

THE ABC's of ATTENDING WIMPFHEIMER NURSERY SCHOOL

Arrival

School opens at 8:00 a.m. Prior to 8:00 a.m., teachers are busy setting up for the day's activities and meeting with student teachers. If you arrive early, please wait in the lobby or library and perhaps enjoy a book with your child. Arrival time is from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. each morning. Flexible arrival activities will be open for the children the first hour of school (inside or out), and teachers will be available to greet children and parents, and help your child settle into the day.

Please make every effort to have your child arrive at school no later than 9:00 a.m. We find that children have a smoother transition and greater participation in the planned activities if they are at school when the activities begin. The teaching staff is also much more available to greet children and help them get started if they arrive between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.

Attendance

When your child will not be attending nursery school, please notify us by calling the school at 437-5630. It is helpful to know ahead of time how many children will be absent. The answering machine is on 24 hours daily. E-mail is also fine: katritschler@vassar.edu. If possible, please call or email before 9:00 a.m. so that the teachers may plan their day accordingly. Per our health regulations, we need to know if a child is ill with a contagious disease (please see *Health Policy* in the following yellow section).

Authorization to Pick Up Your Child

Wimpfheimer Nursery School will only allow your child to leave the program with an authorized adult. An authorized adult is one whose name is written on the child's blue or white emergency cards. If an adult is picking up your child on a one-time basis (i.e. a visiting grandparent or friend), you may indicate this in writing in the daily parent notebook next to the *sign in/sign out* sheet in your child's classroom. Please inform the classroom teacher of this plan. ***Make sure you have spoken with your child about this plan.*** In an emergency or last minute change of plans, we can accept an e-mail message from your personal account if you also call to confirm your e-mail by speaking with an administrator or leaving a voice message. We can accept just a phone call only if the person picking up your child is already authorized on your white or blue card.

Beginning Nursery School (Gradual Entry)

The nursery school uses a gradual entry schedule at the beginning of the school year. For the first few days children spend increasing amounts of time in the classroom with increasing numbers of classmates. By allowing for the gradual entry of children, the teachers are better able to meet the needs of individual children on their first days of school.

Children react to school with a wide range of emotions and behaviors. Some parents and children may find that they can easily say good-bye to each other on the first day. Other parents and children may still be working on separation for many weeks to come. Regardless of your child's reactions, and your own feelings about separation, the teachers, assistant director and director are here to help you make this transition go as smoothly as possible. Please do not hesitate to call on any of us for advice and support.

During the separation process, we encourage parents to make use of the library and observation booths. If your child is having a difficult time separating, it may be helpful to tell your child that

you are waiting in the library. You may find it helpful to sit in the observation booth and observe your child after your departure from the classroom. Parents are also welcome to stay in the classroom with their child. Individualized plans that contain a routine usually work well. The teachers are your best resources when making a plan for your child.

Birthday Book and CD Club

Our children's library is truly one of the unique and beautiful features of Wimpfheimer Nursery School. The Harry Ordan Memorial Library is the gift of Mark Ordan, '79, in memory of his father. We continuously add to our library collection, and encourage parents to donate a book.

We have an active Birthday Book and CD Club. Although families are welcome to donate a book of their choice, we also provide a list of books chosen by the teaching staff and the directors. This selection represents current gaps in our collection that we would like to fill. Simply purchase the book and bring it to the nursery school's office. We will make sure that a gift plate is affixed with your child's name, special date, and any other inscription you would like. Please select hard cover books, when possible.

We are also hoping to expand the school's permanent CD collection. We are particularly interested in the following genres: international music; drumming; string quartets; jazz; piano; and blues (appropriate for children). As with books, we will affix a gift plate to the CD with a limited inscription of your choice.

Of course, we are delighted to accept book or CD donations anytime. Books or CDs can be dedicated in your child's name to the library on the occasion of your child's graduation, new baby, or other special event.

Book and CD donations in honor of teachers are especially welcome. Teachers appreciate having a book donated to the library in their name and see this as a wonderful, lasting gift to honor their dedication to children.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are very special to young children, and often they want to celebrate with their friends at school. We like to help parents think of ways to celebrate the child, instead of having the celebration focus on food, decorations, etc. What's special about your child? What does it mean to be a year older? How has your child changed over the past few years? What can s/he do now that s/he couldn't do at one or two? Does your child know the story of the day s/he was born? Is that something you could share with the class with some "props" like the clothes the baby wore after birth, pictures, or favorite baby toys? This helps children tie the concept of "birthday" into a celebration of growing, changing, and getting bigger!

If your child would like to celebrate with a special snack, please check with his/her teachers. Children may plan and prepare a celebration snack at school or bring their favorite food to share at snack time. It's especially unique (and in keeping with celebrating what's special about your child) if this favorite food is not a traditional birthday dessert. We've had some wonderful birthday snacks from fried rice to tortillas to pickles! Please talk to your child's teacher about your plans ahead of time and feel welcome to join the class on your child's special day!

Car Seat Laws

Children under the age of 4 are required to be restrained in a federally approved child safety seat when riding in a motor vehicle. If the weight of a child under the age of 4 exceeds 40 pounds, the child may be restrained in an appropriate child restraint system, allowing the child to use a booster seat.

Children ages 4, 5, and 6, riding in any seating position of a motor vehicle will be required to be restrained in an appropriate child restraint system.

A child restraint system is any device, used in conjunction with safety belts, designed for use in a motor vehicle to restrain, seat, or position children. It may be a child safety seat or harness/ vest or booster seat. (The vehicle's safety belts are not a child restraint system.)

More detail information can be found at <http://www.nysgtsc.state.ny.us/boost-new.htm>

Children will be required to ride in a parent-provided appropriate restraint device on any Wimpfheimer field trips.

Changes

Please let us know about any changes in your child's life or routine. Changes in family routines are often reflected in a child's behavior at school (e.g. business trips, houseguests, family illness). This will help us to understand behavior changes and provide appropriate support for you and your child.

Child Abuse - Mandatory Reporting Status

Each day, the staff and the administration work to protect and provide for the needs of each child. This takes on countless forms, from offering multi-leveled puzzles to teaching conflict resolution skills, to repairing unsafe equipment on the playground. Basic to our care of the children is providing for their ongoing safety. One of our essential roles is as mandatory reporters of child abuse. Our licensing inspector requested that we provide all parents the regulations in writing concerning the reporting of suspected child abuse.

All employees of New York State licensed child care facilities are, by law, mandatory reporters of child abuse or maltreatment. The law states that if a child care worker has "reasonable cause to suspect" child abuse or maltreatment, they are obligated to make a report. Our licensing regulations read as follows:

In accordance with the provisions of sections 413 and 415 of the Social Services Law, day care center workers must report any suspected incidents of child abuse or maltreatment concerning a child receiving child day care to the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment or cause such a report to be made when such workers have reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before them in their capacity as day care center workers is an abused or maltreated child.

The source of abuse does not need to be known in order to file a report. Childcare employees are required to report suspected abuse whether that suspected abuse is thought to be occurring on the premise of the school or elsewhere. The hotline number to report suspected child abuse is **1-800-635-1522** and is posted on the bulletin board directly outside of the secretary's office.

Please also see *Incident Reports* under "I".

Clothing

Active indoor and outdoor play is a daily part of attending school during early childhood. Please dress your child in clothing that can get dirty (be easily washed) and is suitable for running, climbing, painting, playing on the floor, etc. Sneakers or other sturdy footwear should be worn at school; open-toed sandals, flip flops, jelly shoes, or other *dress* shoes are not as safe on the playground or campus walks. *Children are encouraged to be independent in dressing and undressing.* Please make sure that the clothing they wear can be managed without too much difficulty.

Dressing in layers is recommended. A layer can be added or removed according to the temperature in the room or outside.

Each child has a bin in the bathroom where a complete extra set of clothing is kept. Please label a seasonally appropriate change of clothing, including shirt, pants, underpants, and socks.

We go outside every day in all kinds of weather: light rain, snow, cold, and heat. Please dress your child appropriately.

<i>Snowy Days</i>	warm jacket hat or hood waterproof mittens	snow pants boots
<i>Rainy Days</i>	raincoat with a hood or hat boots (<u>no</u> umbrellas please)	
<i>Hot Sunny Days</i>	shorts and lightweight shirt or sundress sneakers	

PLEASE REMEMBER TO LABEL EVERYTHING

If your child is missing an item on a given day (i.e. mittens), we will find a suitable piece of clothing from our extra clothes kept at school. We will send home a note requesting that the item be provided the following day and that the school item be cleaned and returned to the classroom teachers. If an item of clothing comes home in a plastic bag please send in a replacement item the following day to keep your child's extra clothing supply stocked; if your child borrows a piece of school clothing, please wash and return it as quickly as possible. School items are usually labeled WNS or VCNS.

Full Day Children

Children participating in the full day programs (including kindergarten) need the following items for rest time. These items must be small enough to fit neatly in the basket provided.

- ② All children need a child-size backpack. This is a safety issue so children can carry their belongings up and down the stairs, leaving their hands free to hold onto a railing. (No action figures on backpack, please.)
- ② one crib size sheet for nap (mats are provided)
- ② one small pillow (optional)

② one cuddle animal, doll, etc. (optional)

Please also see *Lunches* under "L".

Guidance and Discipline

Wimpfheimer Nursery School is grounded in principles of positive guidance and discipline. The word “discipline” means “to teach”; young children provide abundant opportunities to teach by example and within contexts directly relevant and meaningful to their young lives. Core to the practice of positive guidance, we structure the environment and our interactions with children to guide them and model positive behaviors. This means setting clear, developmentally appropriate limits, and providing natural and logical consequences for negative behavior (e.g. removing a toy when a child is using it in an unsafe manner). The gradual scaffolding of conflict resolution skills is also a daily part of our guidance and discipline practices. Equally important, we seek and create opportunities to praise children’s growth and support them in feelings of accomplishment and pride.

In compliance with this policy, we never use corporal punishment in any form. Corporal punishment is also prohibited by anyone on school grounds.

Further descriptions and illustrations of our guidance and discipline policy can be found in the following articles included in this handbook:

- ② American Academy of Pediatrics. (1998, April). Guidance for effective discipline. *Pediatrics*, 723-728.
- ② Buzzelli, C.A. (1992, September). Young children’s moral understanding: learning about right and wrong. *Young Children*, 47-53.
- ② Greenberg, P. (1992, July). How to institute some simple democratic practices pertaining to respect, rights, roots and responsibilities in any classroom (without losing your leadership position). *Young Children*, 10-17.
- ② Mackenzie, R.J. (1977, Fall). Setting limits in the classroom. *American Educator*, 32-43.
- ② Riess, J. List of available articles from the *Poughkeepsie Journal* on guidance and discipline.
- ② Stone, J. (1993, May). Caregiver and teacher language: responsive or restrictive? *Young Children*, 12-18.

Holidays

Holidays are part of our society's rich cultural life. Learning about holidays in school can broaden children's awareness of their own and others’ cultural experiences. Learning about how different families celebrate holidays relates directly the similarities and differences among people. As a general rule, we do not plan celebrations around religious holidays and we do not plan traditional celebrations of holidays such as Thanksgiving, Halloween, or Valentines Day. We do discuss the concepts behind some holidays (e.g. thankfulness, love & caring for others). We also encourage families to help us celebrate the diversity of our school through sharing their family's holiday traditions with us. This might be preparing a traditional holiday food, sharing music or a dance with the class, or reading a story about the holiday.

We believe that celebrations at school should be meaningful, developmentally appropriate, and respectful of all the children in the classroom. Celebrations at Wimpfheimer Nursery School avoid the "outer trappings" and commercial aspects of traditional holidays and focus on activities that bring the children together and provide opportunities for inner involvement, child-centered learning, or just plain fun! For example, around Halloween children do not wear costumes to school, as this is often overwhelming for a group of young children. However, classes might carve pumpkins, make pumpkin muffins, read autumn stories, or have face paints available as an activity choice. In each classroom, teachers will keep you informed about plans for any classroom celebrations. If you have any specific requests or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak with the teachers and/or the director.

Home Visits

Home visits are a special treat for children and a wonderful way to establish (or re-establish) a relationship between home and school. Each child's teachers call each family to arrange a home visit at a mutually convenient time (usually in August). Teachers plan to spend approximately 30 minutes at each home. They bring your child a small gift (freshly made Play-Dough) and usually ask each child if there is anything special s/he would like to show the teachers. Common favorites are the child's room, a family room or playroom, backyard play space, siblings and/or pets. Although the main purpose of this visit is to build a relationship between the teachers and the child, parents are encouraged to ask any questions.

Incident Reports/Injury

If your child is injured at school you will receive an *Incident Report*; this is a licensing form that is filled out by the teachers. We provide these written reports to you to keep you informed of your child's health, even for relatively minor occurrences. When a child is injured at school, the supervising teacher completes this report. The written report is discussed with the parent at pick-up time and the parent is asked to sign the report. The director or assistant director reviews and signs each report before it is filed in our records. We also keep a log of these reports so that we can identify if there are any patterns for injuries (e.g. pinched fingers in a loose hinge; tripping hazards). In caring for your child, we also ask that you keep us informed of any health care needs.

Late Pick-Up Policy

The late pick-up policy is designed so that we can provide optimal care for every child attending the nursery school. When a teacher is left waiting for a parent to pick up a child, s/he is unable to attend to his/her other tasks, including being with other children. Most important, the child is left behind, wondering why the parent has not come to get them.

Parents who pick up their child after their child's designated pick-up time (11:45, 3:00 or 5:00) will be charged a late fee. A parent is considered late if the teacher has brought the child to the office to wait with an administrator. The time it takes a teacher to collect a child's belongings and bring a child to the office provides a short grace period from the precise time of pick-up. The parent will be asked to sign a late slip and will be billed directly from the nursery school office.

In response to parent suggestions, the following late fee scale will be used:

- ② Parents will be given one verbal reminder about the late pick-up policy on the first late pick-up.
- ② A penalty fee of \$10.00 for every 10 minutes, or portion thereof, per child will be charged for the second late pick-up.
- ② After two late pick-ups, parents will be charged an additional \$10 fee per each late pick-up:
- ② Third late pick-up penalty fee of \$10 for every 10 minutes per child plus additional charge of \$10
- ② Fourth late pick-up penalty fee of \$10 for every 10 minutes per child plus additional charge of \$20
- ② After three months of no late pick-ups, the fee schedule will be reset.

The Wimpfheimer Nursery School reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of the child(ren) of parents who are late three or more times in the course of any four month period. Fees will be waived for parents facing an emergency situation AND who call the nursery school to inform us of these circumstances. **Please plan ahead to pick-up your child on time each day.**

Library

The Harry Ordan Memorial Library is available to all Wimpfheimer and Infant Toddler Center families. You are welcome to share a story with your child before or after school, and to browse or borrow books from the collection. The library opens at 7:45 a.m. and closes at 5:00 p.m. each day.

Much of the library is electronically catalogued and may be accessed through Vassar's on-line catalog system. You may search for a book by title, author, subject, publisher, or year. Instructions for using the on-line catalogue are provided in this handbook and posted next to the computer in the library. In addition, internet access instructions and a subject list are included in your three-ring parent binder. This list is extremely helpful in finding a book on a given topic. For example, perhaps your family is planning a move or has recently moved to the area. By logging in to the catalog and doing a subject search under 0:PROBLEMS:MOVING, a list of books discussing this topic will appear on the screen. Books are shelved by the author's last name.

The library has books available for children and parents, as well as a small collection for older and younger siblings. We are also fortunate to have a (nearly) complete Caldecott collection. These award-winning picture books are the pinnacle of fine children's illustration. A few books in this collection require parental discretion; these are identified by a red dot on the binding. An infant/toddler toy closet is also available for parents with younger children. These toys need to remain in the library or the lobby, but may be used while parents are relaxing in the library or attending a meeting. Please assist your child in putting the toys away when you are finished.

If you remove a book from a shelf for reading with your child in the library, please use a place marker (a laminated piece of paper that looks like a giant book mark) and return the book to its proper place when you are done reading. If you are uncertain where to shelve the book, kindly place it in the book return basket located next to the librarian's desk. A mis-shelved book often becomes a missing book.

Children may borrow two books at a time. Remove the card from the book, sign your name, date and leave the card in the wooden box stenciled *Library Book Cards* on the desk in the library. Books may be borrowed for one week. Please return books promptly so that others may enjoy them.

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found is located under the bench in the lobby. Please check there for your child's belongings when something is missing. Remember you have a better chance of getting something back if all of your child's clothing and belongings are clearly labeled.

Lunches (full day programs)

Lunch tips written by the teaching staff are provided in this handbook (white section). In addition, short articles on healthy snacks for preschoolers, normal eating habits for preschoolers, and the rising problem of childhood obesity are included in the same section.

Please discuss with your child what s/he would like for lunch so it's not a surprise at lunchtime. Make sure to label your child's lunch box and any reusable storage containers. We ask parents to pack nutritious foods and avoid sugars and sweets. Fruits, yogurt, cheese, raw vegetables, etc. are great. *Chocolate, candy, soda and gum are not permitted in the nursery school.* Fruits and cookies are preferred desserts. We can heat your child's lunch when needed.

Lunches (full day programs) - continued

We also find that a lot of food gets wasted each day. Once a pre-packaged container is opened (applesauce, for example), and your child eats one bite, we have to throw it out. Small, re-sealable plastic containers are very useful for this purpose. (Check out the Rubbermaid or Tupperware section at the grocery store.) In general, we send home the food your child has not eaten so that you know what and how much your child ate. Please just mention: "I guess you weren't too hungry today" when you see leftovers coming home as children's appetites often vary from day to day.

Mail

Each family has a "mailbox" in the lobby (2/3's are outside their classroom) where we place newsletters, notices, research consent forms, and other mail. Please check your mailbox each day.

The mailbox for tuition checks or any other money (e.g. field trips) is located in assistant director's office, on the wall to the left of the door as you enter. This black mailbox is clearly marked "CHECKS."

A general mailbox for parent correspondence is located in the lobby, near the stairs. You may return forms or other paperwork to this box. We encourage feedback and comments at any time!

Naps

Children are placed in nap groups or sleeping areas according to their sleeping patterns and needs (e.g. children who sleep most days; children who sleep some days and children no longer napping). The kindergarten program has a 30 minute rest period. Children are provided with a rest mat (labeled with their name). **Parents provide a crib sheet for their child's rest mat**. Your child may also bring a blanket from home, small pillow and/or cuddly animal.

Children who do not sleep may play quietly on their mat or look at books. Non-nappers get up after approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Children who are heavy sleepers are awakened after 1 hour and 30 minutes (unless other arrangements have been made with the parents). Nap groups are re-evaluated by the teachers when the clocks are changed for daylight saving time (fall and spring), or when a child's sleep patterns at school show a consistent pattern of change.

Newsletters

Approximately every two weeks, parents receive a newsletter from their child's classroom in their mailboxes. One page of this letter has a summary description of recent themes, activities and coming attractions for the next week, which are written by the classroom teachers. The other side contains brief news from the children.

The purpose of the newsletter is multi-fold. Perhaps the most obvious purpose is to enhance communication between home and school. It is a nice way to share school experiences over the weekend or to help to refocus a child on a Monday morning. The newsletter can also serve as an excellent literacy tool. We encourage parents to sit down with your child and read the newsletter out loud. Point to your child's news as you are reading it. Enjoy the time together sharing written communication.

Other suggestions about making the most of the newsletters are located in the section of your parent three-ring binder titled "Newsletters". Children's newsletters will be copied on three-hole punch paper

and may be stored in your parent binder. Occasionally reviewing the newsletters with your child is an excellent way to discuss the passage of time and to marvel at your child's growth!

Parent Event Calendar

A calendar of parent events will be distributed in early September and early January. Events typically include parent discussion groups, the parent potluck supper, school photo day, family gatherings at the nursery school, and a guest speaker series. Parent event announcements are also distributed via e-mail and posted on the parent board in the hallway.

Parent Events Committee - (PEC)

Each year we organize a parent committee. This committee organizes small fund raising events, social events, family gardening days, and other events that may come up over the course of the school year. The assistant director helps to support this committee. If you are interested in joining the Parent Events Committee please contact the assistant director. Another great way to connect with your child's school experience is to sign up to be a **class parent**. If you are interested in being a class parent this year, please sign-up at parent orientation or speak with the assistant director. Class parents help organize events specific to their child's classroom.

Parent Participation

Wimpfheimer has an open door policy; parents are welcome to stop by and visit anytime. We also encourage parents to spend time sharing their talents, hobbies, and personal interests or just helping out. It makes the child feel special and important and it can be an exciting experience for the parent.

One of the benefits of our laboratory nursery school is an excellent adult/child ratio in each classroom. In addition to our regular staff, we have student interns from Dutchess Community College, SUNY New Paltz, BOCES and Vassar College. We also employ 24 work study students to serve as teachers' aides in the classrooms.

We do, however, have approximately eight weeks during the year when Vassar College is closed or in final exams and Wimpfheimer remains open. Most of our college students are not available to work during these times.

Therefore, we request that each family sign-up for two, three-hour periods to help in your child's classroom specifically during these times in the school year. We realize that this is more difficult for some families than for others. We hope each family will be able to contribute as much time as they can. The sign-up sheets for these weeks will be posted ahead of time next to the daily sign-in sheets in your child's classroom. Reminders will be in your child's mailbox. The dates for this school year are listed below:

Dates for Breaks, 05-06	Type of Break
December 12-21	Study and Final Exam Period
January 9-24	College Closed
March 20-24	College Closed
May 10-19	Study and Final Exam Period

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled in November and April each year; specific dates are listed on the annual school calendar. The teachers and/or the assistant director or director are also available for conferences whenever the need arises. Please do not hesitate to call on us for advice or to discuss concerns.

School is closed on parent-teacher conference days. Childcare is provided for your child during your conference time on the regularly scheduled school-wide conference day.

Parking

Our parking lots are busy, active places where many cars enter and exit daily, especially at Wimpfheimer. While many cars are driven by parents commuting with their children, others are faculty, administrators, staff, and students who may not be fully aware that young children are arriving or departing from school. We need to work together as a community to provide for each child's safety when entering and exiting school grounds.

Please follow these guidelines for parking lot safety and share this important information with anyone who brings your child to or from WNS or ITC.

- ② **Please remind your child to never leave the building without you.** The construction next to Wimpfheimer changes daily, making it both exciting and unpredictable for young children. A curious young child can be out the door and in the parking lot or investigating the construction fencing in less than 10 seconds. Keep in mind that adults often use a certain voice, facial expression and conviction to make sure our children understand something is a serious safety issue, such as using a car seat every single time they ride in a car. Parents usually find it helpful to use this same tone when conveying the serious rule to their children about never leaving the building without an adult.
- ② Remember that young children are just learning the rules of safety and cannot predict when a car might be in motion or what direction it might be traveling (in reverse, for example). Daily, matter-of-fact reminders about the rules are usually beneficial for young children, especially during the first weeks of school.
- ② For the safety of everyone, please hold your child's hand while in or near the parking lot. Holding your child's hand allows you to be looking up at nearby cars instead of down at your child. If your hands are full of other items, consider an adult backpack or large over-the-shoulder bag for transporting items to and from school. *We encourage all children at WNS to be responsible for their child-sized backpacks by wearing their own backpacks; parking lot safety is one of several reasons that it is helpful to make this part of your child's daily routine.*
- ② While loading and unloading children, we recommend the "touch the car" rule. Children who are already unloaded from the car but waiting for siblings are required to be touching the car while waiting. This gives the child a positive, concrete direction on what they should be doing to be safe while waiting. Many children know about "safe bases" in games, and you can use this analogy to your parked car being a safe base during loading and unloading in any parking lot.
- ② Ask another parent with a free hand to help you for a moment when unloading or loading several children. Likewise, offer a free hand to another parent in need of assistance.
- ② Drive slowly upon entering and exiting the lot. The campus speed limit is 15 mph.
- ② Use your turn signal to enter and leave the lot. Pay close attention in the WNS lot, as the entrance crosses a sidewalk.
- ② Always turn off your motor while you are in the parking lot. Exhaust fumes are emitted from car tailpipes at child-height.
- ② Please do not double park at any time, anywhere in the parking lot. Please use the marked drop off zones whenever possible. If you have a concern about parking lot safety, please tell an administrator at WNS or ITC. We will call Vassar College Security to assist, as needed.

Payment Plans

There are two payment plans available. Parents may make their tuition payments in two installments due in August and December of the current school year. Parents may also opt for nine monthly payment installments (from August through April). Monthly payments are due the 5th of each month, beginning August 5th. Parents select a payment option on their contracts. A reminder will be posted at the beginning of each month inside the main entrance. A late fee of \$25.00 will be billed for payments more than 15 days late. Checks should be made **payable to Vassar College** and dropped off in the mailbox marked *Checks* (located in the assistant director's office) or mailed to the nursery school. The mailing address is:

*Wimpfheimer Nursery School
Box 485 Vassar College
124 Raymond Avenue
Poughkeepsie, NY 12604-0485*

Vassar employees may choose a payroll deduction plan and/or a flexible spending account. We can provide receipts for flexible spending accounts for child care as needed. Please see the assistant director for account receipts.

Playground Rules

Wimpfheimer's playground rules are written for the safety and protection of the children. The teaching staff has generated these rules after extensive experience interacting with these age groups in our particular play yards.

- ② Because modeling is such a powerful form of teaching during these early years, we ask for the full cooperation of parents in supporting and reinforcing our rules.
- ② Likewise, we ask that parents restrict older siblings from using the playground during the nursery school's hours of operation. The equipment is built for younger children and older siblings often unknowingly model inappropriate use of the equipment.
- ② Finally, in order to provide full supervision to children attending our programs, we ask that parents picking up children at either 11:45 or 3:00 move together to an unused play yard if they wish to spend more time on the playground past their dismissal time.

A copy of the rules is provided on the following two pages and is also posted on the college students' bulletin board across from the 2's/3's classroom. Please take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with these safety rules; if in doubt about any particular rule, please ask a teacher. We thank you for your assistance in keeping our children safe on our playgrounds.

Guidelines For Safe Playground Use

These rules are posted on the college students' mailbox bulletin board for quick review
(across from the 2s3s classroom).

ALL CHILDREN on the playground are EVERYONE'S
responsibility!!

Children are **NEVER** left unsupervised.

The Role of Every Adult

- ② Use the **defensive driving technique**. This means scanning the playground every minute or so to look for possible problems.
- ② Always **face the children** in your area and avoid sitting or standing with your back to the children.
- ② **Conversations** between adults need to be kept to a minimum.
- ② **Clean-up**. Make sure that items in sheds are put away neatly. Every item has a place. Ask a teacher if you don't know where something belongs. Stack tall items horizontally (climber, slide, boards).
- ② **Equipment** is for children's use only. Older children and adults are not permitted to use the swings, tricycles, or other equipment.
- ② **We use positive discipline whenever possible. This means stating, in a firm but friendly voice, which behavior is acceptable.** Example: Instead of saying, "Don't throw sand," it is more useful to say: "sand is for digging." If the child continues to throw sand, say, "It is difficult for you to keep the sand down. You need to go play somewhere else now, but tomorrow we'll try again."
- ② If a **child challenges you about a rule**, ask them to walk over with you to ask a teacher for clarification. You can also show them (point to) the written rules on the college students' mailbox bulletin board (even if they cannot read). This is the power of print!

- ② **If a situation seems unsafe, take action immediately.** If there is no immediate danger, and you are not sure how to handle a situation, ask a teacher to handle it while you observe.

- ② **If a child is injured** in any way, assist the child and then report the injury to a teacher immediately, no matter how minor it may seem.

Equipment Safety Rules

- ② **Bathroom.** A classroom teacher will either accompany, or supervise the children closely if they are capable of going to the bathroom by themselves. An adult must be present either in the bathroom or outside the open bathroom door, with clear visibility into the bathroom.
- ② **Elevated play areas.** An adult must directly supervise any child playing on the upper deck of the boat or large climber. The adult should serve as a “spotter” and remind children to keep their feet on the floor at all times. One adult should be up on the deck of the large climber if children are actively using this area.
- ② **Gazebo.** “The seats are for sitting” in the gazebo. Children may not climb over the railings. Children may walk on the outer (lower) edge of the gazebo.
- ② **Hollow blocks.** A teacher needs to help distribute the blocks from the shed to the platform. Building inside the shed itself is not permitted.
- ② **Jumping boards.** One child jumps at a time.
- ② **Large climber:**
 - ② **Cargo net.** Children need to be spotted when on the cargo net. Check with a classroom teacher if clarification is needed about the direction of travel on the net (up or down).
 - ② **Curly climber.** Children need to climb (or slide) DOWN only on the curly climber until they are in kindergarten.
 - ② **Purple bar.** Children may not stand or walk on the purple bar on the large climbing structure. There is a maximum of three children on the purple bars at any given time.
- ② **Large shovels & rakes.** Shovels are for digging and raking. Any use as weapons is dangerous. Make sure the child walks with these items. Running may cause severe injuries.
- ② **Playhouse.** Furniture in the playhouse is to be used as furniture and is to remain stationary. The doors must be locked in the open position during use. No sand, water, or chalk is permitted in the playhouse.
- ② **Sand boxes.** Sand stays in the sand boxes. Shovels are for digging. Sand toys stay on ground level only. They are not allowed on the big climber or on the upper deck of the boat.
- ② **Sheds.** Children are allowed in sheds only when accompanied by a teacher. Have the children remain outside the shed and describe or point to what they want.
- ② **Slides.** Children may go down the slide sitting, with their feet first. Children may choose to go down the slide feet first, on their stomach. One child is permitted on a slide chute at a given time. Children may not go up the slide or pull others up the slide when they are hanging on the top of the slide.
- ② **Sticks.** Large sticks can cause severe injuries. Children can help to throw large sticks over the fence. Small sticks (the size of the child’s hand) may be used to draw in the sand only. Sticks are not to be used as weapons.
- ② **Trampolines.** Can be used by **one child at a time.** The bar is to be used only for holding on, not for flipping. The trampoline can easily tip over.
- ② **Tricycles.** Tricycles must stay in the area marked for tricycles use. Wagons may be used in the gazebo yard, but must be kept away from the steep incline near the train.

Do not under ANY CIRCUMSTANCES let any wheeled toys go into the “Boat Yard”.

Records - Children's

Every parent has "unlimited and on demand" access to their child's records. In a typical child care facility, each child would have a complete set of records stored in one location (e.g. the office). However, as a laboratory school, we store the children's records in more than one location. This is because the students or faculty researchers can access some of the children's records. For example, when you complete your child's developmental profile at the beginning of the school year, there is an introductory paragraph stating that students and faculty members may have access to this information for educational or research purposes. The developmental profile is then stored in each child's general file in the office. Students and faculty may only obtain access to a child's general records upon making a request to the director. The director reviews this request and then grants or denies access to the records. Requests are approved for educational and research projects only.

There are two other types of children's records kept in the school. (1) Teachers keep observational notes on each child to track the child's progress and needs across the school year. These observational notes are then used to write the children's reports in preparation for fall and spring parent-teacher conferences. (2) Records of a confidential nature are stored in the director's office or sealed in the child's general file. These include, but are not limited to, written assessments and evaluations by other support professionals (e.g. speech therapists; occupational therapists; child psychologists). Not every child has a confidential record folder.

Parents may request their children's records at any time, according to the following procedures.

1. Parents complete a *Request for Written Records* form. These forms can be obtained from the secretary in the Wimpfheimer's office. Parents need to complete a separate form for each request, identifying the recipient of the records.
2. The child's records will be compiled and copied.
3. Records will be provided to the parent within 72 hours of a written request during the weeks when the school is open. Requests take longer to process when the school is closed.
4. In cases of urgency, parents may request that records be compiled within less than 72 hours. E-mail requests will be honored but must be followed by a written request on the standard school form.

These procedures are for the protection of your child's records.

Referral, Screening, Evaluation, and Ongoing Support Services

At present, the director is working with some of the administrators of Vassar College to design, write, and implement a policy regarding referral, screening, evaluation, and ongoing support services for children attending Wimpfheimer Nursery School and the Infant Toddler Center. Once this written policy has been approved, we will distribute it to all families. (Also please see *Termination of Enrollment*, below.)

Research

Please see separate section on research procedures and policies provided in your three-ring parent binder.

Research Observation Booths

We welcome your use of the observation booths throughout year, and hope that you may make special use of them. Please let us know if you need any assistance or instruction in using any of the equipment within the booths.

Please keep in mind that the observation booths are off limits to children, including older siblings. This is important to protect the research studies that are done with a baseline of the children's behavior being measured assuming that they do not know they are being observed at that particular moment. It is also important because sound travels easily through the glass, and both children and teachers can hear conversations that are going on inside of the booths.

If your child raises a question about the booths, we usually reply by saying that these are rooms where we store equipment for the college student (or simply "adults") who work at Vassar.

Siblings

Older siblings are allowed to visit once during the school year. Please arrange for a date and time in advance with the classroom teachers.

Sign IN Sign OUT

In each classroom there is a clipboard with a Sign IN Sign OUT sheet. Our licensing and safety regulations **REQUIRE THAT PARENTS MUST SIGN IN THEIR CHILD UPON ARRIVING AT SCHOOL.** There is a column for comments. **If you are going to be at a different telephone number than the ones you provided on the blue cards during the day please write that number in that column (i.e. Aunt Rose's House).** Parents should use the daily parent notebook next to the *sign in/sign out* sheets to let us know any pertinent information about your child for the day. **AT THE END OF THE DAY, PARENTS MUST SIGN THEIR CHILD OUT.** Please review this important policy with anyone who drops off or picks up your child.

Supervision of Children

No child is left alone without competent, adult supervision. All staff who have regular contact with children have met state regulations concerning health, employment eligibility and criminal record checks. Adult:child staffing ratios by age and group size meet or exceed state licensing regulations.

Supervision and Training of Staff

Supervision. All Wimpfheimer staff is under the supervision of the director. For typical, daily matters, the assistant teachers report to each program's co-teachers. In matters involving the care of children, staff report to the director (or the assistant director if the director is unavailable). The secretary and the assistant director report to the director. The director reports to the Dean of the Faculty at Vassar College. The number for this office is 845-437-5300. There are weekly meetings between each teaching team and the director and/or assistant director. In addition, there is a monthly staff meeting.

Training. Every staff member who has regular contact with children is required by law to have 30 hours of training per licensing period (2 years). Training opportunities are posted at each monthly staff meeting. Vassar College is the employer of all Wimpfheimer staff, and provides partial funding for expenses associated with training.

Supervision and Training of Staff - continued

Specifically, our licensing requirements from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services state:

Thirty (30) hours of training are required for all providers/staff every two years. This training must include the following topics:

- 1) *principles of early childhood development;*
- 2) *nutrition and health needs of infants and children;*
- 3) *child day care program development;*
- 4) *safety and security procedures;*
- 5) *business record maintenance and management;*
- 6) *child abuse and maltreatment identification and prevention;*
- 7) *statutes and regulations pertaining to child day care;*
- 8) *statutes and regulations pertaining to child abuse and maltreatment;*
- 9) *education and information in the identification, diagnosis, and prevention of shaken baby syndrome.*

NOTE: If you do not meet the training requirements, the Office may deny your next application for renewal or limit the length of the next license.

Termination of Enrollment

The following termination of enrollment policy is stated on each child's contract for enrollment at Wimpfheimer Nursery School.

The Wimpfheimer Nursery School reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of a child under the following circumstances: a) The child requires care beyond the scope of what the school can offer. The director feels that the nursery school can no longer provide adequate care for the child even with minor adjustments; b) The director has requested that the parent(s) seek additional assessment or support services for the child and the parent(s) refuse(s) to act upon this request; or c) The child poses a consistent danger to himself/herself, the teaching staff, and/or other children.

The Wimpfheimer Nursery School will not exclude qualified children with disabilities from either enrolling or participating in the school on the basis of their disability. It is the practice of the school to take into account the needs of its students in determining the aid, benefits or services to be provided to each student participating in the school.

Toys from Home

Often children want to bring toys from home to school to play with or show the other children. This presents many potential problems: the toys get lost or broken, the children find it difficult to share with many other children, and/or the toys create a distraction from the planned curriculum and routine. For these reasons we ask that toys stay at home. Books, objects from nature, and music or books-on-tape are always welcome! Please make sure these items are labeled. If your child wants to bring something from home, please help him or her choose one of these items. Children who stay for rest time may also bring a blanket or stuffed animal to keep in their nap basket to use at rest time.

Wish List

We have many items that would be useful to have at the nursery school. Please keep us in mind when cleaning out your house or browsing at yard sales. **We ask that you check with the secretary in the Wimpfheimer office before bringing in any of the larger items** (in case we have already received enough of these items). We also have wish lists from catalogs for the purchase of new items as gifts.

WIMPFHEIMER WISH LIST

Child size dress-up shoes, shirts, hats (incl. Police, Fire, Chef) Costume jewelry Old shirts for smocks Towels Table cloths Newborn baby clothes (tiny) Child-size doll carriage Dolls in good condition Beads, Buttons Paper-used gift-wrap, foil, colored paper, used computer paper, butcher paper etc. Empty toilet paper and paper towel rolls Styrofoam egg boxers Yogurt and margarine containers with lids Yarn Board Games Dominoes	Large capacity coffee maker (esp. 50 cups) Old appliances Old typewriters that work Appliances to dismantle Silverware-sharp knives Kitchen utensils-potato masher, rolling pins... Silverware (esp. teaspoons) Wood scraps Bamboo rakes Gardening Tools Magnetic marbles
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We thank the Cornell Early Childhood Program for their permission to use excerpts from their 1994-1995 Parent Manual.