



**Huguenot Street Cooperative
Nursery School**

Member Handbook

WELCOME!

We are happy to welcome you and your child to the Huguenot Street Cooperative Nursery School. Please take a few moments to familiarize yourself with the information contained in this handbook. Keep it handy as a reference guide to the day-to-day operation of the school.

Once you have read the handbook, any questions you may have can be directed to your class representative or any other member of the Board of Directors. As a cooperative nursery school we encourage inquiries, comments, and suggestions from the membership throughout the year.

MISSION

To create an environment that cultivates the educational, cultural and social growth of our children through a developmental, child-centered approach in which parents share in the ownership by contributing time, knowledge and experience

PHILOSOPHY

The Huguenot Street Cooperative Nursery School (HSCNS) is a non-profit, non-sectarian, cooperative school for children ages 2-5. The goal of our program is the enrichment of each child's preschool experience through the development of self-expression and motor skills, and through the encouragement of good habits like sharing, listening and cooperating with others.

HOW THE COOPERATIVE WORKS

As a cooperative nursery school, the HSCNS relies on parents, teachers and students to work together to operate, maintain and participate in every aspect of the school. The cooperative model brings us all closer together to create a dynamic and enriching learning experience for the children.

Board of Directors - The organizational body of the school is a Board of Directors made up of cooperative and community members. The board is composed of a President, Vice President of Membership, Vice President of Education, Vice President of Fund Raising, Secretary, Treasurer, four Parent Representatives (one from each class) and three Community Representatives (a Reform Church liaison, a teacher representative and an Americorp program liaison).

The Board of Directors meets monthly, usually on the first Tuesday of the month (see school calendar for schedule). All Board meetings are open to cooperative members. The Board is governed by its by-laws, which are available to all members in a white binder on the shelves of the 4 year-old classroom or by request of the Secretary. The minutes of each board meeting are also available to all members in that binder or by request of the Secretary. The agenda for each meeting is published a week or so before the meeting date and will be posted on the bulletin board in the hall. Please speak with the President if you wish to place an item for discussion on the agenda.

Teaching Staff - The cooperative employs two teachers. Kathleen Desmery teaches the 2-year-old class and the 3-year-old class. Doree Langan teaches the 4-year-old class and the mixed 3 and 4-year old class.

Committees – The success of our cooperative program is contingent upon the active involvement of the entire membership. This is accomplished primarily through committee work. Over the years, the school has consistently benefited from the enthusiasm, expertise and special talents and interests that each parent contributes to the committees. The main committees are:

- Administration
- Education
- Fund-raising
- Publicity
- Grounds
- Hospitality
- Membership

These committee names and functions may change based upon the current needs of the school. Ad-hoc committees may also be created during the course of the year.

Any projects by committee that require the use of school funds, whether budgeted or otherwise, must be presented to, and approved by, the Board of Trustees prior to initiation.

Committee Heads are responsible for maintaining parent involvement, delegation, meeting planning and follow-through of all projects and responsibilities. They are also responsible for keeping the Board of Trustees updated regarding activity of the committee.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

- Committee involvement – The importance of committee work cannot be overstated. You may serve on as many committees as you like, but a representative from each family must actively serve on at least one committee during the year. There will be an opportunity to sign up for committees on orientation night. If you wish to join a committee part way through the year, just speak to the committee chairperson. The board of trustees reserves the right to assign committee positions to parents who have not volunteered to serve.
- Classroom participation (except for parents paying non-classroom participation rate of tuition). See “Classroom Participation” section.
- Availability for field trips (required for 2-year-old class parents, encouraged for all other classes). See “Field Trips” section.
- Participation in fund-raising activities.
- Prompt payment of tuition and fees. See “Payment Schedule and Policy” section.
- Maintenance of school property and playground.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Unless a field trip is scheduled, a typical school day for your child may include:

- Free Choice of Activities – These include easel painting, play dough, texture/sand table, blocks, house corner, books, puzzles and board games.
- Circle time – The children meet as a group with their teacher to talk about the day's activities. Circle time may include music, rhythm, dramatic activities, games or stories.
- Project – Children are encouraged to do the project, yet they are not forced to join the others at the project table. The project may involve artwork or food preparation.
- Clean up – All children are asked to help pick up and put away toys and games.
- Snack – Children wash their hands at the sink and help pass out cups and napkins for a healthy snack and drink.
- Story time/Show and tell (older classes)
- Specials – During the winter special classes are offered in music and gymnastics.
- Gross Motor play – weather permitting, children spend a portion of each day outside on the playground. If the weather is bad other activities are held downstairs.

CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

Parent participation in the classroom has always been an integral part of our cooperative program. It is a very rewarding experience for the parents as well as for the children.

Scheduling – The teachers schedule parent participation on a rotating basis. Each parent participates roughly once every month for each class in which their child is enrolled. Schedules are posted in the classrooms. Please make a note of the days you are scheduled to come in. If at any time you are unable to participate, it is your responsibility to find another participating parent to substitute for you. Please do not bring anyone with you when you participate, including infants.

Guidelines for the Participating Parent in the Classroom – The parent who is participating in the classroom for the day acts as an assistant to the teacher. Please discuss your responsibilities with the teacher when you arrive on the morning of your assignment.

As the parent assistant, it will be your responsibility to:

- Arrive 15 minutes before the class begins, or 8:45am. This allows for a smooth transition for the children and gives the teacher time to discuss and plan the morning's activities with you.
- Greet the children with a smile and help them get established with an activity at the beginning of class.
- Assist children with art projects as needed. This will include helping children put on smocks, writing their names on their artwork and washing their hands. Encourage children to do as much for themselves as they can.

- Aid the teacher with general supervision. Encourage children who are not constructively involved to find an activity.
- Make the teacher aware of any misbehavior or conflicts that arise between children. Encourage children to work out disagreements on their own. Please defer to the teacher's judgment with regard to discipline. It is school policy that the teacher will handle any disciplinary actions necessary in accordance to his/her contract.
- Encourage all children to help pick up and put away toys and games.
- Provide the snack and drink for the day. Please do your best to make sure the snack is nutritious. Limit sweets unless there is a special occasion such as a birthday celebration. The drink should be plain milk, water or 100% juice. A list of suggested snacks is in your orange folder.
- Help the teacher maintain a sanitary classroom by following basic rules of hygiene. This includes cleaning the table before snack is served with disinfectant spray, washing your own hands before snack is served or after assisting with or using the bathroom, and helping children wash their own hands before snack and after using the bathroom. Please note that teachers are responsible for changing soiled diapers. Please supervise the classroom while the teacher attends to the student.
- Help the children dress for the outdoors.
- Supervise the children on the playground along with the teacher. Please remain on the playground until every parent or guardian from your class has arrived.
- Clean the classroom at the end of the school day. This includes sweeping the floor, cleaning the tables, washing items in the sink, straightening the bathroom area and putting away stray toys. Anything swept off the floor must go in the garbage (i.e. sand does not go back in the sandbox). Before leaving please check with the teacher to see if any additional help is needed.
- Please note your personal health before entering the school. If you were ill the night before, are ill that day or are showing signs of becoming ill, please refrain from coming to school. A call to another parent to switch days is appropriate. Or, call the teacher so they might find another parent that morning. Any contagious disease is unacceptable.
- It is the school's policy not to allow siblings of students to be in the classroom during school time when the parent is the Parent Helper. Exceptions can be made in dire emergencies, however, it is preferred that all parents make child care arrangements for siblings while the parent is tending to this school responsibility. This allows for the parent to be focused on the students in the classroom and keeps continuity for the children.

Sharing Your Talents and Interests – If you have ideas for projects or activities, please share them the teacher. Our teachers are always open to new ideas.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Arrival and Departure – All classes meet from 9am to 11:30am, except the MWF four-year-old class, which meets until 12 noon. Please try to arrive at school on time (9:00 sharp) but do not arrive prior to 9am unless you are the parent assistant for the day. Parents are encouraged to leave promptly upon dropping off their children. Remember there is plenty of time for socializing after school is over. An on-time start will allow the teachers to offer a rewarding day.

When returning to pick up your child, please arrive on time (11:30 or 12:00 sharp). Please also let the teacher or parent assistant know you are removing your child. If someone other than the usual person will be picking up your child, please let the teacher know ahead of time.

Mailboxes/Bulletin Board – Please check your child's mailbox before you leave at the end of each school day. The mailboxes are our main means of communication. The monthly newsletter, scholastic book order forms, and news on upcoming events are all distributed in this manner. Your child's mailbox may also contain artwork or small items belonging to your child that might otherwise be lost. Be sure whomever you designate to pick up your child knows to check the mailbox too.

Look for postings on the bulletin board out in the hall as well as on the classroom doors. Please also check your email regularly.

Clothing – Dress your child for play. The children will be gluing, painting, and cooking. It can and does get messy! Send in a labeled box at the beginning of the school year with one complete change of clothing. Label all clothing. Dress your child to suit the weather. Please send along boots, hats and mittens as needed. Note to all parents of children wearing diapers: Please send in a package of diapers and wipes at the beginning of the school year. The teachers will notify parents if more are needed.

Toys – Please do not send your child to school with books or toys from home unless it is for Show and Tell. Toys brought from home could get lost, broken, or cause conflicts.

School Calendar – Our calendar will be distributed at the beginning of the school year. Our school follows the New Paltz Central School district calendar with regard to holidays, vacations and cancellations. Traditionally, HSCNS begins one week after the start of New Paltz School District and ends one week prior to the end of their school year. Therefore, HSCNS's first day of school will be September 13, 2006 and the last day of school will be June 8, 2007.

Snow Day Policy – If the New Paltz Central School District is closed for snow, we are closed. If the New Paltz Schools have a two-hour delay we will have school from 10:30 until noon. If New Paltz has a one-hour delay, we have school from 10 until noon. Please listen to local radio stations WEOK, WCZX, WPDH, WRWD, WDST, WQHQ or WKNY for news of delays or closings on icy, snowy or extremely cold days. You can also call the New Paltz Central School District hotline at 256-4000. If we go over the allotted New Paltz district snow days, we will try to make up the lost school time.

Field Trips – Field trips are taken on foot or by car to local areas only. A parent of a two-year-old child must accompany their child. If a parent of a three or four-year-old child cannot accompany their child they must either make arrangements with another parent or not send their child to school. Teachers cannot transport children to or from field trips by car.

Parent/Teacher Conferences – These are scheduled in the spring for teachers to discuss each child's progress with his/her parent(s).

New York State Registration – Non-public nursery schools and kindergartens in the state of New York can voluntarily adhere to the registration guidelines. The HSCNS members, staff and children do follow the voluntary registration guidelines for non-public nursery issued by the Commissioner of Education for the State of New York to the best of their ability and resources.

Fire Evacuation Plan – In case of the fire alarm being activated, whether for actual fire or other reasons, the children will be escorted from the building by their teachers, parent helpers and Americorp volunteers. All parents will be notified immediately if it is an actual fire. Everyone will exit through the outside door into the playground area. They will walk to, and stand by, the fence that is the farthest from the building, but still inside the fenced-in area. They will wait there until told otherwise by the New Paltz Fire Department or Church Official. In the case that the children need to be moved from the property to a safer location, all parents will be notified immediately and the New Paltz Police or Fire Department would be responsible for the location and time of that removal situation.

Lockout or Lockdown – The HSCNS will follow the guidelines provided by the New Paltz Central School District and the New York State Education Department in regards to emergency situations that may occur during school hours. These emergencies include natural and human-caused disasters, acts of terrorism and local environmental emergencies. The school shall become aware of such occurrences by means of parent's relay of information, church informant, fire/police or auditory alarms by local officials.

To maintain safety and security in our classrooms each day, please be aware of the following:

- The school's main entrance door will be locked after drop-off, about 9:30 and will be unlocked 10 minutes before pick-up. The main entrance of the Christian Education building is accessible for late drop-off and early pick-up.
- The classroom doors to the school playground are locked at all times, except when the children are in the playground.
- We perform mock safety drills and fire drills yearly.
- Teachers do not leave the school until all children are safely in the hands of parents or guardians.

Should the school receive word that the national alert level is being raised beyond the normal level due to any of the above emergency reasons, then the children will remain in the school in a lockout situation. The following safety precautions would occur:

A LOCKOUT – most commonly used when the threat is general or the incident is occurring outside the school building, on or off school property. No unauthorized personnel will be allowed into the building. Students will be able to continue the normal school day but will not have any outdoor activities. If permitted and possible, parents will be notified immediately. Depending on the situation, children stay for the remainder of the school day or are picked-up immediately by parents/guardians.

A LOCKDOWN – Most commonly used when the building has an intruder. The children, teachers and parent helpers are secured in the rooms they are currently in and no one is allowed to leave the room or building until the situation has been resolved. No one will be allowed to enter the building or be on the school grounds except

emergency personnel, police/ambulance should they be necessary. No student may be picked-up until the event has been resolved and then only released to parent or guardian. This enables the school to account for the safety of our children as well as keeping innocent people from coming into a dangerous situation. If permitted and possible, parents will be notified immediately.

Classroom Temperature – Should the classroom heat malfunction and the temperature in the classroom should drop below 65 degrees there will be no classes held in the room until heat returns. Parents will be notified either the evening prior or when they arrive at school that day. This is an inconvenience we wish we could avoid, however our building is known for having heating and cooling issues.

Substitute Teachers – Should one of our teachers need to be absent from class for any reason, HSCNS will provide a substitute teacher for the school day. Any member who volunteers to fill this role will be paid a stipend of \$30.00 per day. Members who wish to volunteer may sign-up on the Substitute Teacher List at Orientation Night in September. Substitute teacher reimbursement forms are available in a white folder on the shelves in the 4 year-old classroom.

BASIC HEALTH RULES FOR DAILY ATTENDANCE

If your child has a flushed appearance, sore throat, fever or rash, DO NOT bring him or her to school. Although these conditions may not constitute an illness, the teacher should be notified. Before returning to school, the child's temperature should be normal for at least 24 hours.

- Colds: Stay home until head is clear, nose mucus has thickened and cough is minimal.
- Bacterial Infection: (such as strep Throat, or an ear infection) Stay home until all symptoms, including fever, have been gone for at least 24 hours.
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye): This is extremely contagious. Stay home until all symptoms are clear.
- Viral Infection: (such as respiratory or intestinal flu.) Stay home until child is back to normal and strength returns.
- Measles: Call teacher immediately! Stay home until rash has disappeared completely for 24 hours (usually 7-10 days).
- Chicken Pox: Stay home until sores are scabs and notify teacher.
- Lice: Stay home until eggs or lice are no longer found. Notify teacher as soon as possible to avoid an epidemic. Treat at home with appropriate medication and wash all bedding, clothing, combs and brushes.
- Allergies: Teacher must be notified of any allergies. They should be listed on the medical alert form as well as the background information sheet.
- Other: This includes any illness not specifically listed here, accidents, surgery, etc. Stay home until released by your doctor to return to school.

- Parents - Please note your own personal health before entering the school. If you were ill the night before, are ill that day or are showing signs of becoming ill, please refrain from coming to school for any length of time. Pick-up and drop-off are acceptable, but Parent Helper or other extended exposure to the children is not.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE AND POLICY

Tuition is due the first of each month for eight months (October – May). It is imperative that your payment be prompt in order for us to meet our monthly financial obligations. After the 10th of the month a \$15 late penalty will be charged and recorded by the treasurer. If tuition is not paid in full by the end of the month, your child will not be able to attend classes and your spot may be given away. To secure your spot after the last day of the month, tuition must be paid in full for the rest of the year. There will be a \$15 penalty on returned checks.

If you wish to pay the year's tuition at the beginning of the school year, please do so by September 15th.

Tuition payments may be placed in either classroom or mailed to the Huguenot Street Cooperative Nursery School, 92 Huguenot Street, New Paltz, NY 12561.

Since enrollment is limited and our expenses continue regardless of individual attendees, no refunds will be made for absences, scheduled holidays or emergency school closings.

If you are unable to pay your child's tuition due to financial hardship, please contact the President or Treasurer. All such information will be kept confidential.

The school will not fill any open student spaces after March 1st in order to maintain classroom continuity.

Students must be the appropriate age to attend our classes:

Two-year-olds must be 2 on or before September 15 of current school year.

Three-year-olds must be 3 on or before December 1st of current school year.

Four-year-olds must be 4 on or before December 1st of current school year.

All required paperwork must be completed and submitted to the VP of Membership prior to the first day of school. Failure to do so will result in your child not being allowed to attend HSCNS until it is received.

The registration fee, application fee and security deposit are non-refundable. If a student must leave the school and HSCNS is able to fill their position with another student within one month of their withdrawal, then the security deposit will be refunded. If HSCNS is unable to fill the open space then the security deposit is not refunded to the family.

Please note that all registration paperwork submitted to HSCNS will be held in a file with the VP of Membership for 3 years. After which time all documents will be destroyed unless otherwise requested by individual member.

Registration Procedure: The HSCNS uses a lottery system to process registration. There is in-house registration for all existing members, then an alumni registration for any past members wishing to reenter the school and finally the open registration which is for the community. Each is run as a lottery system to ensure that registration is fair to all. On the day of registration, which is arranged by the membership committee headed by the VP of Membership, anyone interested will come to the specified location at the school to pay the registration fee and submit a ballot to the class bowl they wish to enter. A neutral party will then draw the names at a specified time. All are welcome to attend the drawing however, it is not necessary to be present as the VP of Membership will call everyone who submits a ballot. The names will be added to the class roster in the order in which they are drawn from the bowl. Once the class spots are filled, any additional names drawn from the bowl will be listed in order on a wait list. Registration paperwork, registration fee and security deposit must be submitted and paid for by May 31 unless otherwise specified by the VP of Membership.