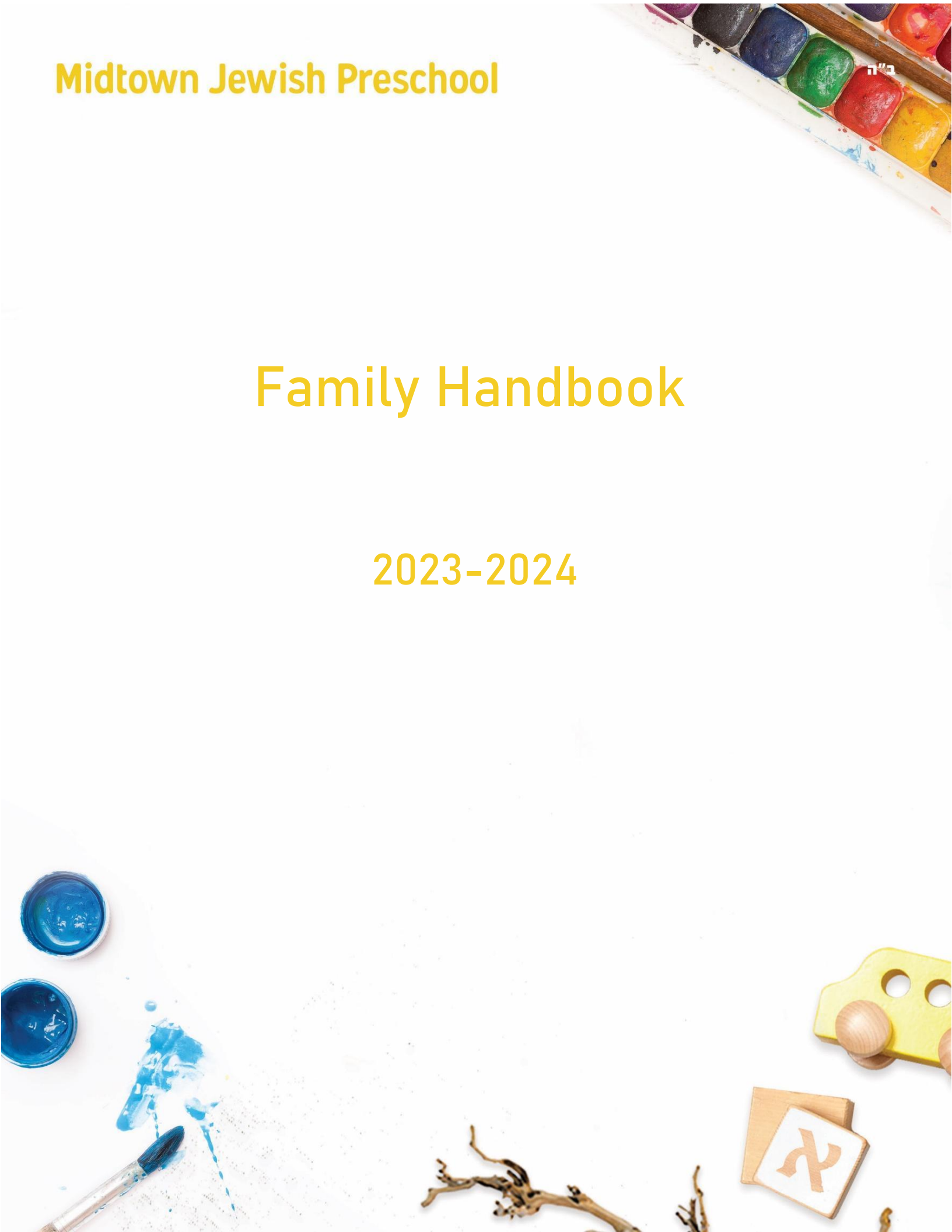


Midtown Jewish Preschool

Family Handbook

2023-2024



Midtown Jewish Preschool



A note from us:

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that we welcome you to The Midtown Jewish Preschool! If this is your family's first year at our school, we're delighted that you're here and we hope that you and your child have a wonderful experience. If you've been here before, it's wonderful to welcome you back.

Join us in our journey as we nurture our Reggio inspired preschool, a safe haven where our friends can blossom and develop their natural creativity and curiosity in a wholesome organic atmosphere. Our aim is to provide a loving environment that fosters each child's natural creativity and curiosity as we model kindness, respect, compassion and confidence.

Thank you for allowing us to be part of your child's formative years. We are humbled by this responsibility and your faith, entrusting us with the monumental partnership in your child's upbringing.

The beginning of the school year is an exciting time, and for young children especially, it can also be an anxious time. Working together, we can smooth the path, and help your child become comfortable in what we hope will be a "home away from home." We sincerely want you to feel comfortable to come to us with any questions, concerns or suggestions you may have regarding the program and your child-now, or at any time during the year.

Welcome to the family! To a year of learning, growth, laughter and success!

Rabbi Shmuel & Chana Gopin



Midtown Jewish Preschool







Our Philosophy

As a school that stands on the foundations and tenets of Jewish culture and traditions, Midtown Jewish Preschool's vision and mission exudes Judaism's most fundamental values: kindness, compassion, confidence, and respect and responsibility for ourselves and each other. The Torah teaches us that it is the children and these formative years of education that set the tone for lives, and ultimately entire communities, filled with happiness and success.

Judaism views a child as a seed that needs the utmost nurturing and care specific to each one; every experience that a child meets will shape the color and quality of its matured self. Judaism emphasizes and outlines the concept that each child is an individual with specific needs, challenges, and strengths. Torah states *chanoch l'naar al pi darko* — we must educate each child according to his nature. We recognize that each unique child is a precious gem with special passions, gifts, needs, and interests, and our teachers work diligently and carefully to springboard their teaching off of our friends' individuality. As a true Reggio Emilia-inspired school, we value each child as strong, capable and resilient, rich with wonder and knowledge. Every child brings with him deep curiosity and potential, and we are sure to honor and respect that.

Our educational philosophy is centered on the RIE Educarer approach: having basic trust in the child to be an explorer and self-learner, learning through hands-on and uninterrupted experiential play, encouraging children to be active participants in the implemented activities, and constant and consistent observations by our teachers in order to understand the needs of our friends.

Our children's intellectual and emotional development is fostered and strengthened through exploration of their natural environment. Of utmost importance is our emphasis on the social-emotional development of the children in our school; they are encouraged to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills for a meaningful and successful life. Through philosophies such as Conscious Discipline, our teachers help the children navigate connecting



Midtown Jewish Preschool



with peers, conflict resolution, self-regulation, and development of kindness and empathy. Our school runs under the philosophy that true learning can only take place when this social-emotional development is underway.

Our Staff

'Teachers who love teaching, teach children to love learning'

We are blessed to have so many beloved Morahs (teachers), each bringing her own unique strengths and talents, but all our Morahs share a genuine passion for young children and deep respect for each child individually. Our staff members are qualified and experienced teachers, trained in early childhood education, who participate in workshops and studies for professional advancement throughout the year. All of our staff hold First Aid and CPR cards and have all necessary teaching certifications mandated by the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Who we are and how to reach us:

Midtown Jewish Preschool is a project of Chabad at Midtown. The Preschool is located at the Chabad premises

221 NE 29th St
Miami 33137
Our office number 786.402.3544

E-mail: preschool@midtownjewish.org website: midtownjewishpreschool.com

Director: Chana Gopin

E-mail: chana@midtownjewish.org Direct number: 786.266.5758



Midtown Jewish Preschool



Affiliation

Our school is an affiliate of the international Chabad Lubavitch movement that is dedicated to spreading the wonders and rewards of Judaism throughout the globe in a nonjudgmental and inclusive manner.

Chabad today, is the largest and most dynamic unified religious, educational and social force in the Jewish world. The movement boasts more than three thousand branches in nearly fifty countries on six continents.

Nearly a million Jewish children touched via our schools, institutions, summer camps and extra-curricular programs around the world each year. Our centers everywhere serve the needs of all Jews, no matter their level of knowledge, observance or affiliation.

Hours of Operation

We are currently enrolling boys and girls ages 12 months through 4 years old.

Full day program: Monday - Thursday from 8:30am - 3:30pm

Fridays from 8:30am - 2:30pm

Half day program: Monday Friday from 8:30am -12:30pm

We will do our best to offer early and after-care to accommodate working parents. Please notify us during enrollment if your family needs extended care schedule.

Morning early care: 8:00-8:30 am Afternoon after care: 3:30pm-5:00pm



Midtown Jewish Preschool



School Closings

Inclement Weather or other unforeseeable scenarios: Please note that when Miami Dade County Schools are closed for inclement weather or other unforeseeable scenarios, we will also be closed. **We will not make up for days closed.**

In the event of a pandemic or other worldwide disaster that prevents MJP from operating, tuition responsibilities will be revisited after twenty-five consecutive school days not in session.

Holidays: MJP will be closed for the Jewish and secular holidays and vacation. Please review the MJP Calendar. This will allow you to plan ahead for the days school is closed.

Fees

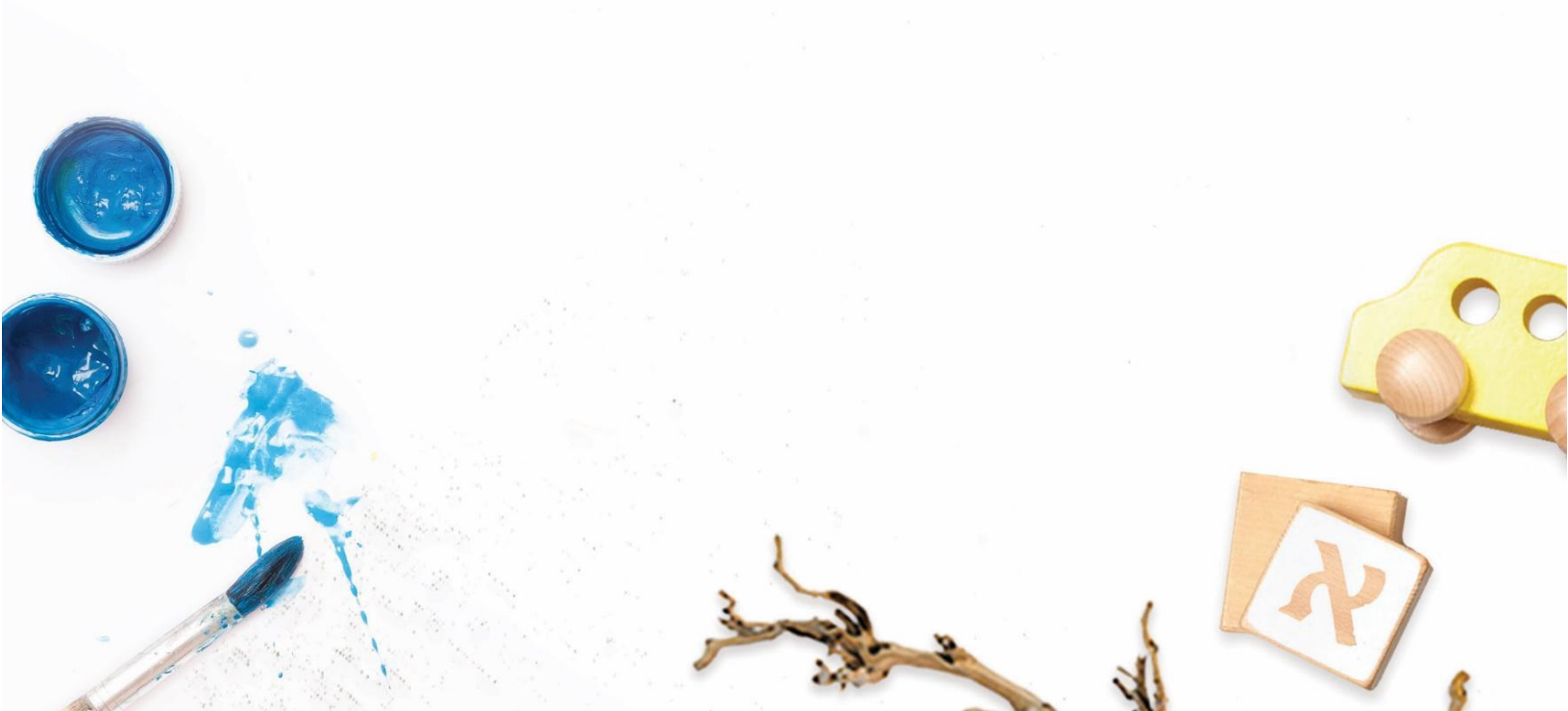
Registration \$450 Non-refundable processing fee

\$750 mandatory security fee per family

Nap Pack Purchase \$32 (Required for full time students)

Lunch \$150 monthly

Tuition fees as outlined in the registration form.



Midtown Jewish Preschool



Expulsion Policy





Reasons for expulsion, may be, but are not limited to:

- If we find a child is a danger to himself or to others.
- If we cannot adequately support or provide for his or her needs.
- If a parent is abusive to children or staff.
- If payments are not made in a timely manner.
- If all paperwork is not submitted.
- If a child is sent to school sick/ medicine is given to mask illness symptoms.
- Any other reasons as deemed necessary.

Snacks and Lunch

At MJP we strive to provide an organic and wholesome environment. Clinical dietitian Monica Auslander Moreno with Essence Nutrition has created a well-balanced, healthy, kid-friendly menu featuring fresh and wholesome ingredients serving the needs of our growing friends. See lunch menu enclosed. Our meals are kosher, and nut free. Monica also trains our staff on positive practices, her audience is implemented in the classrooms fostering a positive environment during mealtime.

If your child has any allergies or is on a special diet, please be in touch with our director so that we can determine whether we will be able to accommodate your child's needs or you will need to provide your own snacks & lunch.



Midtown Jewish Preschool



Rest Time

Children that stay for a full day are required to have a rest period.

A child who cannot sleep will be provided with quiet, restful activities. Parents are required to purchase an all-in-one nap pack, available at our office. If your child normally falls asleep with a pacifier, stuffed toy, or special blanket, please be sure to bring those items to be kept in school.

Nap sacks and special nap items will be kept in the classroom and sent home on Fridays to be washed.


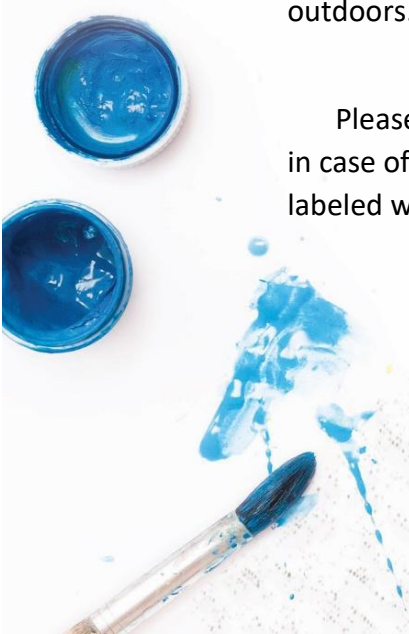
Clothing

MJP children are welcome to wear appropriate play clothing of their choice. When presenting your child with clothing choices, keep in mind to DRESS FOR MESS! We offer the children with plenty of sensory and art materials, at times despite wearing a smock children's clothing get soiled while exploring.

Our classrooms are NO SHOES ZONE to ensure our young friends can play safely in a clean environment. Keep in mind that the shoes will need to be removed before entering the classroom. Kids can wear comfortable socks, soft sole indoor shoes or may remain barefoot.

For outdoor play tennis shoes are the recommended footwear for their comfort and safety. Please send along appropriate jackets or sweaters when the weather gets cooler so that the children will be comfortable while playing outdoors.

Please make sure your child has two complete sets of clothing at the school in case of need. Pack each set of clothing in a gallon size ziploc bag, clearly labeled with his/her name.



Midtown Jewish Preschool





My Special Toys

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home to school unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity. If a younger child needs a special article for security, please discuss this with the teacher.

Toy weapons, particularly guns, water toys, and other toys that promote aggressive play are not permitted in school and will be unavailable for use in school if a child brings them in. Please assure your child that those toys are for home use and that at school, he/she has special toys and activities.

Communication and Family Partnership

A child's educational journey encompasses the unique qualities of his/ her family as an integral part of the learning experience. In our pursuit of excellence, we welcome your questions, concerns, suggestions, and ideas. We aim to keep you fully informed and updated with the happenings of the school, your child's class and his/ her development in particular. We do this via:

- ***Parents' orientation**- an evening for parents to meet their child's teachers, visit their child's new class and learn about the educational program and goals for the year.
 - * **Daily report**: Parents of toddlers will receive daily updates via our communication app with eating, diapering and sleeping information. All parents will receive weekly newsletters with pictures of the children from the week. Teachers will periodically share the process of learning that is taking place in the classroom. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of reading the updates and discussing the happenings at school with your child.
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Midtown Jewish Preschool



***Messages from the school office.** Reminders about school closings and special in-school events. Please note that our primary means of communication is via Brightwheel, our communication app. Please make sure you are receiving app updates and check the application messages as you receive them.

- * **Parent Teacher Conferences** are held in January and May. These conferences are an opportunity to discuss the uniqueness of your child and to receive an in-depth view of your child's progress. A sign-up email with time slots will be available a week before the conferences.
- * **Talk to the teacher** Please communicate with your child's teacher by sending a message on the class communication app and she will be happy to respond to your questions and concerns, or do her best to call you at her next break. Arrival and dismissal times are not appropriate times for meaningful conversation with teachers – staff must be completely involved with supervising your children without any distraction. Please do not call your child's teacher after hours unless she has specifically requested you to do so.
- * **Talk to us** Morah Chana is always available for you! She can be reached at her cell phone or her e-mail. Please avoid calling after hours, unless it's an emergency.

Important: Please advise the teachers if parents are going to be away from home for any length of time or any other special situation your family might be traversing. This is especially important if the absence is caused by unexpected conditions, such as hospitalization, which may be upsetting for your child. When teachers are aware of such conditions, they can be of great support and help in alleviating your child's distress.



Midtown Jewish Preschool

Birthday Party Guidelines

Birthdays are such an important day and we would love to celebrate and make it special for each of the friends at MJP. The focus is your child and His/her uniqueness, and the class coming together to celebrate him/her!

We have put together these guidelines for celebrating a birthday in class:

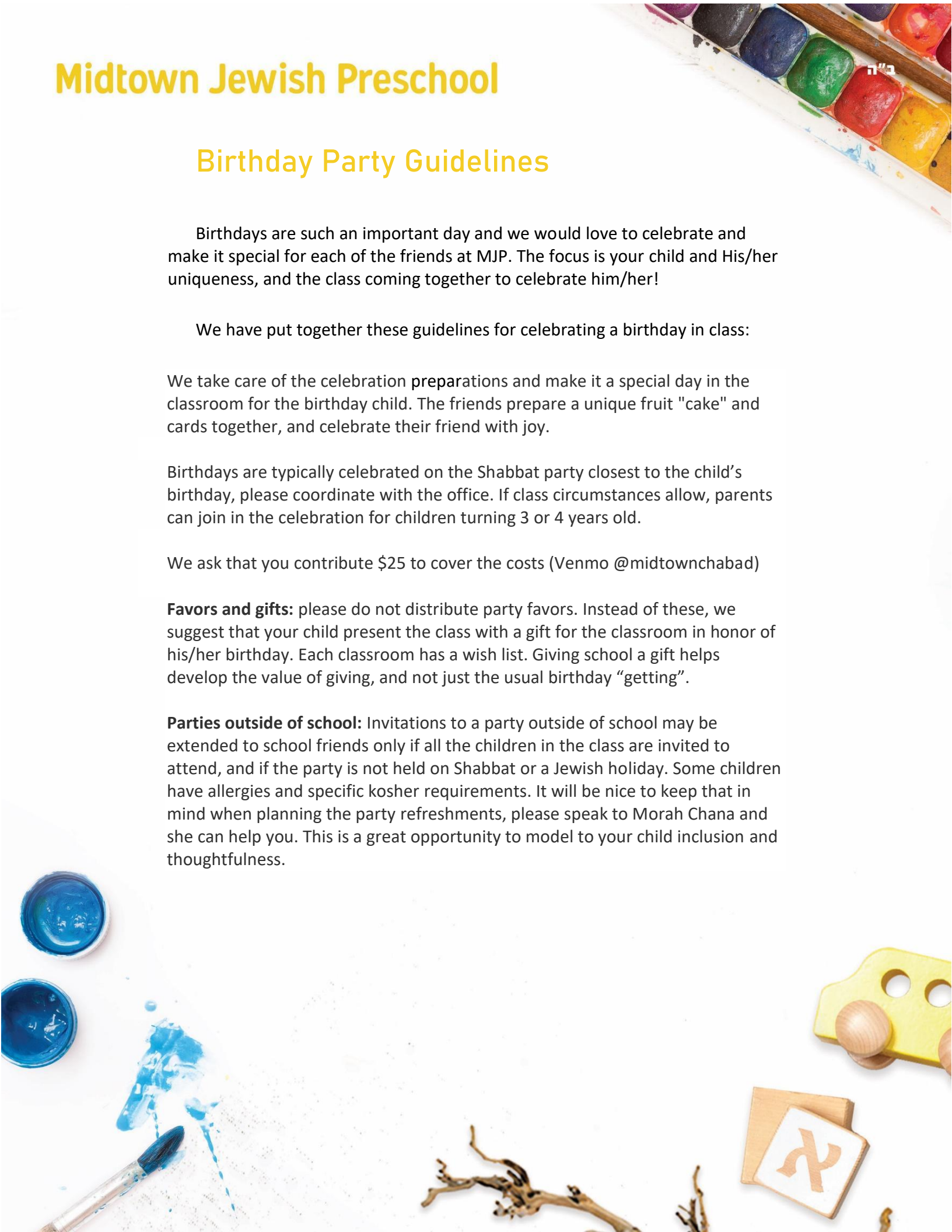
We take care of the celebration preparations and make it a special day in the classroom for the birthday child. The friends prepare a unique fruit "cake" and cards together, and celebrate their friend with joy.

Birthdays are typically celebrated on the Shabbat party closest to the child's birthday, please coordinate with the office. If class circumstances allow, parents can join in the celebration for children turning 3 or 4 years old.

We ask that you contribute \$25 to cover the costs (Venmo @midtownchabad)

Favors and gifts: please do not distribute party favors. Instead of these, we suggest that your child present the class with a gift for the classroom in honor of his/her birthday. Each classroom has a wish list. Giving school a gift helps develop the value of giving, and not just the usual birthday "getting".

Parties outside of school: Invitations to a party outside of school may be extended to school friends only if all the children in the class are invited to attend, and if the party is not held on Shabbat or a Jewish holiday. Some children have allergies and specific kosher requirements. It will be nice to keep that in mind when planning the party refreshments, please speak to Morah Chana and she can help you. This is a great opportunity to model to your child inclusion and thoughtfulness.



Midtown Jewish Preschool



Shabbat Party

All groups will have a Shabbat party on Friday. Every class has its own special rituals- it is truly a highlight of the Midtown Jewish Preschool experience. Throughout the year, the students in the older toddler, 3s and 4s will each have opportunities to be the “Shabbat Star”, Parents will be notified in advance so that their child can come dressed in Shabbat festive attire.

Arrival and Departure Procedures




School begins at 8:30 am and ends at 3:30 pm. Drop off will be by the classroom door. Pick up will be from the first floor lobby. Parents should check in/out their child on the Brightwheel app when dropping off and picking up their child.

We ask that you cooperate with our school policy and not bring your child before 8:30 am as our teachers are setting up and getting ready for the day. If you arrive before drop off time, you may wait at the second floor preschool lobby. We also ask for you not to pick up after 3:30 pm, except when aftercare arrangements have been made. Pick up after dismissal time will result in a \$2 per minute fee. Late pickups will be billed as aftercare at the end of every month.

Children arriving after 9:30 am will be accompanied to their classroom by a staff member. If your child needs to be picked up early, please notify the office on the app and a staff member will accompany your child to the first floor lobby.

Nannies/family members picking up a child on a regular basis will be required to sign in/out the child on Brightwheel.

No child will be released to a person not authorized in writing by a parent/guardian. Authorized people to pick up indicated in the registration form will be updated in the app. We will check photo ID before releasing your child to someone unknown to us.



Midtown Jewish Preschool



To add an authorized person to pick up, email their full name, phone number and ID (Indicate if this authorization is for one time or for the school year) to preschool@midtownjewish.org. Our office will update that information on the app. (Please do not add an approved pick up person yourself) **If a friend or family member is on the app, but does not pick up your child on a regular basis, please send a message on the app the day he/she picks up to ensure our staff is aware of this change.**





Let us know! Please let your child's teacher know via Brightwheel message within the first hour of the school day if your child will not be in attendance. If your family will be away for any reason, please let us know in advance.

A Note on Greeting and Starting the Day

We like to greet children warmly at the start of the day. Our greeting time extends until about 9:00am. After that time, we transition into more formal classroom activities and the focus of the staff is on the group as a whole. For your child to have that warm one-to-one beginning, it is important that you arrive on time. If you are late, we will do our best to smooth the way, but please understand the limits of the situation.

Discipline Policy

Discipline at MJP takes the form of positive classroom management. Our goal is for the child to learn self-management skills and inner control through participation in a safe, loving and well-planned environment. Children will be provided with consistent routines and realistic limits and expectations. Children shall not be subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating or frightening.



Midtown Jewish Preschool



Discipline shall not be associated with food, rest or toileting. Spanking or any form of physical punishment is prohibited. We ensure that age appropriate, respectful, constructive disciplinary practices are used for children in our care.

Health and Safety

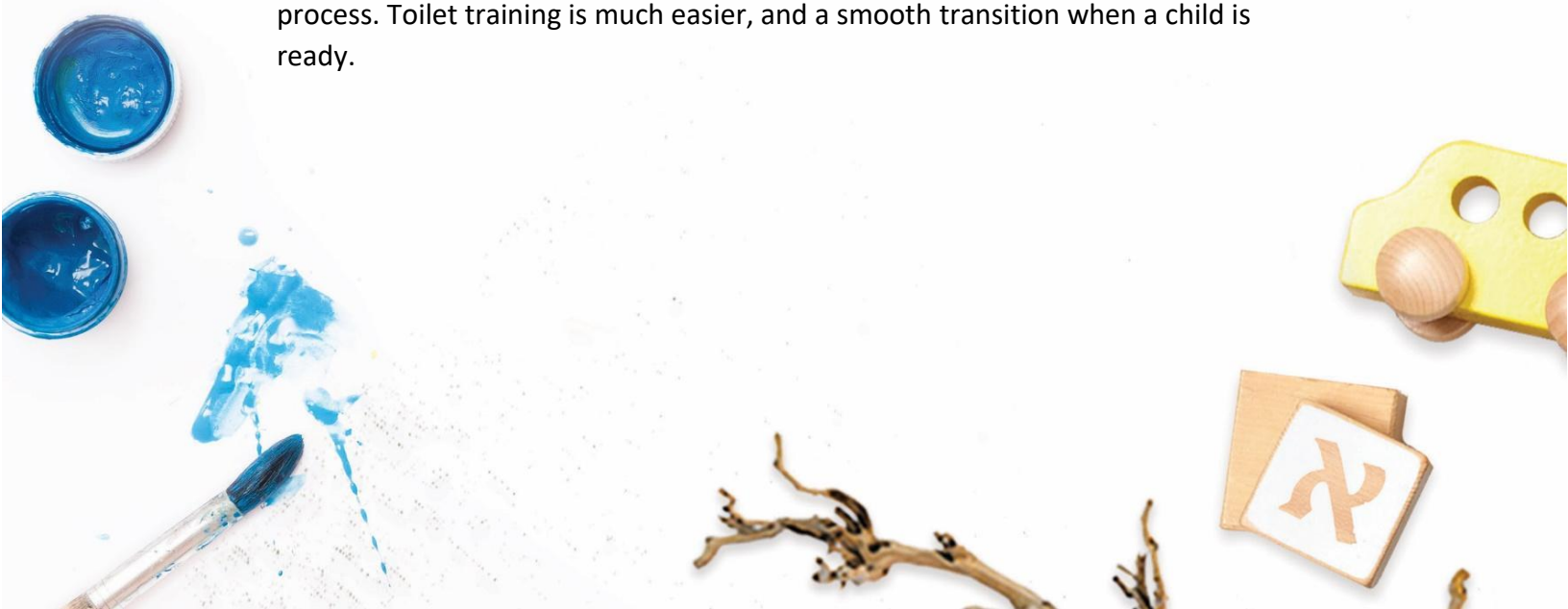
Evacuation Procedure

In the event that MJP needs to evacuate the building due to site-related problems, it will promptly notify the emergency authorities after the facility has been evacuated. Families will be notified via Brightwheel app and text messages. We will move all the students to Taco Chido's outdoor seating area. Staff will wait until all parents and caregivers have picked up their children.

Toileting and Diapering

Children do not need to be able to use the toilet independently to enter our program and the timing for initiating toilet training is up to the parents to determine based on your child's readiness. Most children are developmentally ready to begin toilet training between the ages of 2 1/2 and 3 1/2, however each child does develop at his/her own rate.

Learning to use the toilet is a big event in a young child's life. Timing is everything when it comes to potty on a not-quite-ready kid only prolongs the process. Toilet training is much easier, and a smooth transition when a child is ready.



Midtown Jewish Preschool



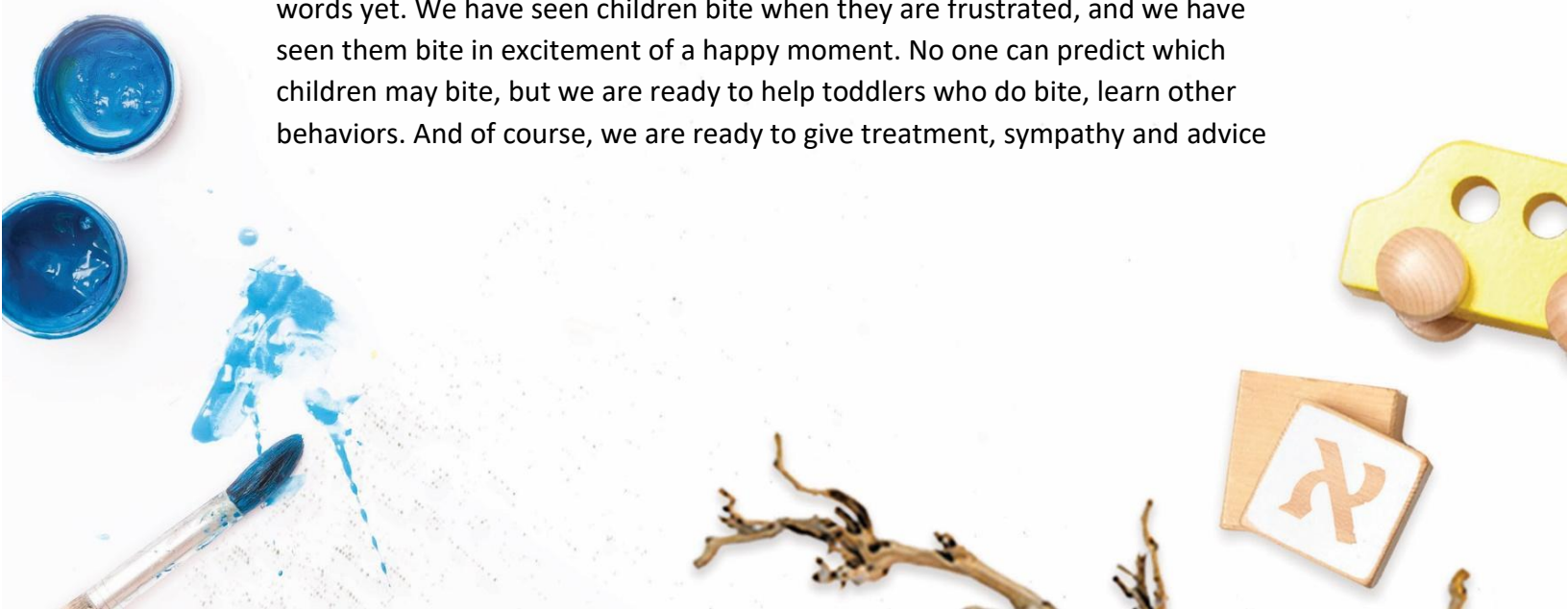
Children should be sent to school in underpants only after they had two successful dry days in a row at home and have had a bowel movement in the toilet at home. Please be realistic about your child's ability to use the potty when sending him/her to school in underpants. It is very important that your child be able to verbalize his/her need to use the toilet in order to be successful at school. It is helpful to discuss toilet training with your child's morah in advance of bringing your child to school in underpants.

We will take newly trained children to the bathroom frequently; however, do not be alarmed if they are not as successful at school as they are at home. Children who are completely trained are taken to the bathroom as-needed basis and during appropriate transitions (before outdoor play, lunch, and naptime). We are always mindful to ask children many times during the day if they have a need to use the bathroom. Children who are trained or in the process of being trained must be dressed in clothing that is easily taken on and off.

It is best to attempt the toilet training process over extended weekend (beyond the typical 2 days) or longer breaks at a time when your family can be home with few social engagements. This process should be stress-free and if many accidents occur, try another time. We understand accidents do happen and we are prepared to deal with them in a loving way. However, if your child has more accidents than successes, we will need to reconsider whether underwear is still an appropriate option in school.

Biting

There are many reasons toddlers may bite. Sometimes the biting is related to teething. Sometimes toddlers bite to express feelings they cannot express with words yet. We have seen children bite when they are frustrated, and we have seen them bite in excitement of a happy moment. No one can predict which children may bite, but we are ready to help toddlers who do bite, learn other behaviors. And of course, we are ready to give treatment, sympathy and advice



Midtown Jewish Preschool

to children who are bitten. Here are the ways we work to prevent biting and how we respond to it when it does happen:

- We program the day so frustration levels are kept to a minimum by providing a calm and cheerful atmosphere, stimulating and soothing age appropriate activities and multiples of favorite toys. We also work to model acceptable and appropriate behavior for the children.
- If a bite does occur, we help the child who was bitten. We reassure him or her and care for the bite. We wash it with soap and water and use a cold pack. If it is likely that the bite may get dirty, we will also cover it to keep it clean. If your child is bitten, we let you know about the bite. We also respond to the child who did the biting. Our specific response varies depending on the circumstances, but our basic message is to help the child learn an appropriate way to express his/her emotion.

The teachers and director try to analyze the cause of consistent or pattern biting by collecting careful data and we work to develop a plan to address the cause of the biting, and put all our energy into keeping children safe and helping children who are stuck in biting patterns. When we need to develop such a plan, we share the details with parents so they know specifically how we are addressing this problem. If necessary, a therapist may need to be called in for further evaluation or a shadow requested to help the child relearn the necessary behavior.

We ask parents to keep us informed if their child is biting at home. Children who bite in school do not necessarily bite at home. But if your child is biting in both places, it is important for all of us to be consistent in dealing with it. Communication is very important in order to help your child stop biting.

We wish we could guarantee that there would never be any biting in our preschool, but we know there can be no such guarantee. We will support your children whether they bite or are bitten. We want the best for all the children in our program. If you want more information on biting or have any questions or concerns, please let us know.



Midtown Jewish Preschool



Fire / Disaster Drills

During the year, we will conduct fire and disaster drills teaching students our safety procedures in a non-frightening manner. During fire drills, the children will practice evacuating the building in a quick matter.

Each class is outfitted with a “go to” bag with snacks, water, and class info to be taken when evacuating.

Minor Injuries & Illnesses



All of MJP’s staff members are trained and hold current CPR cards, they are well equipped to handle minor injuries, such as superficial cuts and bruises. If we have any questions as to the severity of an injury, we will contact parents at the emergency numbers we have on file. An incident report will be filled up and updated on the Brightwheel App. Parents will be contacted in the event their child becomes ill or injured at school. The school faculty will use their own discretion to determine if the child is well enough to remain at school.

Allergies

Please communicate with us any suspected allergy your child might have, we will need to understand the symptoms and safety measures to safely care for our child.

Medications

MJP does not administer medication (note exception below). Parents should give medication before and after school. Parents will be required to come to school to administer the medication if necessary.



Midtown Jewish Preschool



Sunscreen, Ointments, Etc.

Parents should apply a broad spectrum (guarding against ultraviolet A and B) sunscreen to their children in the morning to protect against harmful ultraviolet radiation. Shade canopies in the outdoor play area are there to protect our children from the sun. You can keep the sunscreen of your choice in the classroom to be applied if your child goes out in the afternoon.

Ointments (such as diaper cream), sunscreen, or any other over the counter medication must be marked with your child's name, and you must complete an "Over the Counter Medication Form" available at the office BEFORE handing it to the teachers.

Non-prescription medication should not be administered for more than a 3-day period unless a written order by the physician is received.



Medical Forms

a) Your child's health form must indicate a physical exam by a Florida State doctor within a year's period. By State regulation, current forms must be on file in order for children to participate in the program.

b) The emergency form, with contact numbers, must be kept up to date.

Illness

Children must be kept home when they have symptoms of a contagious illness. This policy protects the recovering child, whose resistance to new infection is low, as well as his/her classmates and teachers.



Midtown Jewish Preschool

Our primary consideration is for the well-being of all students and staff, so while it is normal and even healthy for young children to be sick in the early years as it helps develop a strong immune system, communicability remains an important consideration in deciding if a child is well enough to be in school.

Written communication from a physician must be provided regarding a child who has a condition that poses no threat to himself or herself or anyone else, in order for that child to remain in school. **We reserve the right to ask you to keep your child home until we feel comfortable having the child back in school regardless of the doctor's note.**

Keep Your Child Home if He or She Has:

- Diarrhea- acute diarrhea characterized as twice the child's usual frequency of bowel movements with a change to a looser consistency within a period of 24 hours. (your child may be acting like himself, but should still remain home as this is highly contagious)
- Vomiting one or more episodes of vomiting within a period of 24 hours.
- Fever elevated temperature over 100.5 F within 24 hours.
- Strep throat- sore throat or constant cough.
- Conjunctivitis— red eyes with or without a discharge, or discharge without redness, are often signs of conjunctivitis ("pink eye"), and highly contagious. children are required to stay home until the eye is clear and back to normal.
- Excessively runny nose especially with green mucus.
- On Antibiotics - has begun an antibiotic for a contagious condition less than 24 hours ago.
- Chicken Pox - Child may return to school when all lesions are crusted over.
- Head Lice - MJP honors a no-nit policy. Child may return to school after the removal of all lice and nits.
- Pinworms - Children may return to school 24 hours after treatment.

Midtown Jewish Preschool



- Fifth Disease - Also known as Parvovirus. Fifth Disease is a mild illness and not serious in healthy children. However, it can cause serious complications during pregnancy.
- Fussy-child has been fussy, cranky or out of sorts for the last 12 hours.
- Had very little sleep the night before. Children too tired to participate in full program activities should be at home.
- Children can return to school 24 hours after the fever or symptoms have disappeared.

Children must remain home 24 hours after the fever or symptoms have disappeared without the use of fever reducing medicines, before returning to school.

Please message us on the app when your child is absent due to illness. If your child becomes ill in school, or if we notice any concerning marks, or fever is at 100.5 or more, we will call you to take him/her home. Parents are expected to pick up their child or make arrangements for their child to be picked up within 30 minutes.

If we can't reach the parents, designated emergency numbers will be called.

MJP reserves the right to determine if a child is well enough to be in school. Each morning the teachers will conduct a quick health check on each child as they arrive. They will check for runny noses, fever and any other common symptom. They will also be noting down any bruises or bumps a child may have.

