

Yearly Calendar

A calendar for the school year is made available every August. It is important to refer to the calendar for dates of school closures (i.e. holidays, staff development days, and parent-teacher conferences) and special school-wide events. If you are new to our schools, please request a current school calendar for a general idea of what next year's calendar will look like.

This calendar will be emailed to you at the beginning of the school year, and also be accessible on our school website.

New Enrollment and Return Enrollment

General Policy: Enrollment is open to any child, provided our schools are able to meet the needs of that child. There will be no discrimination in regards to sex, race, culture, religion, or political belief. We accept children as young as the age of two, and no older than six. A Sibling Discount is available to our families. If you have a second child attending Duck's Nest, the "Down Payment" due at time of enrollment will be waived for your second child.

New Enrollment

1. Inquiries are usually received by phone or email. When you contact us about enrollment, we welcome your interest in our schools. We will provide you a form by email to get your name, address, phone number, age, gender of your child and interested enrollment schedule.
2. Once we receive your response you will be contacted regarding a school tour, if there is a space available.

3. On the day of tour, you will receive an information packet that includes a brochure, application form, outline of our enrollment process and a current price listing. The Director will conduct a tour of the school and answer any questions that you may have.
4. If space is available, we will enroll your child at our school on the day of your tour. You will be required to complete a Parent Agreement; at that time the Down Payment and Registration fee are due.
5. Parents will receive a copy of their Parent Agreement signed by the school with a copy of their check as a confirmation of enrollment.
6. In May parents will receive a packet of required paperwork for their child. The paperwork is due at the school in August.
7. A welcome letter from your child's teachers will go out to each family the week before school begins.
8. Parent Orientation Meeting dates will be announced the first week of school.

Return Enrollment

1. If you are planning on re-enrolling your child or enrolling a sibling for the next school year, we will hand out a letter and a new Parent Agreement in January. Arrangements need to be made with the office to pay the whole deposit or in three separate payments along with a signed parent agreement. This payment is non-refundable after two weeks of signing the parent agreement. This payment serves as the first step in securing enrollment for your child to return in August.
2. Families requesting financial aid will be asked to submit an application and tax documents through School and Student Services by NAIS. Duck's Nest will review and award scholarships on an individual basis. If a scholarship is given, the child will receive it for the rest of their stay with a slight yearly increase of about 2- 4% unless there is a change in parents income. Families receiving financial aid will be required to fill out the SSS application each year during re-enrollment.
3. All parent agreements are due in the office in February. A signed copy of your Parent Agreement will be provided to you.
4. A welcome letter will go out to each returning family the week before school begins.
5. Classroom Placement and teachers assignments: Classes may not always

move as a group to the next classroom. Placement is primarily based on birth date, but we take into consideration gender balance, a child's development and classroom dynamics.

Forms, Deadlines, and Important Dates

If you are new to our school this year, your student emergency and health forms and Parent Agreement must be on file in our office prior to your child's first day of attendance at the school. If you are a returning family, please check to make sure that all medical and emergency information on your forms from last year are up to date. Here's a list of all the paperwork that must be on file in the school office before your child begins school:

1. Current Parent Agreement
2. Identification & Emergency Information
3. Consent for Medical Treatment
4. Physician's Report and Immunization Record (TB screening required)
5. Child's Pre-admission Health History - Parent's Report
6. Parent's Rights (acknowledgment of receipt)
7. Personal Rights (acknowledgment of receipt)
8. Photo/Video Waiver
9. Walking Field-trip Permission
10. Family Questionnaire

*returning families will be asked to turn in an updated Emergency Form and Family Questionnaire each year of attendance.

You may want to note these dates in advance so that you can plan accordingly.

July 1st: Either 1/2 or full payment for Art Supply Fee due.

August 1st: First monthly tuition payment of the twelve monthly payments to be made throughout the school year is due. The Down Payment paid at the time of registration is a deposit made toward the total annual tuition that holds your child's spot in the school. The remaining of the annual tuition is then divided by twelve to obtain the monthly payment amount. To avoid the late fee charge of \$25, please make your payment by the 5th of each month.

February 1st: If you are planning to re-enroll for the next school year, your signed Parent/Duck's Nest Agreement is due. Second 1/2 of Art Fee due.

Feb 28th: Scholarship applications for the next school year are due, along with

tax returns for the last two years to substantiate income.

April 1st: Your Down Payment for the new term is due (unless the 3 payment option is chosen to pay the Down Payment in April, May & June). Your signed agreement and the installment payment serve as the first step in securing enrollment for your child to return in August. Annual tuition is subject to increase yearly.

Withdrawal Policy

Notice of intent to withdraw a child from enrollment during the school year must be submitted to the school Director in written form. Individual requests to be excused from financial responsibility for the remainder of the school year (i.e., when parent's job transfers family out of the area) will be considered by school administration as long as we have a replacement for your child. This process may take time. The earlier you hand in your written request the more chance you'll have to be excused from your contract. We do not release tuition in June or July. Tuition cannot be suspended to accommodate family vacations and/or extended leaves of absence. Unless notified otherwise by the administration the parent remains financially responsible for the full balance due of annual tuition, regardless of whether their child continues to attend. If tuition is not received, your account will be transferred to Transworld Systems Inc. for collection. Without exception, the first installment is refundable only during the limited period of two weeks following registration.

Termination Policy

The school reserves the right, after attempting to rectify a situation, to cancel student enrollment at Duck's Nest. This is extremely rare, but it is included here to clarify steps that will occur when called-for changes cannot take place—for whatever reason—in keeping with our preschool policies.

Two weeks written notice of enrollment termination will or can be given to parents for any of the following reasons:

1. Parent/guardian has not cooperated with Duck's Nest regarding the child's needs.
2. Parent/guardian has failed to pay agreed-upon fees or has been late paying tuition more than twice in a six-month period without explanation to the school's Director.
3. Parent/guardian will not or cannot agree with the school's administration

- and staff regarding the procedural operations and policies of our schools.
4. If Parent/guardian or child act verbally or physically abusive toward Duck's Nest personnel, students or parents.
The school reserves the right, under extreme circumstances, to require immediate dismissal.

Discipline at Duck's Nest

Our approach

The word discipline comes from the Latin word *discipulus*, which means "to learn". Many people associate the term discipline as a means to correct unwanted behaviors. At Duck's Nest we think of discipline as a teachable moment. Labeling emotions, conflict resolution, and catching children in good moments are all effective methods we should use as positive discipline. Our teachers are trained and experienced to handle conflicts according to every child's age and individual stage of development. With the teacher's help, the children are encouraged to verbalize and resolve their feelings when conflict arises. Of course, demeaning a child or physical punishment is NEVER an option at Duck's Nest.

Labeling Emotions

Labeling emotions is the first step in teaching children awareness of their feelings and how their actions affect others. Setting limits is necessary, but we set them with empathy by acknowledging the child's perspectives. When kids feel understood, they're more able to accept limits. Often helping a children identify their emotions will help them calm down, feel understood and, with time and practice, teach the children to label their own emotions. Once an emotion is labeled/understood it is much easier to control.

For example: *"I see you are mad, but biting hurts people. Let's use your words to tell your friend how you feel."* or *"It looks like you want to play longer, but it's cleanup time. I know that makes you sad."*

Learning about and practicing labeling our emotions is at the foundation of every child's growth through his/her classroom's curriculum.

Conflict Resolution

We anticipate that conflict will occur among children. Peaceful conflict resolution

provides children with opportunities to feel competent in handling situations and relationships. It fosters feelings of respect for the self and other people, as well as respect for new ideas.

Six steps to take in conflict resolution:

1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.
2. Acknowledge children's feelings
3. Gather information
4. Restate the problem
5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together
6. Be prepared to give follow-up support

**Occasionally a child needs to be removed from a difficult situation. When needed, teachers will sit with that child to reflect or find a solution about what happened or engage the child in an area/activity where they can be more successful.

Catching children in good moments - Enough cannot be said about the power of positive reinforcement. The more we focus on and celebrate positive behavior, the more likely children are to internalize and repeat that positive behavior.

Redirection

Through redirection, we can guide the child to refocus his/her attention to a different and more positive experience. This works for all ages but especially with younger children.

When Young Children Bite

Biting is a natural behavior for very young children. Young children do not have the social awareness to control this behavior. Children are still developing language and social skills necessary for social interaction. Our teachers are aware that a child who bites is going through a stage that will soon pass. The teacher will not allow biting but will be sensitive to the reason the child is biting and will work with the child to help change the behavior.

These are the steps the school will follow when a biting incident has occurred:

1. Separate the children. Say to the child firmly: "NO! It hurts when you bite!"
2. Tend to the bitten child and give first aid as needed.
3. A teacher will keep a careful eye on the child who has bitten to be sure that

he/she does not repeat the behavior.

4. Both parents of the children involved will be called about the incident.

5. A Biting Incident Report must be filled out for both children involved, and once signed by parents, teacher and administrator; will be kept in the child's file in the office.

6. A conference will be scheduled after multiple biting incidents or concerns by teachers or parents. At the conference, a plan of action will be devised according to the individual child's needs.

Our goal is to reinforce acceptable social behavior and meet the child's developmental needs.

Early Intervention

As Early Childhood Educators, we are strong advocates for early intervention. We have seen positive impacts across the developmental domains, such as: physical, cognitive, social/emotional, language development, and sensory integration. Since research has shown children's earliest experiences play a critical role in development, it is our practice to share with you any observed challenges in order to minimize potential delays in growth. Open communication and working together with our families has been very successful. If we observe any challenges that may require additional support, we will schedule a conference with your child's teaching team. We may recommend a child specialist to be consulted that we mutually agree upon. A follow up meeting will be scheduled with the parents, the Specialist, the teachers and the administration; to develop a plan of action to support your child in his/her successful development at school. Duck's Nest will pay for the first on site observation, the parents are responsible for any other observation/recommended private session with a specialist.

PARENT TOPICS

Communicate with Your Teachers

Our schools will be your child's "home away from home." Please consider your teachers as partners in these irreplaceable early years of your child's life, and freely share your concerns with them.

Communication is made easy for you with the following tools:

Sign-in books: Daily communication will be written in the daily sign-in books.

Verbal Communication: Morning and afternoon check-ins with your child's teachers are encouraged. Don't hesitate to tell teachers about any out of the ordinary changes that may affect your child's day. Even seemingly insignificant things can feel overwhelming to a preschooler.

For example: perhaps your son or daughter skipped breakfast, slept restlessly, has visiting grandparents, maybe one parent is out of town, or you've had a doctor's visit, a sick pet, or perhaps your child took medication at home, etc. If you and your family are dealing with larger issues such as separation or financial pressures that are bound to cause some stress in your child's life, be sure to alert your teachers so they can give the extra support your child may need.

Please keep check-ins short and be mindful of the classroom/students needs.

If you have a concern or need to communicate a matter in more details, set up a time to meet and/or talk on the phone with your child's teachers. There are telephones in each classroom, you will receive a school directory with the list of extensons.

Documentation in the Classroom: Idea webs, children's quotes and projects displayed let you know the learning that goes on in the classroom. Please take time out to take a look around.

Emails & Newsletters: Each classroom has a dedicated email. Teachers send out regular emails sharing class projects, updates and other communication related to the current classroom interests. There are also emails by the administration and Duck's Nest Parents Association.

Parking

When arriving or departing, please use street parking spaces rather than our neighboring businesses' driveways or parking facilities.

No parking in the schools driveways!

The Telegraph campus does not allow ANY parking in the church parking lot behind the school. The lot is not owned by Duck's Nest and parents may risk being towed by owners. Please only enter and exit school from the Telegraph entrance through the playground.

Parent Evenings Policy

Throughout the school year there are various meetings scheduled at the school (i.e., potlucks, informational meetings, or Parent Association meetings). On occasion we have minimal parent sign up and the meeting is cancelled. For this reason we have implemented a policy for cancellation:

1. A sign up sheet will be emailed a week before.
2. A room parent may be asked to call the families in the class as a reminder.
3. The meeting will be cancelled if less than 8 families sign up the day before, as a courtesy to our teachers who, after an 8 hour day, stay to hold the meeting or provide child care.

Field Trips

We organize class field trips to places of special interest. You will be informed at least 2 weeks prior to the event in order for all of us to prepare for your child's participation. If you can help, you'll find the driver sign-up sheet in your classroom. Your child will be thrilled to have you along for the trip (as well as to show you off to classmates!). Our school carries insurance for students and teachers in the event of an injury occurring outside of the school grounds. As an official field trip driver, you also supervise the children assigned to your vehicle, and must remain aware of each child's whereabouts at all times during the outing. If you are a field trip driver you must have proof of adequate insurance. Teachers do not drive on field trips.

Field trips mark the high points of many special activities throughout the school year. It's your personal parent participation and support that makes field trips possible. We hope you'll make time in your busy schedule to join us for at least one trip. Your child will remember that you did, for a very long time.

You Can Make a Difference. Volunteer!

There are many opportunities to volunteer from just stopping by or becoming more involved as a room parent. If you don't have as much time to give you can arrange to come and read a book, sing some songs, play an instrument, help on a field trip, share a skill you have or do a presentation about your job. If you are able to commit more time then sign up to be a Room Parent. You serve as a liaison team between classroom teachers and classroom parents for 4 months. Each classroom has two room parents at any given time throughout the school year. Responsibilities are routinely passed along to new room parents annually, or 3 times a year, making this a great way to get to know other parents while actively participating in your child's school experience.

What does a room parent do? They organize phone trees to expedite communication when special class events are planned. Sometimes they take charge of organizing and delegating tasks to other parent volunteers, while keeping their class parents aware of upcoming school functions or Parents Association meetings.

They may drop into the classroom every few months with a video or still camera to document special events or moments during a typical day in their classroom. Room parents find out what other parents know and love and arrange for them to come in and share the best of it with their students. Sometimes they assist teachers by researching logistics in advance of a class field trip to pave the way for happy adventures. Room parent teams don't work alone. Their teachers keep them well informed on how they can provide the most useful support to the classroom and its students.

*In order to volunteer in the classroom it is a state law that you provide proof of immunization for Measles, Pertussis, and Influenza.

Room parents work closely with the Parent Association. They serve as a liaison between the administration, the staff, and the parents. We hope you'll volunteer to be a room parent in your class this year. Talk to your teachers to sign up in advance.

Be Part of Our Parent Association!

Each Duck's Nest school has its own non-profit Parent Association— the Duck's Nest Parent Association (DNPA). Every family becomes a member of the DNPA through enrollment of their child at Duck's Nest. There are many opportunities for you to become involved with the DNPA. The DNPA's mission is to foster the school community and raise funds to provide enhanced classroom programs, and support community programs and special school events. Special programs and events may include Teacher Appreciation Day, Parents' Picnic, educational seminars for teachers and parents, CPR instruction for parents, community garden projects, donations to homeless shelters, schools and children's programs, and many other community-building initiatives. We value your family's support in building a strong community and school for your child. Your participation will evoke a feeling of pride and belonging in your child!

HEALTH AND SAFETY

If your child is injured at school...

1. In the unfortunate event that your child is injured on site, we will immediately care for your child's injury, clean any small scratches, apply ice pack or band aids and also reassure your child with TLC. Once your child is feeling better, we will fill out an Incident/Injury Report. The teacher that witnesses the incident and the director or administrator will sign the form as well. We will ask you to sign the Incident/Injury report at the time the child is picked up, and we will make a copy for you upon request. We will keep the original in your child's file in the office.
2. If your child injures her/his head or face, we will contact you right away to report the incident (even if it is a small bump!) The teachers fill out an Incident/Injury report for you to sign as well.
3. By regulation, if your child needs to be seen by a doctor due to an injury that occurred at school, we are required to fill out an "Unusual Incident Report" and send it to Social Services. We will contact you to get the details about the treatment, the treating physician, etc. If needed, Duck's Nest has an insurance policy that will cover medical expenses that are not covered by your child's insurance. Please inquire with the office if this is needed.

Allergies and Special Diets

We provide careful individual attention to the needs of children with recognized food allergies or specific dietary restrictions. At the beginning of every school year, we compile a school-wide allergy and special diet list. If your child falls into this category, be sure to sign this list every August so that every teacher who comes in contact with your child will be informed of your child's special needs.

Any special dietary restrictions required must be reviewed to make sure our school is able to accommodate. A "Parent Agreement for Special Dietary Restrictions" must be completed by a parent/guardian. If your child's dietary needs change during the course of the school year, remember to keep your teachers up to date by letting them know right away. Your child's health is very important to all of us. We want to always uphold good health practices. Please remember that Duck's Nest is a NUT FREE school.

Incidental Medical Services (IMS)

If your child has an anaphylaxis allergy to food or bees and requires an Epi-pen, or has asthma that requires an inhaler or nebulizer, you will be required to fill out additional paperwork in order for us to administer treatment. The office will provide you with detailed instructions on what is needed as well as authorization paperwork to go over with teachers. Please inquire with the office if your child will potentially require these types of medical treatments.

Medication Policies

If your child requires administration of prescription or non-prescription medication during the school day, you must first give a signed consent form with instructions to your teacher. Forms are in your classroom.

Prescription medication must be brought in the original container with the label stating the physician's instructions. Prescription medication will only be administered in accordance with the label directions as prescribed by the child's physician. The instructions from the child's representative cannot conflict with the label directions or the medication will not be administered.

Non-prescription medications may be administered without approval or instructions from the child's physician only if the child's parent provides in writing,

approval and instructions for administration of the medicine and medication is administered in accordance with the product label. The instructions from the child's parent may not conflict with the product label directions or the medication will not be administered.

All medication will be stored in a designated box that is labeled. Please hand it directly to your child's teacher with the consent form. Parents need to bring only the prescribed dosage that is needed, in the prescription container. Do not place any medication in your child's lunch box or cubby. Your teacher will note the time(s) medication was administered on your Daily Sign-in Sheet. Be sure to check for this verification when you pick up your child.

Health Policies

We want you to know that we understand that children will get sick and sometimes the decision to keep them home is a hard, but necessary one. However, it is mandatory that you keep your child at home if she/he experiences any of the following conditions or symptoms.

Please know that the judgment of the school will prevail:

1. If your child has been sent home with a fever he/she must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.
2. If your child is taking antibiotics for an illness, he/she must remain at home for 24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment.
3. If your child wakes up with a fever, please do not bring him/her to school. A fever is an indication that something is wrong and it is important that he/she stays home.
4. If your child has a constant cough, please take your child to his/her physician before returning to school. Coughing spreads germs and may indicate infection or a contagious agent. Also if your child has a runny nose and feels lethargic or looks like he/she is not enjoying school, we will call you to pick up your child.
5. When your child has diarrhea, this could mean an intestinal problem and could be highly contagious. This can also be very uncomfortable. Children

with diarrhea must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.

6. If your child has a rash we would like you to take him/her to the doctor. It could just be caused by a bug bite, but may also be chicken pox, impetigo or other bacterial or viral organisms. We want to know that a doctor has ruled out the possibility of infectious diseases.
8. Please do not bring your child to school for 24 hours if he/she has been vomiting. Nausea is a very unpleasant experience and may indicate a virus or contagious illness.
9. There are many forms of eye infections known as “pink eye.” Some are very contagious. Children must remain at home for 24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment and their eyes must be clear.
10. If your child complains of pain, he/she does not belong in school. Tenderness or pain in ears, neck, throat, head, back, or abdomen can indicate serious illness and should be brought to your physician’s attention.
11. If your child is feeling weak, lethargic, tired or listless, we feel he/she should be home resting.
12. Any bowel or bladder problems such as constipation or urinary infections can be very upsetting and uncomfortable. Children must remain home until they are feeling better.
13. A child with chicken pox must remain at home until after all the pox have scabbed over and he/she feels well enough to participate in school.
14. If your child contracts head lice please contact us right away. You must use a medicated shampoo and follow all instructions on the bottle. In order to return to school your child must be free of all lice and nits.
15. If your child is exceptionally clingy and needs one-on-one attention, is exhausted, extremely upset, very sad, or just cannot relax and play we will call you and have you come pick him/her up. Your child should be at home under these circumstances.

Social Services requires that teachers check children as they arrive in the morning.

If you are asked to take your child home, you must comply. If your child develops symptoms of illness during the course of the school day, you will receive a phone call to pick up your child within the next 30 minutes. Our concern is with the speedy recovery of your child and the health of the entire classroom.

We thank you for following our guidelines. Your cooperation in helping us to maintain a healthy school environment will benefit all of us.

Immunization Requirements

California has implemented immunization requirements for children as well as adults at licensed facilities. Children must complete their pediatric immunization schedule unless they have a medical exemption. All adults that interact with children regularly must show proof of immunization for Tuberculosis, Measles, Pertussis and are recommended to have an Influenza vaccination. If you plan on volunteering in your child's classroom you will be asked to provide proof.

Health and Safety Training for Teachers

Duck's Nest teachers keep current with their CPR training by taking a refresher course every other year. All teachers are also trained in first aid, injury prevention, and infectious disease control. We offer CPR training classes for teachers in a special seminar. A certified instructor or the Red Cross conducts classes. We maintain our certification according to requirements.

By law all Early Childhood Educators are Mandated Reporters and are required to report child abuse. This requires them to report any reasonably suspected or alleged abuse of an individual under the age of 18 to a designated agency.

Your Child's Security

If you want someone whose name is not listed on your emergency form to pick your child up from school, follow one of these procedures:

Option #1: You may bring a note or email us, authorizing us to release your child into the care of the designated person. Be sure to tell your child's teacher. Before releasing your child, we will check a photo I.D. with photo to verify that person's identity.

Option #2: You may call the school office and verbally authorize the release of your child to the designated person. We will verify that you have just called by immediately calling you back at your home or work phone number. As before, the person who arrives to pick your child up will have I.D. checked to verify his/her identity.

Our specific goal is to ensure the ultimate safety of your child while providing peace of mind for you as a parent. In the meantime, you can avoid putting a friend or relative through this cumbersome procedure by making sure their name is currently listed on your emergency form in the school office.

General Injury Emergency Policies and Procedures

In the event of an emergency, we will make every effort to contact you immediately. If you cannot be reached we will act according to instructions on your signed consent form. If an emergency situation occurs 911 will be called immediately. Emergency Procedures will be followed. Duck's Nest has an accident policy which provides medical payments in the event that a child gets injured during a covered activity on site. In the case of a serious injury at school, which requires medical treatment, please contact the office to fill out a claim form.

Disclosure Notice

For Berkeley campus only: Duck's Nest in Berkeley is located in an industrial neighborhood. Please be advised that truck traffic, industrial noises, odors and other activity associated with industrial uses are a normal and lawful condition resulting from operations in this industrial area. The Berkeley site has been in operation since 1984 and there have been no reports regarding health or safety issues.

Fire and Earthquake Drills or Evacuations

We are ready! Given the East Bay's history, we take the idea of fires and earthquakes very seriously. Classroom teachers hold monthly fire and earthquake drills so that your child will know exactly what to do and how to respond in an emergency situation. We also conduct school wide evacuation drills twice a year. You'll find all of our emergency information and policies posted in clear view in

each classroom. After an emergency occurs we will contact families by email if we are able to. If electricity is out we will use our phones to email (unless cellular service is also disrupted). We have designated staff on-site who have committed to stay until all children are able to be picked up.

In the event of an evacuation, each of our schools has a designated emergency site to go to for shelter. Here are the specific locations for each school if the school neighborhood is evacuated:

41st: Piedmont Elementary School

Berkeley: James Kenney Recreation Center

Telegraph: Mosswood Park

These numbers are to use in case of emergency ONLY:

Berkeley

510-910-0656

Telegraph

510-384-5331

Forty First Street

510-325-5973

We are pleased to welcome you and your family to the Duck's Nest Community. We look forward to an exciting and fun-filled school year with your child. Our goal is to provide a nurturing and safe environment where your child can thrive.