

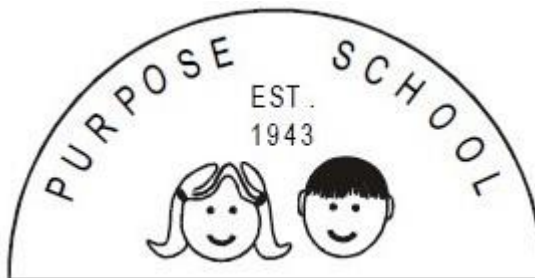


Purpose School Parent Handbook 2019 – 2020

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First Congregational Church
1 Church Street
Stoneham, MA 02180

Important Dates: 2019–2020

August 28 & 29	Teacher Set-Up Days
September 3	Teacher Set-up Day
September 4	Visiting Day
September 5 & 6	First Days of School
October 14	Columbus Day Holiday
October 30 & 31	Halloween Show
November 7 & 8	Picture Days
November 11	Veterans' Day Holiday
November 27	School closes at 12 noon
November 28 & 29	Thanksgiving Holidays
Dec. 23–Jan. 3	Holiday Vacation
January 20	MLK Holiday
January 30 & 31	Conferences, No School
February 17–21	February Vacation
April 20–24	April Vacation
May 25	Memorial Day Holiday
June 10	Last Day of School



Purpose School Calendar: 2019-2020

August 2019						
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November 2019						
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December 2019						
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January 2020						
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February 2020						
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March 2020						
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April 2020						
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May 2020						
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June 2020						
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July 2020						
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IMPORTANT DATES:

August 28, 29 / Sept. 3: Teacher set up

Sept. 4: Visiting Day

Sept. 5 and 6 -First Days of school

October 14: Columbus Day

October 30 and 31: Halloween Show

November 11: Veterans Day

November -Picture Days 7 and 8

November 27 (1/2 Day)-29: Thanksgiving

December 23 -Jan. 3: Holiday Vacation

January 20: Martin Luther King Day

Jan 30 and 31: No School, Conferences

February 17-21: February Vacation

April 10- 1/2 day Good Friday

April 20-24: April Vacation

May 25: Memorial Day

June 9 and 10: Last day of school

No School

Important Reminders

School Phone: 781-438-2815

School Fax: 781-438-0238

Tax ID Number: 04-2157045

web site: purposeschool.com

Email:

purposeschoolstoneham@gmail.com

2019–2020 Monthly Tuition Rates

3-and-1/2-Hour Core Session ***8:30–12:00***

Two Day	\$276/mo
Three Day	\$379/mo
Four Day	\$507/mo
Five Day	\$583/mo

School with Morning Extended ***8:00–12:00***

Two Day	\$305/mo
Three Day	\$423/mo
Four Day	\$568/mo
Five Day	\$656/Mo

School with Lunch Bunch ***8:30–1:00***

Two Day	\$327/mo
Three Day	\$456/mo
Four Day	\$610/mo
Five Day	\$706/mo

School with Morning Extended & Lunch Brunch ***8:00–1:00***

Two Day	\$356/mo
Three Day	\$500/mo
Four Day	\$669/mo
Five Day	\$777/mo

School with Lunch & Afternoon Extended ***8:30–2:00***

Two Day	\$381/mo
Three Day	\$539/mo
Four Day	\$722/mo
Five Day	\$841/mo

School with Morning Extended, Lunch & Afternoon Extended ***8:00–2:00***

Two Day	\$410/mo
Three Day	\$581/mo
Four Day	\$783/mo
Five Day	\$911/mo

Note: We offer a 10% discount for a second child's core tuition. We also offer a la carte rates if your child attends Lunch Bunch or Extended Session for fewer days than they attend school. Please ask us about these rates.

A \$15 late fee will be charged if tuition is not received by the 15th of the month.

Tuition Information

1. The Parent will pay Purpose School for the Child's care at the monthly tuition rate set forth at the beginning of the year. If the Parent requests a change to the Child's attendance schedule, the School Director will calculate a new tuition rate. Tuition is due the first week of each month. Payment is to be placed in the mailbox by the school office. **A late fee of \$15.00 will be added to any payment that is more than two weeks past due.** *Enrolling in the Tuition Payment Plan to pay tuition via ACH will eliminate the possibility of late payments.*

2. The Parent is responsible for monthly tuition regardless of the child's absence for any reason including school closings due to holidays, inclement weather, State of Emergency called in MA, closing mandated by the Town of Stoneham, or the child's illness. A schedule of the school's closings is distributed annually. Yearly tuition is divided into ten equal payments that are due at the beginning of each month.

4. Continual failure to pay tuition may result in the suspension of the child's enrollment until tuition is caught up or a payment plan has been agreed upon by the Parent and School Director. In the event that a check is returned for insufficient funds, Purpose School will request a second check along with a \$25.00 bank fee. If the second check does not clear, the Parent will be asked to pay the amount with cash or a money order.

4. The Parent will give the Director of Purpose School at least a two-week written notice before withdrawing or reducing the number of school days a child attends. The Parent will pay tuition for school until the end of the two-week notice period.

5. The Parent agrees to **drop-off and pick up** the child within the set school hours. Chronic late pick up may result in termination of the child's enrollment or a late fee.

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Welcome

We welcome all children at Purpose School. We accept children without bias who are two years nine months to six years old. Typically, students are from Stoneham, Wakefield, Melrose, Reading, Medford, Woburn, and Winchester.

Philosophy, Goals, Objectives

The Purpose School provides a safe, nurturing, enriching environment for young children. Our developmentally appropriate curriculum and theme based activities are designed to foster growth in the areas of social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. At Purpose School children are encouraged to learn through child centered participatory play.

Our curriculum offers a balance between planned teacher initiated activities and planned free choice activities set up daily in the classroom environment. The teacher serves as a resource by preparing an environment that is conducive to learning. Children are encouraged to experiment and are given a choice of materials that will expand their thinking and instill confidence in their level of competence.

The teacher helps the children define the limits of their behavior and guides them in forming their interpersonal and group skills. Through a widely-integrated curriculum, children will learn to work comfortably in both group and in individual settings. Each child is recognized as individually unique. Children are treated at all times with dignity and respect. The learning environment is designed with special equipment and materials to allow each child to:

- Develop a sense of security and feelings of positive self-esteem
- Develop attention span and ability to follow through on a task
- Develop a range of motor skills (fine and gross)
- Develop and enhance language skills and literacy
- Develop readiness skills for math, science, reading, etc.
- Interact with children and adults
- Learn about and explore their emerging world and the world of others
- Engage in self-expression through music, dance, dramatic play and art
- Develop pro social body control and social skills
- Develop self-help skills that are needed to be successful and independent



Statement of Non-Discrimination

Purpose School is sponsored by the First Congregational Church in Stoneham and was established in 1943 as a community service. We do not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, religion, cultural heritage, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, political beliefs, marital status, disabilities or any other category protected by applicable federal, state or local law. All children are welcome! Our program is designed for children 2.9 years through 6 years old.

Extended Day Lunch Option

This program begins on Thursday, September 5, 2019 and lasts until Friday, June 10, 2020. Those enrolled will bring a ready to eat lunch (labeled with child's name) to school and remain at school until 1:00 pm. Children will engage in a variety of additional games and activities. A few times each month we will order pizza (small additional charge) for interested families.

To insure the safety of all our students we must remind you that the Purpose School is a nut free program. Parents must refrain from packing lunches that contain peanut butter and/or other products that contain nuts. Please note that even if a product states made in a factory with nuts it cannot be served at Purpose.

We feel many great social, emotional and self-help skills are learned when staying and independently eating their lunch with their peers. We strongly recommend that every student stay at least a few times before graduation to prepare for kindergarten. You can add it at any time as a drop in fee or add lunch to your planned daily schedule.

Lunches should include:

- A freezer pack to keep food cold
- A thermos to keep foods warm (Soup, noodles, chicken nuggets, etc.)
- A drink: milk, water, or 100% juice
- Nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables, and dairy products
- Ready to serve foods



The state requires us to offer parents the opportunity to have the children brush their teeth if they consume a meal while at school. A form will be provided at the beginning of the year for you to choose this option, if you are interested. Parents can also sign off that they do not wish their child to brush while at school. If you opt for brushing, please send in toothbrush with lunch.

Snack Time

The Purpose School provides snack for all students. Due to the serious nut allergies in the program, and the fact that many of the children are only present for three and a half hours, we keep the snack simple. Daily cold water is offered as well as a choice between graham crackers, saltines or Ritz. Any change in the snack menu is noted on the weekly planning sheet that is posted on the classroom door. Such changes could occur due to holiday and/or birthday parties or special classroom cooking projects.

Parents must first check with their child's teacher before bringing in any food items to the classroom. We have an approved list of food items that may be served. We do not allow any homemade baked goods into the school due to the concern of cross contamination.

Please inform Purpose School of any food-related allergies. Notices of food allergies are posted and available to staff for review in each classroom. Special precautions will be made for those children who have been diagnosed with allergies.

Admission & Registration

- All parents considering the Purpose School are invited to visit prior to enrollment. Tours can be scheduled in October, November and December by calling the Director, Kristie Colwell. We strongly suggest that the parents take the first tour and meet with the Director without children so the adults can talk freely about the preschool experience. Children will visit with their parents for their tour and to meet their teachers right before school starts in September.
- After parents have visited, if interested, they will be given a pre-enrollment form to complete.

- These forms can be returned to school on Monday, January 6th and Tuesday, January 7th.
- Once we offer a placement, and the parent accepts, a \$50 registration fee is due. Those students who do not receive a placement will be put on a wait-list. It is important to remember that if your child is not placed by December, you must reapply in January for the next school year.
- Currently enrolled students will receive pre-enrollment forms in November and be given first placement priority. Unfortunately, this priority cannot always guarantee first choice due to limited class sizes. For this reason, all parents are encouraged to include a second-choice session and submit form and fee to the office by Nov. 18, 2019.
- Siblings of currently enrolled students receive second placement priority. Children are placed according to age and class size. Confirmation of placement will be sent by December for the upcoming school year. A first choice wait list will be maintained for all enrolled students who are placed in second choice sessions.

Enrollment Forms

On May 10, 2019, all fully completed ENROLLMENT packets are due to the office. Completed packets must contain fact sheet, authorization and consent forms, allergy form, enrollment agreement, developmental history, and medical forms (explained below). If enrolling after the May 18th deadline, these forms can be mailed to Purpose School or dropped off at the Church office in the box labeled "Purpose School Enrollment Packets". The Church office has summer hours from 9:00 to 2:00. The phone number for the Church office is (781) 438-0097.

During summer months, please use the blue church door to the left of the Purpose School door. The Church/School office also has an outdoor mail slot to the left of the blue doors.



Medical Forms

A medical form is provided by the school and must be completed by your child's doctor. Some pediatricians prefer to provide computer-generated printouts. This is acceptable as long as it contains the date of last yearly physical, full record of immunizations including Varicella, lead screening date and results, and a Doctor's official stamp or signature. The Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) requires a complete physical each year.

Please note that health exam forms must be updated every year since it is valid for only one year from the date of the physical. For example, if your child's health exam date is November 10, 2018, then we need updated forms by November 10, 2019. Please submit or fax updated health form immediately following the exam. During the summer please mail in or fax new physical forms, as this will help your first day check in to go more quickly and smoothly.

Please Note: No child will be able to attend school without his/her completed health form and enrollment packet on file.

Curriculum

Purpose School follows the state standards and criteria as set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Education. These standards and criteria can be found in the state's "Guidelines for Preschool Learning" booklet. They are part of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, insuring the continuity of curriculum from preschool into kindergarten and the public school system.

Daily Schedules

- Arrival
 - Learning Center Activity Period
 - Sensory Activity
 - Clean-Up
 - Morning Meeting / Circle Time-Literature, Music, Theme Topics
 - Snack Time
 - Gross Motor Activities-indoors/outdoors
 - Individual Group Activities
 - Lunch Time
 - Quiet Activities Time
- (Students who extend their school day will engage in additional activities similar to the ones listed above both indoor and outdoor.)

*Dismissal Time

Transitions between activities are planned and organized to avoid children waiting. Warnings (visual, verbal, and auditory) are always given before their occurrence. Depending on class size and activity the whole group is not always expected to move at the same moment.



Weather

The Purpose School will be closed on the days that Stoneham Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather conditions. We will follow the Stoneham Public School delay system. Example: If the Stoneham Public delays one hour we will open at 9:00 am, a two-hour delay we will open at 10:00.



If you hear/see Stoneham Public School is closed, you know that Purpose School and the office are closed. In the unlikely event (i.e. no heat) that public is open and we must close, Room Parents/Staff will contact class members prior to session via email.

Families can also go onto Channel 5's website and sign up to receive a school closing or delay email directly to your home. Sign up for "Purpose School" school closing alerts. Purpose School does not make up any snow days!

Arrival, Dismissal & Attendance

Upon arrival, parents check in with greeting/ support teacher. The greeting teacher keeps a daily checklist with specific time of arrival and departure on a clipboard. This checklist, printed from our enrollment database, includes the child's name, date, session, and classroom assignment. Once checked in by the parent, the child proceeds with parent to assigned classroom. Classroom teacher

takes classroom attendance upon arrival, as well. At 9:00am, 12:00am, and 1:00pm the greeting teacher confirms numbers in each classroom with master list and posts the number, by classroom on white board in main hallway. Purpose School entrance doors are only locked/unlocked within 10 minutes of any drop off or pick up time. Excessive tardiness at pick up could result in a late fee or suspension if continued without support from child's parents.

Parents return to greeting/support teacher to check child off master list, as they are dismissed. Teachers, who receive yearly training on dismissal policy, will ask for a picture I.D. for cross-reference on Emergency Release record when and if an unknown adult comes for a child. Written notice of a parent car pool plan is maintained in child's school file. Director is summoned immediately if any situation may pose risk to a child, including the appropriateness of one's physical condition to care for child (i.e. apparent intoxication or debilitating illness). Director will call parent or guardian immediately for consultation, as necessary, to insure safety of child leaving premises.

Transition to School / Separation Policy

Attendance in nursery school, while beneficial, may manifest some separation anxiety in young children. To support your child's smooth transition to school, Purpose School has developed the following procedure:

- Prior to pre-enrollment, parents are invited to visit Purpose School for a tour.
- Teachers will read pre-enrollment packets concentrating on the Developmental History to familiarize themselves with the children enrolled in their classes. They will also read past evaluations and all pertinent information enclosed in the file.
- A few days prior to school opening, children and parents will attend "visiting day," a 45-minute session with parent and child remaining together in the classroom.
- On the first day of school, parents check in with the greeting teacher and proceed to the door of their child's classroom.
- From experience we have found that children who experience separation issues are often more anxious when separation is delayed and parents linger in the classroom. For this reason, we recommend that parents hug their children and ensure him/her that they will come back when school is over.
- Feel free to call the office after at least 30 minutes to see how things are going.
- Every child is given all the support, comfort, and understanding that is needed by teachers throughout the transition process.
- The teacher and Director will monitor children's transitional progress. For a few children, prolonged anxiety may be an indication of a child's developmental non-readiness for nursery school. The Director will consult with parents within the first few weeks of school if needed.
- At the end of the school year, all students will visit their new classrooms and meet their new teachers for September. In many cases the children are familiar with their "new" teachers as we often get together throughout the year for activities. On the last day of school, the children who are going onto Kindergarten participate in a graduation ceremony.

Supervision / Staff Development

Purpose School is committed to an active supervision model. The Director will make daily drop-in visits to classrooms to observe teachers' activity and general teaching practice. Supervision sessions as a team or individually will be set up as needed to address any issue that may affect the quality of the child's experience at Purpose School.

The Director will conduct a formal observation and teacher evaluation each year; this also includes a self-evaluation by each teacher. A one-to-one supervisory session will be held to discuss such evaluation. The Director will meet with the team monthly to assist with curriculum development and

to discuss program operations.

Yearly staff training and development is arranged by the Director and includes participation in many different types of educational workshops (diverse learners, literacy, math, music, science and social studies, as well as First Aid Training and CPR Training and certification). Staff development also includes visitation of other programs for observation.

Field Trips

We ask that you sign a permission form for nature walks, trips to the police and fire stations, library, post office, bank, playground and other locations within walking distance of Purpose School.

We use the playground (wooden section only) across the street in back of the Town Hall (Munchkin Park). We use a rope with loops for the children to hold as we walk together as a class. The children also wear bright orange vests whenever we leave the building.

Teachers always take the classroom emergency bag whenever the students leave the classroom as well as emergency phone and first aid supplies. The emergency bag contains basic numbers for all the students. We use two-way radios and/or cell phones to communicate between the park and the school.

Transportation

General Transportation—All children must be transported to and from the school by a parent, guardian, or other authorized person. At arrival and departure times, an adult must escort children into school. Children cannot be released to siblings for safety reasons.

Field Trip Transportation—Throughout the school year a variety of walking field trips around the school neighborhood will be planned.

Emergency Transportation- In the event of a medical emergency, children will be transported by ambulance to Winchester Hospital or the nearest hospital designated by ambulance personnel.

Dismissal/Pick up Contacts

Calls to the office regarding change in “Pick up Person” will be checked by a return call to the parent prior to release of child. A qualified staff person will supervise children that are waiting in the hallway either before or after school.

Parking—Drop off and Pick up

Parents are asked to park legally in any parking space located around the school. There are three town lots; one is across the grass common, the second is located next to Town Hall, and the last is behind the Town Hall by the playground.

When the funeral cones are out on Common Street we can still use the street for quick drop off and pick up. Please do not park in handicap spots or block the crosswalks or the mailboxes at any time!



Birthdays

Birthdays are special days to young children. We celebrate the child's special day during snack time. Parents are welcome to send in a special snack to be shared with classmates. Teachers will provide parents with a list of approved nut free store bought snacks. Only items in their original packaging on this list can be served at Purpose School. Parents are required to schedule this special treat ahead of time with classroom teachers. No homemade treats can be brought into school due to the concerns of cross contamination. "Goodie Bags" are no longer allowed for the same reason.

School Pictures

A professional photographer comes in, usually in the fall (November), to take individual and class pictures for a nominal fee. We may also take pictures to accompany an article in the local newspaper and we continuously take pictures for our portfolio style end-of-the-year evaluation.

Toys

Our classrooms are rich with educational toys and equipment. We discourage the practice of children bringing toys from home. Children can be distracted from program activity and become overly concerned with a "home toy". Often, children are conflicted by the need to share a toy brought from home. Our "home toys stay at home" policy helps to eliminate this potential conflict. However, on occasion, children may be asked by teachers to bring in an item related to our curriculum (i.e. something red for Red Day). Children will also be redirected from pretend "gun play" while at school.



Toileting Policy

For those children who are not toilet trained, Purpose School recommends that the child wear "pull ups" to school.

All children are required to have a labeled extra set of seasonal clothing including socks and underwear at school, or in their daily backpack. The school also has extra clothes for all seasons available as back up if needed.

The greeting/support teacher will change children who have soiled or wet during school attendance in the children's bathroom. This teacher will practice Universal Health Precautions while changing children's clothing. A commercial disposable diaper cleaning cloth will be used to insure the child's health and comfort.

While changing the child the support teacher will close the door leaving a 2-inch opening. Wet clothing, including all body fluids, will be stored in a tied plastic bag and labeled with the child's name. Parents will be informed of the changing by the support teacher or classroom teacher upon arrival to school at dismissal. Support teacher will dispose of wet/soiled pull-up in tied plastic bag in janitor's trash.

Children are encouraged to visit the bathroom as needed and also prior to snack and outside time. No child is ever punished for soiling or wetting. All children will wash hands following a bathroom visit with a commercial anti-bacterial soap. Support teachers will also wash hands immediately after assisting a child with bathroom visit.

Purpose School views the child's toileting needs as a natural part of the child's daily functioning at nursery school. Children will at all times be handled with dignity, respect, and support, as is the general philosophy at Purpose School. It is a goal to have all students become potty trained soon after starting school if they are not already done with this important process. Until your child is trained we require you to provide us with wipes and diapers.

Dress

We ask that you have your child dress in play clothes and rubber-soled shoes or sneakers. Children cannot participate safely in school activities wearing, for example, slippery leather soled shoes or sandals. Please **label all clothing** (e.g. hats, mittens, sweaters, jackets, boots, etc.).

A change of seasonal clothing, including underwear and socks, should be brought to school in a zip lock bag labeled with the child's name. This bag should be brought back and forth to school daily in the child's backpack.

For safety reasons parents are required to remove all drawstrings from children's clothing. These strings can get caught on equipment (i.e. slide) and cause injury.

The Sunroom and the Discovery Room request that all students have a backpack that the children can use to transport items to and from school. Learning to be responsible for this backpack is a very important pre-kindergarten activity.

Child's School Records

All records (health, evaluations, and testing both Purpose School or if needed outside resources) are confidential and accessible to parents within 24 hours upon request. Parents' rights include the deletion of any information on the child's record. The child's record will be forwarded to the Public School if requested in writing by the parent. Purpose School will also provide parents with free copies upon request.

Conferences/Communication

In October each classroom will have a scheduled day for parents to sign up for a quick check in meeting with the teacher. At this meeting we will together share how the adjustment to school is going based on information from home and school. We might set some goals or suggestions that will help reach the best adjustment. A "check back" conference can be set a few weeks later if requested by the teacher or the parent.

Written reports of your child's progress will be provided twice each year, once at the end of January and again at the end of May. We use a developmental assessment tool, as recommended by the Department of Early Education and Care. Children with diagnosed disabilities will receive a third report and/or parent teacher meeting in March.

This year parent teacher conferences will be held on January 30 and January 31 from 8:00 am to 1:45 pm. On these two days, the school will be closed for regular sessions. Parents will schedule a conference time prior to these dates.

It is important to note that at any time during the school year a conference can be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time if the need arises. Teachers or parents can call or email each other to request a check in meeting or conference call.

Because some parents are not able to pick up or drop off their child at school, we have a few recommendations to help improve home/school communication. Please read your monthly newsletter and calendar for important dates, read the classroom door dry erase board for any last minute updates, and call when you have a question or concern. Because we are actively engaged and teaching

our students during classroom time, we do not have “down time” for personal daily notes. We would however be happy to quickly come to the phone when a question or concern does arise.

Monthly Newsletters

An informational newsletter is sent out monthly by email. Updates on curriculum, program plans and special events are included. Some traditional special events include Halloween Costume Parade (Oct), Pajama Day (Dec), and Spring Show (April). Please make sure that we always have a current email address for emailing these informational newsletters. Printed copies of the newsletter can also be obtained from the hallway desk.

Referrals and Reports

The teacher’s observations of each child’s development are written and compiled on an ongoing basis. Observations may consist of such methods as anecdotal records, small group and large group observations and dated samples of child’s work. A report on the child’s progress will be prepared twice a year during the months of January and end of May. Copies will be given to the child’s parents and placed in the child’s file.

For children with disabilities, these reports will be prepared every three months; January, March, and end of May. Time will be made available for parent/teacher conferences during early morning or after school, as requested by parents.

Referral Services

If Purpose School staff feel that an assessment for additional social, mental health, educational and/or medical services (including, but not limited to; dental check-up, vision or hearing screening) would benefit a child, parents will be referred to appropriate agencies.

The procedure for making such a referral includes observation of the child, written reports/observations for the child’s file, meeting with the parent, suggesting referral agencies and follow-up. A detailed written plan for referral services is available to parents upon their request.

Referral Procedure

When it is time to suggest a referral, the procedure is as follows:

1. Written description/observations of the child’s problem are prepared.
2. A meeting is scheduled with the parent(s) for their input, involvement and to recommend a referral for consultation and/or professional evaluation for the child. At this meeting, the teacher/ Director will provide to the parent the reasons for recommending a referral for additional services, a brief summary of the school’s observations related to the referral and any efforts the school may have made to accommodate the child’s needs. The Director will offer assistance to the parent(s) in making the referral in terms of calling or writing. The parents will be notified of their rights under Chapter 766.
3. Each referral will be followed up in order to determine how effectively the child’s needs are being met, and what additional services may be needed. A written record of requests or referrals will be kept in each child’s folder.
4. Every three months a progress report will be prepared to determine if another referral is necessary or if the child is still in need of services. With the written consent of the parents, the school will contact the referral agency.
5. The Director will keep on hand an updated list of referral agencies.

Children with Special Needs

Children with special needs are admitted on the same basis as all other children. The Director shall meet with parents beforehand to tour the school, to give parents information about the school and to discuss the individual needs of the child to ensure that Purpose School is a good placement for the student.

We will support families who need to work with the Public School to see about screening or placement. If an educational plan is in place it must identify in writing any accommodations that need to be taken to meet the individual needs of the child.

Additional Referrals

If Purpose School staff feel that an assessment for additional social, mental health, educational and/or medical services (including, but not limited to; dental check-up, vision or hearing screening) would benefit a child, parents will be referred to appropriate agencies.

The procedure for making such a referral include observation of the child, written reports/observations for the child's file, meeting with the parent, suggesting referral agencies and follow-up. A detailed written plan for referral services is available to parents upon their request.

Parent Involvement

Purpose School has an open-door policy. Parents are welcome to visit and peek in the classroom at any time while their child is present. We also invite parents on occasion, to share their time and talents. They have in the past shared their family customs, traditions and personal professions. Parents who are visiting may not however bring siblings as directed by the Department of Early Education and Care.

At times parents may also be asked to help chaperone classrooms on walking fieldtrips.

Parent Group

Parents are invited to join the Purpose School Parent Committee. An organizational meeting is held in September to plan special home/school activities and fundraising events. Money raised through fundraising events or donations goes into the children's enrichment fund. These funds are then used each year to sponsor enrichment activities such as creative movement sessions for children during the winter months, music programs, storytellers, and fitness programs.

At the parent group meeting, a small group of parents will volunteer to lead the other parents in planning and carrying out the planned fundraisers and social events.

Home/School Activities

Home/school fun activities that families can participate in are as follows:

- Sale of tee shirt and sweat shirts, with the school logo (order forms).
- Halloween Parade (during school hours).
- November project-decorating family Turkeys.
- December project- sharing family traditions.
- Spring Show Concert (during school hours).



Typical Fundraisers

- Jump Start Family Enrichment donation (\$20.00 per child in September).
- December and April 50/50 cash split raffle.

Parents are not required to participate in fundraising events but we hope that every family helps in some way during the school year. All funds raised by parents are spent on the extra activities that enhance the curriculum of all Purpose School students. The Purpose School Parents Group plans many different events so that parents can pick and choose if they wish to participate.

Parent Program Evaluation

A program evaluation form will be sent home twice a year during January and at the end of May to provide feedback to the school Director. All suggestions and feedback are greatly appreciated. The school committee then reviews these evaluations.

Consultation

The School Director is available to meet with parents to offer support with parenting issues such as behavior management and/or concerns regarding child development. The teaching team is also available to meet with parents to support your child and family while at Purpose School.

Parent Open House

A parent Open House is held one evening each September to view the classrooms, meet the teachers, review curriculum and socialize with other parents. Teachers will share information with families about classroom rules, expectations, and routines. The purpose of this evening is for parents to visit their child's classroom, talk with teachers and other parents and learn more about our hands on developmentally appropriate curriculum. It is a time for teacher presentations and questions regarding the program. Due to the nature of the night's activities, it is appropriate for parents only.

Room Parents

Every classroom, at the beginning of each year, asks for one or two volunteers (depending on class size) to take on the role of room parent. This role is very important and greatly appreciated by the staff, as the basic job of room parent is to assist the teachers. Room parents are requested to attend Parent Group meetings each month so that they are informed about upcoming school events and can support both the classroom and the school.

Room parents are asked to help in the planning of special events and parties, and phoning or emailing other parents for assistance. Some room parents might be asked to come into the classroom

and assist with special projects during school hours, or prep materials at home. In the event of an unexpected school closing, they might be asked to phone or email the other classroom parents.

We typically celebrate these holidays:

- October- Halloween party
- December- Winter Holiday party
- February- Valentine's Day party
- June- End of the Year party



The teachers will let the room parents know what food and paper products will be needed for each party. We try to keep snacks healthy and simple, and always adhere to our safe snack list. We have a no “goodie bag” policy at school.

As a room parent, you would receive a class list complete with parents’ names, email addresses, and phone numbers. This information is confidential and must be used for school purposes only.

Suggestion Box

Parent suggestions are always welcome. Your written suggestions and feedback should be deposited in the Parent Box which is located at the top of the stairs, near the school office.

Discipline

Our goal at the Purpose School is to encourage children to develop and practice social skills that will ultimately allow them to positively interact with a wide variety of people, in a number of settings. We encourage them to resolve conflicts in a collaborative and peaceable manner.

At Purpose School, teachers use a positive re-direction of inappropriate behavior. By stating limits in a clear, child centered manner, we hope to build a child’s ability to practice pro-social behavior.

By respecting a child’s age appropriate behavior, our program and schedule of daily activity is designed to support the child’s natural energy. This plan often eliminates behavioral issues.

When a child is struggling behaviorally, teachers and Director will meet, seek parental input and design a behavior plan to meet the child’s individual needs. Children are always treated with respect and dignity. No punitive measures are ever used in this effort to guide children’s behavior. Children who may demonstrate overly aggressive behavior resulting in the injury of peer or staff will be assisted to the Director’s office. The parent will be contacted for a one-day dismissal if needed.

Health and Safety

Medications

A doctor’s note or pharmacy label designating the medication, its dosage and criteria for administering is required for the staff to administer any medication, prescription or non-prescription.

Parents will need to complete a medication form before a staff member can administer any medication.

Over the counter drugs (i.e. Tylenol, Sudafed, and cough syrups) can only be administered by the staff if accompanied by a doctor’s note, which states the child’s name, the name of the medication, the dosage, and the criteria for administering the medication.

The Purpose School staff cannot administer any drug/medicine that has expired. A daily record of medication administered by staff is maintained in the child's file, located in Director's office.

Chronic Health Conditions

We are required to have an Individual Health Care Plan on file for a student with a chronic health condition. If your child has a chronic medical condition (Food Allergies, asthma, etc.), you will be asked to have your child's pediatrician fill out this form and sign off on any medicine that might be required while at school. We will review this plan yearly.

First Aid

Classroom teachers receive yearly training in administering EPI pens. EPI pens will be contained in a labeled plastic container and be carried in the backpack by the teacher while on walking trips outside of building.



All unused medication will be returned to Director's office and returned to parent at the end of the year by the support teacher.

The first aid kit is located in the office and checked monthly by hallway support staff, who then advises the Director if supplies are needed. The entire school staff is trained in the "5 Rights of Medicine". Please note that staff members can never give the first dose of any new medicine. This first dose must be given at home so parents can closely watch for any reaction.

All topical medications, including sunscreen, require a written medical release. We recommend the home application of sunscreen prior to attending school on warm, sunny days.

Isolation of Mildly Ill Children

Parents are requested to call the Purpose School to inform Director of child's illness. Children who become ill, or cannot keep up with the school routine during the school session will be removed from class to the comfort of the Director's office. Parents will be called immediately.

Children will be offered quiet play activity and the opportunity to rest while waiting for parent to arrive. Director and/or support teacher will provide supervision of mildly ill children.

Typically, illness that would call for a child to stay home would include temperature of 100 and over, nasal discharge that is not clear, cough, and verbal complaint of illness, loose stools, and lethargy. For illnesses that are contagious, children must be on medicine for 24 hours before returning to school.

We track all reported illnesses on the school attendance board, a health form is posted for parents to see what illnesses might be in the school.

Health Consultant

Purpose School Director consults a medically licensed individual to consult as needed on health-related issues. The Stoneham Board of Health meets two times a year with the Director to review policy, procedures, and records.

Stoneham Public Health Dept., 35 Central Street, Stoneham MA (781) 438-0501.

Injury Prevention

Classroom teacher will monitor and report any potential classroom injury hazard to the Director daily (broken equipment, etc.). Children are encouraged to wear rubber-soled shoes to school. Parents are required to remove all hanging, loose ties (drawstrings) from children's clothing to prevent any potential injury to neck while engaged in play. Teachers daily inspect classrooms, hall and playground to insure a safe environment.

Communicable Disease

Purpose School is committed to the health and safety of all children and staff. Children and staff who have been identified as having a communicable disease will be excluded from attendance of school. Parents will receive written notice of exposure to communicable disease.

Parents with consultation from a physician shall inform Purpose School of child's non-communicable disease status and return date to school.

Infection Control Procedures

First Congregational Church Janitor (20 hours per week) cleans Purpose School daily after school sessions. All floors and rugs are vacuumed daily, tables and floors are washed with non-toxic anti-bacterial commercial cleaner. Trash bins are lined daily with plastic liners and washed with bleach weekly. Bathrooms are cleaned and disinfected daily.

Support teachers maintain sanitary conditions in bathrooms during school session, including the restocking of drinking cups, paper towels, latex gloves and toilet tissue.

Classroom equipment, toys and materials are maintained and washed regularly by classroom teachers. Disposable eating utensils, plates, and cups are used in the classrooms.

Universal Health precautions are maintained by the staff at all times when introduced to body fluids including blood. Each classroom and "outside the building" backpack is equipped with disposable gloves. All staff are instructed to wash hands before and after attending to children. A bottle of commercial hand sanitizer is kept in an adult accessible location in the classroom. Whenever your child is injured you will receive an accident report that explains the injury. The parent or assigned adult who is picking up the student that day will be asked to sign the accident report and receive a copy to take home with the child. A copy of this report is placed in the child's file as well as logged into the school's main accident log. This log is reviewed by the director and then by the Department of Early Education and Care when they come for a site visit/inspection.

Purpose School is a smoke-free building.

Family Pets

For health and safety reasons, we ask that no pets be brought into the school unless a special visit has been arranged with your child's classroom teacher.

Emergencies

All staff maintain an up to date certification in American Red Cross First Aid procedures as well as American Heart Association Pediatric CPR certification. If your child becomes seriously ill or injured in school, we will call you immediately. First aid will be performed and lots of TLC will be given. All injuries that require first aid to your child will be reported to you in writing. An injury report form signed by the parent will be entered into the child's record.

If we cannot reach you, we will contact the person whom you have listed on the enrollment form as an emergency contact. If we feel a delay in getting your child medical help will be dangerous, we will take the child and his or her medical records by ambulance to the Emergency Room of the hospital listed on the child's emergency card, or the closest available hospital. If you ever have any questions about an injury, please speak to your child's teacher as soon as possible.

Withdrawal/Termination

When parents decide to terminate the arrangements for preschool, two weeks' notice (with tuition paid) must be given to the school Director.

The Purpose School recognizes that not every situation is appropriate for every child. If, for any reason, this program is found to be unsatisfactory for any particular child, we will make every effort to discuss this with the parents in order to determine the cause and to make the necessary adjustments.

When a child's behavior continues to be unacceptable or endangers other children, the child may be referred for professional evaluation according to program referral procedures. The Purpose School does not feel, in most cases, that suspension of a child is needed when teachers and parents are working together to help the child through a difficult situation.

Purpose School will work closely with the child and family to make the school experience as successful as possible. Together, developing a plan for behavioral intervention at home and in the program works well for the child who is having difficulty. Director has referrals for parents for evaluations or therapeutic services. When parent trainings or workshops are offered, we will post for parents to attend.

When the child's adjustment to the program is unsatisfactory and the arrangements for the individual child's needs are not being properly met, and if the teachers have determined that they cannot provide for the child, it is in the best interest of the child to seek another placement.

Termination will be made on a timeline that serves the interest of the child who is leaving, as well as the other children in the program. Adequate time for "good-byes" will be provided.

Other reasons that may result in the termination of a specific child's enrollment include:

- Non-payment of tuition or lack of adherence to tuition payment policies.
- Absence of cooperation from parents with the program's efforts to resolve differences and/or meet the child's needs through parent/staff meetings or conferences.
- Abusive behaviors and/or verbal threats by parents toward program staff or other parents.
- Parents disciplining children (other than their own), in any way, while at the program.
- Child exhibits special needs or needs related to a serious illness that cannot be met through program accommodations. In this case, the program staff will make every effort to involve the parents and other resource persons to determine the best course of action for the child prior to any termination.
- Chronically late picking up child at scheduled time. More than 3 instances will result in a late fee.
- Non-payment of the first tuition installment by the deadline will result in a loss of placement.

School Inspections

The Purpose School is inspected and licensed every two years by the Department of Early Education and Care.

Other yearly inspections include...

- Stoneham Board of Health
- Atlas Alarm Company
- Keane Fire and Safety Equipment
- Stoneham Building Department
- Stoneham Fire Department

Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a staff member realizes that a child is missing when taking a routine head-count, she/he must quickly identify the missing child and inform the program Director. The Director will immediately lockdown the building and rally extra staff to search the building. Another staff member will conduct an outdoor perimeter check. If the child is not immediately found, the Director will call 911, parents, and the Department of Early Education and Care. Extra staff will continue to search and follow the direction of public officials.

Evacuation Policy

The Director conducts regular (monthly) school evacuation drills. Evacuation exit plans are posted in each classroom and checked by Director. When instructed by the Director, the Hallway Staff activates the (in school) emergency bell. Teachers will alert children and take a head count as they exit the classroom and proceed (with emergency bags) out designated exits. In the event that the designated exit is blocked, teachers will find the nearest safe exit. The Director and hallway staff will make a final sweep of all classrooms and make sure that the entire building has been cleared.

The evacuation meeting spot will be across Church Street on the Town Common. Once evacuated to Town Common, teachers will take attendance and report numbers to hallway staff who will compare the numbers to the daily attendance sheet. An accurate count is announced to the Director who will then give instructions based on the situation at hand. If it is a drill, teachers will be instructed to return to the building.

If an actual evacuation is necessary, the teachers will be instructed to walk the children to Saint Patrick's School at 20 Pleasant Street. Upon arrival, the Director will designate a few staff members to notify parents via cell phones of location change and ask that they pick up their children as soon as possible. Necessary parent contact information as well as medicine and first aid supplies will be on hand in the previously described emergency bag.

Please note that if an evacuation is due to a larger town-wide situation, we will follow the lead of emergency personal and relocate as directed. Other possible evacuation locations are Town Hall, Stoneham Middle School, and Stoneham Public Library. If a situation requires us to shelter at Saint Patrick's, or in place at Purpose School for an extended period of time, both locations have the ability to provide us with food, water, bathrooms, and activities.

Please make sure that you always notify us of any new or changed emergency phone and cell phone numbers.

Lock-Down Procedures

“Lock-down” procedures are designed to keep children and staff safe within the facility until police or other emergency responders can respond and eliminate the threat. In a facility with multiple classrooms, such as a preschool, “lock-down” typically involves gathering all the children in their classroom, closing and locking all interior doors, and covering interior windows. Lights in each classroom will be turned off, and children will be asked to sit on the floor and remain quiet, out of sight lines from the door.

The Director will call 911, instruct hallway staff to alert teachers of immediate threat verbally or via walkie talkies. Teachers will lock doors, cover windows, turn off lights, gathering children as mentioned above and wait for emergency personnel. However, in certain situations (depending on the proximity of the threat, the number of staff available and the possibility of escape), it may be best for some or all of the occupants to flee the building when an intruder enters. Each classroom teacher will take control of the situation and handle the safety of her students to the best of her ability. All classrooms, school office, hallway monitor and church secretary have walkie-talkies in their work areas to communicate with each other when emergencies arise both in school and outside of the building.

Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

- Contact the Department of Children and Families (DCF): 22 Pleasant Street Malden, MA. Phone (781) 388-7100, Fax (781) 324-2209.
- As mandated reporters, staff receive yearly training on how to recognize signs of abuse and/or neglect including sexual abuse and emotional abuse and/or neglect.
- Teachers will report suspected abuse or neglect to the Director, who will notify D.C.F. and inform the Purpose School Committee. A verbal report (51A) will be made within 24 hours, followed by a written report within 48 hours. Our health care consultant could be consulted if abuse or neglect was questionable prior to such report.
- Director will notify reporting staff member of the actions taken regarding her/his report. If staff member is not satisfied with said action she/he will call D.C.F. directly on behalf of the child.
- Allegations of abuse/neglect by staff members would be reported first to the school Director and then to the Purpose School Committee. Procedures for reporting such abuse/neglect would be the same as if a parent were involved. Any allegation against a staff member or the school itself will be reported to the EEC (Department of Early Education and Care), as well as D.C.F. A suspected staff member would not be allowed to work directly with children until the EEC and D.C.F. investigations were completed. Director and all staff members will fully cooperate in any investigation. All requirements of the EEC will be met prior to the return of the staff member.
- All staff are required to produce a clear C.O.R.I. (Criminal Offense Record Investigation) prior to employment.

First Congregational Church School Committee

The School Committee is made up of five members of the church, selected by the Trustees. The committee meets once a month with the Director to check in on school operations. The committee then reports back to the church Trustees.

The School Committee oversees:

- Supervision of the Director and staff
- The budget
- Written Parent concerns
- Parent surveys results
- Handbook and policy changes
- All requests for Purpose School use of church space



Referral Resources

Health Care Consultants:

Stoneham Board of Health 35 Central Street Stoneham, MA 02180
(781) 438-0501

Child Services: Early Intervention:

Boston Regional Child Development
#8F Henshaw Street Woburn, MA
(781) 935-3855

North Shore Children's Developmental Assessment
Diagnostic Clinic:
(978) 745-2100

Evaluation & Speech Therapy

Stoneham South School (781) 279-3880
Boston Medical Center (617) 638-8000
Child at Risk Hotline 1-800-792-5200
Lead Poison Prevention 1-800-532-9571
Mass Dental Society 1-800-342-8747
Mass Eye and Ear Associates 617-523-7900

Hospitals

Children's Hospital: Main (617) 355-6000
Child Development Unit (617) 355-6511
C.O.R.E. Evaluations (617) 355-7025

Winchester Hospital (781) 729-9000
Melrose/Wakefield Hospital (781) 979-3000

Schools

Stoneham Public Schools (781) 279-3800
Melrose Public Schools (781) 662-2000
Reading Public Schools (781) 942-9043
Wakefield Public School (781) 246-6400
Winchester Public School (781) 721-7001
Medford Public School (781) 393-2268
Woburn Public School (781) 937-8204

Parenting

Families First, Positive Discipline and Parenting (781) 868-7687
Parental Stress Line (800) 632-8188
Parents helping Parents (800) 882-1250



Notes

Revised April 4, 2019