



# Parent Handbook

## Sunshine Academy

164 Harvard Street  
Brookline, MA 02446  
617-264-4404  
[www.sunshineacademy.com](http://www.sunshineacademy.com)

last updated: June 1, 2018



Sunshine Academy is an NAEYC-accredited early childhood education program.

Sunshine Academy admits families of every race, color, cultural heritage and national origin, regardless of marital status, sexual orientation, disability, religious belief or any other status protected by state or federal law. If you, a family member, relative or friend will visit our school and needs handicap accessibility, please contact us and make a note on your application form so we can make the necessary accommodations and arrangements.

June 1, 2018

Dear Parent,

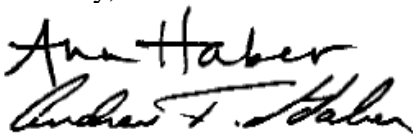
Welcome to Sunshine Academy! We are pleased that you have selected our school for the care and education of your child. Our goal is to provide the highest quality care and best early childhood education to the children and families we serve.

Our caring and highly skilled teachers are here to welcome and nurture your child while guiding his or her education and development. We developed our curriculum to meet, and in some areas exceed, the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Massachusetts Department of Education. Our newly renovated building provides a comfortable, safe environment for your child to grow, develop and learn.

At Sunshine Academy, we share your appreciation and love of your child's unique abilities and strengths. Teachers and parents strive toward mutual goals for children by promoting health, growth, and development.

Inside this Parent Handbook, you will find answers to many of your questions about our philosophy, policies and procedures. We trust that your careful consideration of the policies outlined herein will nurture a basis of mutual understanding for everyone. Please contact us with any additional questions, comments or suggestions. We welcome and appreciate your input.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Ann Haber and Andrew T. Haber. The signature for Ann Haber is written in a cursive style, and the signature for Andrew T. Haber is also in cursive, appearing below Ann's signature.

Ann and Andrew Haber  
Co-Owners



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## Goals

Our goal is to provide a safe stimulating environment in which children can grow and develop with the nurturing support and guidance of teachers, staff and parents. We are committed to providing the best early education and highest quality care to the children and families we serve.

## Our Philosophy

We believe that children do their most important learning before the age of five. They learn best through child-centered and child-directed activities, and through play and exploration of materials. Teachers facilitate the children's learning by providing materials, guidance and support for each child to learn at his or her own pace and by designing curriculum-based activities to enhance children's learning.

We recognize that every aspect of the program affects all of the children enrolled. The physical environment, staff, activities and services all contribute to each child's experience. The program maintains a maximum quality level that promotes each child's health, growth and development; encourages services that strengthen family life; and supports families in the essential task of nurturing their children's development.

Our philosophy is to:

- Focus on each child's unique abilities and potential
- Provide activities that foster growth socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically
- Engage qualified staff with a caring, nurturing, loving and supportive attitude
- Create opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education

We admit families of every race, color, cultural heritage and national origin, regardless of marital status, sexual orientation, disability, religious belief or any other status protected by state or federal law.

### Programs

We enroll children in the school on a space-available basis. Upon enrollment, children are assigned to a classroom based on age and developmental level. We assess children's developmental levels based on a Developmental History that you complete during the enrollment process, observations teachers make of the children and conversations with you at conferences. With the exception of infants who cannot enroll younger than eight weeks of age, children may transition into a classroom earlier or later than the ages listed below depending upon our assessment of their ability to manage the challenges of the classroom. Our age guidelines are as follows:

Infant Classrooms: 8 weeks to 15 months  
Toddler Classrooms: 15 months to 2 years 9 months  
Preschool Classroom: 2 years 9 months to 4 years  
Pre-K Classroom: 4 years to 5+ years

### School Contact Information

Office and Infant Classroom: 617-264-4404  
Toddler Classrooms: 617-264-4406  
Preschool and Pre-K Classrooms: 617-264-4405  
Director's Emergency Number: 617-504-4364

Fax Number: 781-998-6408  
Email: [director@sunshineacademy.com](mailto:director@sunshineacademy.com)  
Website: [www.sunshineacademy.com](http://www.sunshineacademy.com)

### Tax Identification Number

Sunshine Academy's Tax Identification Number is: 20-2788756

### Hours of Operation

The school is open Monday through Friday 6:30 am to 6:30 pm. The school closes promptly at 6:30 pm.

We are a school-based program. Our teachers are strictly prohibited from supervising your children outside of school hours. We encourage you to assess your needs carefully as you consider enrollment.



Calendar

Sunshine Academy is closed on the following days:

2018-2019

Professional Training Day*	Friday, August 31
Labor Day	Monday, September 3
Columbus Day	Monday, October 8
Veterans Day	Monday, November 12
Thanksgiving	Thursday, November 22
Day After Thanksgiving	Friday, November 23
Christmas Eve	Monday, December 24
Christmas Day	Tuesday, December 25
New Year's Day Observed	Tuesday, January 1
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday, January 21
Presidents Day	Monday, February 18
Memorial Day	Monday, May 27
Independence Day Break	Thursday-Friday, July 4-5

2019-2020

Professional Training Day*	Friday, August 30
Labor Day	Monday, September 2
Columbus Day	Monday, October 14
Veterans Day	Friday, November 11
Thanksgiving	Thursday, November 28
Day After Thanksgiving	Friday, November 29
Christmas Vacation	Wednesday-Friday, December 25-27
New Years Day	Wednesday, January 1
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday, January 20
Presidents Day	Monday, February 17
Memorial Day	Monday, May 25
Independence Day Observed	Friday, July 3

\*The professional training day is for teacher training and recertification.





### Professional Qualifications of Our Teachers

Sunshine Academy maintains a highly qualified and dedicated staff of professionals in the field of early childhood education. We choose our teachers carefully based on their education, professional experience, and their demonstrated ability to work with children. Our teachers are all certified as early childhood educators through the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. Many hold Master's or Bachelor's degrees in Education and/or Child and Family Studies. All are either pursuing coursework toward a degree in education or have already completed an education degree. All teachers are certified in Infant/Child First Aid and CPR. Prior to working in the classroom, all complete Medication Administration Training, Nutrition Training, and if they work with infants, Prevention of SIDS Training. Prior to hiring any teacher, we conduct CORI, DCF and fingerprint background checks, as required by state law, and observe the teacher during a working interview in one of our classrooms. All teachers are hired initially for a 30-day orientation period when we continue to observe the teacher's work with the children before assigning the teacher to a classroom teaching team.

We want Sunshine Academy to remain an environment where teachers are appreciated and rewarded for their knowledge and skills, and where we offer meaningful opportunities for personal and professional development. We support the continuing education of our teachers through a tuition reimbursement program, student loan reimbursement, in-service trainings and workshops throughout the year. We appreciate your support in maintaining an environment respectful of early childhood education and the knowledge and experience of our teachers.

### Outdoor Classroom

We are especially proud of our own exclusive outdoor classroom located on the south side of the building and directly accessible from preschool room. This enclosed area provides a safe space for active play and small group activities, designed to enhance our educational curriculum. We use the outdoor classroom for gardening, nature study (plants, birds, worms, bugs, weather), science experiments (light and shadow, ice and snow), water play, seasonal projects, music, theatre, family events and other activities. When using the outdoor classroom, children are under the direct supervision of their teachers at all times.

### Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination and Harassment

We are committed to maintaining an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. Sunshine Academy strictly prohibits and will not tolerate harassment by anyone, including any parent, family member, teacher, administrator, or service provider. We expect each and every member of the Sunshine Academy community to take responsibility for creating and maintaining a comfortable and constructive environment in which all children, teachers, family members and service providers are treated with respect and dignity. We will investigate all allegations of discrimination or harassment in a fair and expeditious manner and will take action up to and including termination against anyone in violation of our policies.



Harassment is defined as any verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of her/his race, color, ancestry, religion, gender, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, veteran status, or any other category protected by law that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment in which to work. Determination of whether particular conduct can be defined as harassment for the purpose of disciplinary action is made on an individual basis, in light of all the known facts and circumstances.

We encourage anyone who believes that he or she has been subjected to any form of discrimination or harassment to speak with the director and/or owners. Anyone wishing to file a complaint may do so by contacting the director at [director@sunshineacademy.com](mailto:director@sunshineacademy.com) or by contacting the owners at [ann@sunshineacademy.com](mailto:ann@sunshineacademy.com) or [andrew@sunshineacademy.com](mailto:andrew@sunshineacademy.com).

### Licensing and Accreditation

Our licensing authority is the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), a division of the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE). We maintain a copy of EEC's regulations in the office. To consult the regulations, please ask the director or go to [www.mass.gov/eec](http://www.mass.gov/eec).

We are accredited as an Early Childhood Education program with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We maintain a copy of NAEYC's Standards in the office along with our site visit results and application portfolio. To view the NAEYC Standards, please ask the director for a copy or see [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org). We welcome families to view the site visit reports and portfolios we assemble and submit as part of the accreditation process.

### Application and Enrollment Procedures

#### Application Process

We encourage all families who are interested in our school to take a tour of the classrooms, meet the teachers, and speak with the director about our programs. If you wish to apply for a space, you may submit an application with a non-refundable \$100 application fee. Upon receipt of the application and fee, we enter your information into our database of families interested in enrollment and start a file for your child.

#### Enrollment Procedures

Whenever a space becomes available, we call families on the waiting list in the order in which we receive the application and fee. When you are offered a space, you may secure it with a security deposit. Without a deposit, we will continue to offer the space to other families. When a family secures the space, we send parents an enrollment package that consists of a Developmental History, Drop-Off and Pick-Up Authorizations, a First Aid and Emergency



Medical Consent Form, a Permissions Form, a Medical Health Record form to be completed by a licensed pediatrician, and a Family Participation Preferences Form.

With your enrollment materials and the non-refundable security deposit, we schedule an orientation meeting with you during which we review the enrollment materials, agree on a start date, and provide you with further information about the classroom, teachers, catering menu, curriculum, materials to bring to the school.

### Security Deposits

The security deposit consists of a payment of one month of tuition that secures a space within the school. The security deposit also serves as the last month of tuition for the child. We ask that you provide us with a 30-day advanced notice if withdrawing from the program. With such notice, we credit the security deposit as the last month's tuition payment. For children who are graduating from the pre-k classroom into kindergarten, we ask for a 30-day advanced notice of the child's last day, or longer if possible, so we may plan for our August/September enrollments.

### Tuition Payments

Tuition is due on or before the first day of the month. Tuition may be handed to the director or placed in the locked mailbox outside the director's office. Tuition payments are never to be given directly to classroom teachers or left in your child's mailbox or backpack.

### Required Documentation

We are required by law to keep on file the following documents for all children enrolled in the school: Application Form, Developmental History, First Aid/Emergency Medical Care Consent Form, Massachusetts School Health Record/Physician's Examination (valid within 1 year of the exam), Immunization History, Lead Screening, Drop-Off and Pick-Up Authorization Form, Transportation Plan, a Permissions Form for sunscreen, fieldtrips, photographs, and a Signed Parent Handbook Acknowledgement and Agreement (last page of handbook). We also ask that you complete a Family Participation Form and our Photo and Video Usage and Sharing Policy.

Forms that must be updated annually include the Application (for parent contact information), Developmental History form, Emergency Contacts form, the medical exam, the immunization report, the lead test, any allergy information, any Individual Health Care plans that have been submitted, and the permissions form.

We ask for your cooperation in keeping your child's file up to date by submitting new information whenever you receive it and by responding promptly to requests for updates. We cannot allow a child without required documentation to attend the school. Enrollment will be suspended until required forms are returned to us.



### Transitioning Newly Enrolled Children into a Classroom

Any transition can cause heightened emotions including excitement, anxiety, joy or grief. We seek to provide time for everyone involved in the transition, including parents, the child, the teachers and other children in the classroom, to adjust emotionally to the new situation. When you meet with the director to enroll your child, the director will ask for your input in preparing a transition schedule. Transitions typically take place over the course of a week prior to the child's official start date. The transition schedule specifies the times each day when your child will visit the classroom, when you are expected to be there to support your child, and the date on which your child officially starts attending the school.

We ask that you use the transition period to speak with the teachers about your child, inform them of any medical needs, health issues or allergies your child may have, review your child's developmental history with them, ask any questions you have about the classroom or the school, and establish a routine for communicating with the teachers. These initial conversations set the tone for your relationship with the teachers and are an important part of the enrollment process.

### What to Bring to the School

We ask that you provide all of the following items for your child. Please make sure to keep all items in ample supply. We cannot allow children to use each other's personal items in the school. Please be sure to label everything with your child's name. Any packaged food must also be marked with the date on which you brought it into the school.

For **infants**, prepared formula and/or breast milk in bottles, a container of formula powder, food for lunch and snacks, diapers and wipes, any topical creams or lotions, sunscreen, a pacifier (if needed), two complete sets of extra clothing, and seasonal outdoor clothing.

For **toddlers**, diapers and wipes, two complete sets of extra clothing including socks and underwear, seasonal outdoor clothing, nap items (blanket, stuffed animal), any topical creams or lotions, sunscreen, non-fluoride toothpaste, and two sippy cups (for younger toddlers only).

For **preschoolers** and **pre-kindergarteners**, two complete sets of extra clothing including socks and underwear, seasonal outdoor clothing, nap items, one tube of fluoride toothpaste, any topical creams or lotions, and sunscreen.

Seasonal outdoor clothing for summer includes a swim suit, towel, sun hat, and water shoes; for winter, a warm coat, hat, gloves, and boots; for fall and spring, a sweater or light jacket. Please consult your child's teachers for recommendations of appropriate clothing that will enable your child to participate comfortably in all activities.



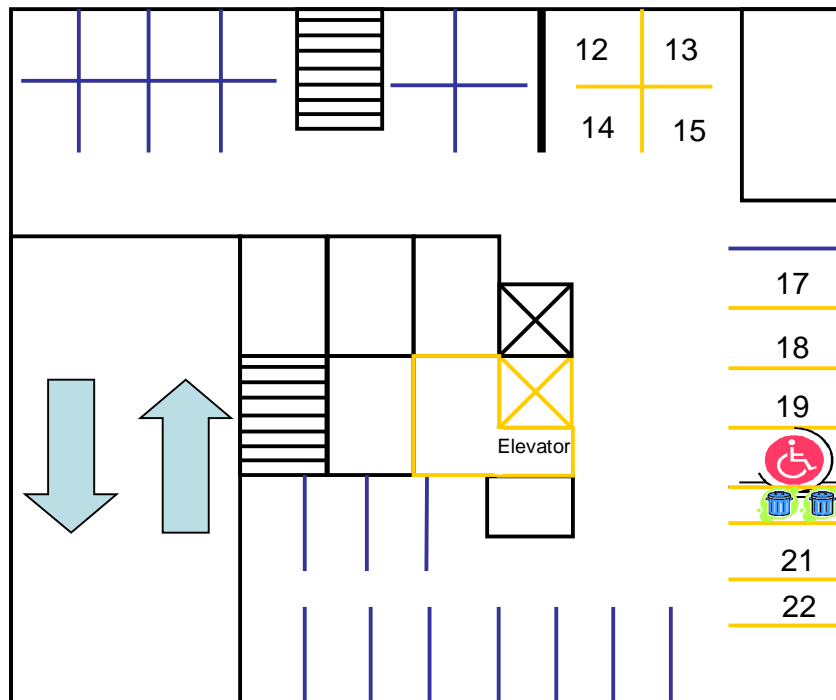
### Daily Operations

#### Drop-Off and Pick-Up Policies and Procedures

In order to ensure the safety of the children, drop-off and pick-up for those driving to the school is via the underground garage. You are responsible for your child’s safety in the parking garage and are expected to hold your child’s hand when walking between the car and the elevator vestibule. Children are not under any circumstances to run or play in the garage. Please also do not allow your car to idle in the garage so that children do not inhale the exhaust.

There are four drop-off/pick-up parking spaces with signs numbered 17, 18, 19 and 20 with a time limit of 15 minutes each. The drop-off/pick-up times are from 6:30 am to 9:00 am and 4:30 pm to 6:30 pm. There are two elevators in the parking garage – one for Sunshine Academy and the other for residents of the building. Our elevator is the one closest to the drop-off/pick-up area and is marked with our logo on the door. Families with a valid handicap license plate or sticker have preferential access to spot number 20 directly across from our elevator. Please do not park in spaces 12-15, as they are for the teachers or for 21-22, as they are privately rented.

Families walking to the school should use the Harvard Street entrance. After dropping off your child, you may store any strollers, scooters, bicycles or other equipment in the underground parking garage, on the ledge behind staff parking spaces 12 and 13. You may exit the garage by the elevator back through the school or via the stairway adjacent to the ramp. The door is labeled “Stair 2.” Under no circumstances are pedestrians allowed on the ramp.



Please note that in signing our Parent Handbook, you are also agreeing to the following release of liability statement:



“As the lawful parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of a child enrolled in Sunshine Academy, I/we hereby assume(s) all risk of injury or harm to the child associated with Sunshine Academy, including without limitation, said child’s presence on the property situated at 164 Harvard Street, Brookline, Massachusetts 02446 (the “Property”), and the use of the garage situated on said Property, and agree(s) to release, indemnify, defend and forever discharge Harvard-Vernon Place LLC and the Vernon Condominium Trust from all liability, claims, demands, damages, costs, expenses, actions and causes of action in respect of death, injury, loss or damage to the child, or by the child, howsoever caused, arising or to arise by reason of or during the child’s participation in the Sunshine Academy at 164 Harvard Street, Brookline MA 02446. We acknowledge that we have been warned and informed of the potential for injury and/or bodily harm, which could result from walking in or through the garage situated on the Property (including walking on the garage ramp) and agree to assume the risk therefore.”

### Sign-In and Sign-Out Clipboards

Upon entrance into the classroom, you must sign in your child on the sign-in/sign-out clipboard and inform the teachers of your arrival. Please write in the time as well as your initials. **The teachers are not responsible for your child until you sign in.** As you arrive to pick up your child, you must sign your child out of the classroom including both the time and your initials. Signing out transfers responsibility for the child back to you. The sign-in/sign-out sheet is a legal document that transfers responsibility for your child between you and the teachers. It is your responsibility to fill it out every day. We use the sign-in/sign-out sheet also to monitor attendance and for fire drill and evacuation purposes, so it must remain accurate.

Before you sign your child into the classroom and after you sign out, you are responsible for your child’s safety and must provide adequate supervision.

### Coordinating Drop-Off and Pick-Up Times with the Classroom Schedule

Teachers post a daily schedule on the Parent Boards in their classrooms specifying expected drop-off and pick-up times. For most classrooms, children are expected to be dropped off by 9:00 am to enable them to participate fully in classroom activities and learning opportunities. You are expected to call the classroom by 9:00 am and coordinate with the teachers if you need alternative drop-off or pick-up schedules. Late drop-offs and early pick-ups cannot be allowed to disrupt learning opportunities for the remainder of the children in the classroom.

If you arrive at the school during outdoor time, we ask that you wait in the classroom for the group to return. You may become unnecessarily frustrated walking or driving between the park and the school to meet the group, as teachers reserve the right to change their plans to avoid overcrowded parks, respond to sudden changes in weather, or avoid any other situation that may compromise the safety of the children. The children’s safety is our first priority.

It is also strictly forbidden to leave your child in the classroom unattended to wait for the group by himself or herself. You are responsible for your child until you are able to sign your child into the classroom on the sign-in/sign-out clipboard and release your child to the teachers.



### Authorized Pick-Up Lists

The drop-off/pick-up authorization form is to enable you to provide us with names, contact information and photographs for anyone you want to be able to drop-off or pick-up your child from the school. Anyone on the authorized list must be at least 18 years old and be able to supply documentation of identity. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone not on the list, anyone showing obvious signs of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or anyone with a known history of child abuse or neglect. We also do not allow former Sunshine Academy employees to be listed on anyone's authorized pick-up list to avoid potential conflict of interest and disruption of the classroom. We reserve the right to remove an authorized pick-up person who violates our policies and procedures. We will call the child's emergency contacts should an unauthorized or ineligible person arrive for pick-up.

### Prohibition Against Late Pick-Ups

The school closes promptly at 6:30 pm. We ask therefore that you arrive at the school to pick up your child **before** 6:15 pm so you may help your child transition appropriately back into your care. Pick-up time ought to be a pleasant experience for both you and your child, when you reconnect emotionally and share information about what you did when you were apart. We reserve the right to call emergency contacts for any parents who do not arrive by 6:15 pm.

Picking up your child anytime after 6:30 pm is strictly prohibited. Teachers make a note of any and all late pick-ups. Parents with a regular pattern of arriving after 6:15 pm or of preventing the teacher from closing the classroom on time at 6:30 pm may be subject to termination of the child's enrollment.

### Transportation Policy

We are not authorized to transport children to or from their homes, and we cannot allow teachers or administrative staff to walk or transport children to or from their homes under the employment of or at the request of a parent. If you have a transportation emergency while dropping off or picking up your child, you may use the school phone to make alternative arrangements.

### Car Safety Seats

Use of a car safety seat while transporting a child in a motor vehicle is required by law. If you arrive to pick up your child without a car seat, we reserve the right to contact another person on your authorized pick-up list for assistance. If a teacher or administrator witnesses a child leave the school without a car safety seat, we are required by law to call the police, the office of Child and Family Services to report abuse/neglect, and the Department of Early Education and Care.

### Security Access Cards

The director issues security access cards to enable you to enter the front and back doors of the school to drop-off and pick-up your child. For the safety of the children, cards are not to be shared with anyone. Any lost cards are to be reported to the director so they can be immediately





deactivated. At graduation or upon the withdrawal of a child from the program, all cards must be returned to the director. Upon termination of a family, all cards are immediately deactivated. Anyone who is authorized to enter the school has an access card. We ask therefore that no one release the lock on the doors or leave doors propped open for anyone. All school entrances are also monitored via recorded security cameras.

### Parent Information Boards

Each classroom maintains a parent information board that contains all required postings for the classroom. Please consult the board daily for special announcements, the monthly curriculum calendar, monthly menu, the classroom daily schedule, our behavior management policy, the location of the first aid kit, and photos of the classroom teachers.

### Parent-and-Child Mailboxes

As you enter the classroom, you will also see the parent-and-child mailboxes near the entrance. Please check your child's mailbox daily and take home any forms, announcements, and samples of your child's work left there for you. Teachers also use the mailboxes to post reminders of materials your child needs and to provide you with your copy of your child's daily sheet, monthly menu, monthly curriculum plans, and monthly newsletter.

### Coat Hooks and Nap Bags

When you enter the classroom, please hang up your child's coat on his or her hook and place any other belongings in his or her nap bag. We provide each child with a mesh bag for storing his or her own mat sheet and any other items that may be needed for naptime. We wash the mat sheets once a week and whenever they are wet or soiled. We ask that you take home any other blankets, pillows or stuffed animals you bring in to wash regularly at home. If you inadvertently take your child's mesh bag or mat sheet home, please return them to the school the next morning, as your child needs them for naptime.

### Extra Clothes Bins

All classrooms have individualized bins for children's clothing, labeled with each child's name. In the infant and young toddler rooms, the bins are located under the changing tables. In older toddler, preschool and pre-k classrooms, they are in the bathrooms. You are responsible for updating your child's bin with seasonally appropriate clothing. Occasionally, the classroom teachers will clean out the bins and place out-of-season clothes on your child's coat hook. Any clothing not taken home within one week will be donated to charity.

### Daily Communications

Please check in with your child's teacher every day when dropping off and picking up your child. We ask that all drop-off and pick-up conversations remain brief, however, as the teachers' primary focus in the classroom must remain on the children they are supervising. If you need to





discuss an issue or communicate any information of a confidential nature, please call the classroom during “call-in time” (from 1 to 3 pm) or speak with the director in the office.

Daily Sheets

The daily sheet is the primary means we use to communicate information about your child’s day to you. Daily sheets include notes about your child’s personal achievements, challenges and interests over the day as well as about your child’s eating, sleeping, and toileting behaviors. Teachers use the daily sheets also to communicate special announcements or requests. The daily sheet can be very useful to you in your efforts to reconnect with your child at the end of each day. When you read the daily sheet to your child, even if your child is not yet conversational, you can facilitate the emotional transition between school and home and reinforce for your child what he or she learned throughout the day.

Daily Schedules

Teaching teams work together to prepare and post a daily schedule that outlines the sequence of your child’s day. The teachers follow the schedule every day to provide the children with a sense of structure and predictability. Please drop off your child prior to morning circle, when the activities of the day are introduced, classroom jobs are assigned, activities are modeled, and children are welcomed into the classroom. We ask also that you maintain a regular pick-up time, or call us when you cannot do so, so we can help your child anticipate the change. Children do notice when there is a change to their schedule and may become upset when they are not appropriately prepared for it.

The following is a sample daily schedule for a toddler, preschool or pre-k classroom. Infants follow a more flexible schedule to enable teachers to respond to the children’s more intensive daily physical needs. Please consult your transition packet and/or the parent information board in your child’s classroom for the current daily schedule.

6:30-8:30 am	Arrival, Sign In, Activity Choice Time
8:30-9:00	Toileting, Hand Washing, Snack
9:00-9:30	Morning Circle Time
9:30-10:00	Structured Curriculum Activity
10:00-11:00	Clean Up, Prepare for Outside, Outdoor Time
11:00 am-12:00 noon	Language or Music Class, Transition Circle
12:00 noon -12:45 pm	Lunch
12:45-1:00	Toileting, Hand Washing, Tooth Brushing, Prepare to Rest
1:00-3:00	Rest/Nap (with quiet music)
3:00-3:30	Wake Up, Clean Up, Toileting, Hand Washing, Snack
3:30-3:45	Afternoon Circle Time, Prepare for Outside
3:45-4:45	Outdoor Time
4:45-5:15	Structured Curriculum Activity
5:15-6:30	Activity Choice Time, Departures, Sign-Outs
6:30 pm	School Closes



### Circle Time

Circle time is a group meeting of all of the children in the class when the teachers formally welcome them, communicate information about the activities for the day, allocate special jobs, inform children about changes to the routine, provide instructions on how to use new materials, and provide children with opportunities to present work they have done.

Please drop-off your child prior to morning circle so that your child does not miss important information. Children who miss morning circle often have difficulty transitioning into the classroom. Please help your child become integrated into the classroom by arriving on time to participate in morning circle every day.

### Structured Curriculum Time

Each month, all teaching teams prepare a formal curriculum calendar of activities organized around a common theme. Teachers plan the activities carefully to respond to children's interests and learning goals and to provide teacher-directed engagement with our six curriculum areas: Language and Early Literacy, Early Mathematics, Science and Sensory Exploration, History and Social Science, Visual and Performing Arts, and Health and Physical Education. Children engage in structured curriculum time twice a day (in the morning and in the afternoon).

### Activity Choice Time

The daily schedule also includes time for children to play together in an informal manner in the many activity areas in the classroom. "Activity choice time" is usually scheduled at the beginning and end of the day, when staggered drop-off and pick-up times necessitate flexibility and open-endedness. These times are very important to enable children to practice teamwork, leadership, creativity, sharing and small-group dynamics.

### Outdoor Time

Outdoor time helps children develop their physical abilities, stay healthy, explore the natural world, practice important social skills and have fun. Our morning and afternoon outdoor times are an integral part of the children's day. Children in all of our classrooms play outside every day, unless weather conditions are too hazardous to allow it. In general, we consider air temperatures above 95 degrees or below 20 degrees Fahrenheit too hazardous for park excursions or long walks. Classes do take short walks in all weather. We will not exclude a child from outdoor play unless we have medical documentation on file that indicates that the child is being treated for a specific condition that requires him or her to remain indoors.

We recommend that you dress your child appropriately for outside weather every day. Layered clothing and comfortable walking shoes are generally recommended. In the spring and fall, a light outdoor jacket or sweater is recommended. In the winter, a warm coat, hat, mittens or gloves, and waterproof boots are recommended. In the summer, we ask that you provide your child with a swimsuit, water shoes, a sun hat, and a towel for water play.



### Fieldtrip Policy

Teachers at Sunshine Academy may take the children on walking fieldtrips around the neighborhood. We never transport children via bus, car or public transportation. Fieldtrips are typically planned in coordination with the curriculum and involve such places as the fire station, library, farmers market, flower shop and grocery stores.

### Insect Repellent

The children do not generally go anywhere that would require insect repellent. Should public health authorities recommend insect repellent at any time, we will contact you to provide it.

### Sunscreen

From May to October, all children older than six months wear sunscreen during outdoor time, with written parental permission. Please bring your child to school with a layer of sunscreen already applied for the morning outing and please give the teachers a container of your preferred sunscreen, labeled with your child's name, for them to apply after nap for the afternoon outing.

### Infant Food, Formula and Breast Milk

If you have an infant enrolled at the school, we ask that you provide your own food, formula and/or bottled breast milk for all daily meals and snacks in clearly labeled bottles and containers. We do not allow glass containers under any circumstances due to the potential hazard they may pose to all children in the classroom if they break.

Teachers store all infant foods in the infant room refrigerator in separate plastic containers, labeled with each child's name. Under no circumstances are infants given food, formula, or milk intended for another child. Teachers dispose of all unfinished food, formula, and milk after each meal. Bottled formula and breast milk are disposed of within an hour of being first offered to the child. Teachers never offer the same milk or formula to children throughout the day.

If you are concerned about conserving breast milk, we recommend that you bring in bottles with 2 to 4 ounces of milk in each so that if your child cannot finish an 8-ounce bottle in a single sitting, there is less waste. If your child is hungry after the first 2 or 4 ounce bottle, we can prepare another one.

Mothers who wish to breastfeed their child are encouraged to coordinate schedules with the teachers. The infant room rocking chair is available at any time for feedings. Breast milk may be stored either in the infant room refrigerator (for no longer than 24 hours) or in the kitchen freezer (for up to 2 months). All frozen breast milk must be stored in ready-to-feed containers, clearly labeled with the child's name, the date it was placed in the freezer, and the date of expiration. All milk left in the freezer past the date of expiration will be disposed.



State law prohibits us from using bottle warmers or a microwave oven to warm up formula, breast milk or food. We steep bottles and food containers in warm tap water to counteract the chill of refrigeration.

Teachers do not offer solid foods or fruit juices to infants younger than six months of age, unless recommended by the child's pediatrician and approved by the parents. We also do not serve cow's milk to infants younger than 12 months of age.

Infants follow their own schedules and are fed whenever they seem hungry. During bottle feedings, infants unable to sit are held to be fed. Infants are never given bottles while in a crib and never eat from propped bottles. Teachers document all feedings on the infant daily sheets.

### Sippy Cups

If you have an older infant or young toddler at the school, please provide two sippy cups, labeled with your child's name. Children never carry sippy cups with them while crawling or walking. Teachers transition children to an open cup as soon as they are developmentally ready.

### Meals and Snacks

For all children in the toddler, preschool and pre-k programs, we provide two appetizing, nutritious snacks and a catered hot lunch daily. All food is prepared in a safe and sanitary manner and is free of trans fats. Monthly menus are posted in each classroom and are designed in accordance with U.S.D.A. standards to meet children's nutritional needs. Children are allowed to eat at a reasonable leisurely rate. No child is forced or coerced into eating. Each child receives an adequate amount and variety of food. No child is ever denied food for any reason other than written medical direction. Teachers encourage children to eat a well-balanced diet.

Refrigeration is provided for food storage. All food is stored in clean, covered containers. The disposable utensils and drinking cups we use are age-appropriate. Any food that children leave unfinished is disposed. Tables are washed and disinfected before and after each meal or snack. Drinking water is provided at meals, snacks and throughout the day.

When children require special diets for medical or religious reasons, parents must coordinate with the director about their child's needs. In most cases, the need may be met by ordering vegetarian or allergen-free meals from our caterer. While we expect most children to eat breakfast at home, if you drop off your child prior to 7:30 am, you may provide breakfast for your child at the school. We recommend fresh fruit or vegetables, wholegrain cereal, bread or bagels, unsweetened oatmeal, hard-boiled eggs, rice balls, low fat cheese, yogurt, milk or soymilk. Prohibited foods include candy, chocolate, cake, donuts, chips and any other high fat/high sugar food that will interfere with a child's ability to function in the classroom. Under no circumstances may peanuts or any products that contain tree nuts (e.g., peanut butter, almonds, walnuts, etc.) be brought into the school. Breakfast food must be consumed by 8:15 am, after which it will be disposed in the trash. Outside food not approved in advance by the director is prohibited from the school and will be disposed in the trash immediately.



Teachers serve only whole milk to children who are 12 to 24 months of age and 2% milk to children older than 24 months. Teachers do not serve any of foods to children that could potentially cause a choking hazard, such as hot dogs or hard pretzel nuggets. When needed, teachers cut food into ½-inch pieces before serving it.

### Tooth Brushing

Children in the toddler, preschool, and pre-k programs brush their teeth daily, following lunch and before nap. We provide each child with a toothbrush, labeled with the child's name and date it was issued. We replace all toothbrushes every three months or whenever a child has been absent due to illness. Under no circumstances do children share toothbrushes. Teachers wear gloves when helping children brush their teeth and when setting up the toothbrushes. Teachers clean the toothbrush holders every week with a bleach-and-water solution.

Parents provide toothpaste, non-fluoride for toddlers and with fluoride for preschool and pre-k. All toothpaste must be labeled with the child's name. In the infant program, teachers wipe the infants' teeth and gums with a disposable cloth after each feeding to remove excess milk or food.

### Nap Time, Quiet Time and Safe Sleep (SIDS) Policy

Children in all classrooms are required to nap and/or rest quietly as part of their daily schedule. Infants are provided with individual cribs. Toddlers, preschoolers, and pre-k children are provided with their own labeled sleeping mats and sheets. The mats are wiped with a bleach solution and the sheets are washed in our washing machine weekly and when otherwise soiled. Teachers supervise the children throughout naptime to ensure that they rest. We cannot keep a child awake during naptime. If your child has trouble sleeping at home, please consult a sleep therapist to help you develop a regular bedtime routine that does not include screens.

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), infants are put to sleep in their cribs on their backs, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Nothing is allowed in the cribs with sleeping children including but not limited to blankets, swaddling cloths, pillows, quilts, comforters, books, toys, pacifier attachments, bumper pads, extra mattresses, positional wedges, jackets or snowsuits. You may provide a sleep sack for your child provided that the arms are exposed.

Children who arrive asleep in their car seats must be removed and placed on their backs in their cribs, even if that risks their waking up. Any child who falls asleep in a bouncy seat, swing, or anywhere outside their crib will be put immediately in their crib on their backs to sleep.

### Diapering Policies and Procedures

The infant and toddler rooms all have changing tables for diapering children adjacent to sinks with running water for hand washing. The diaper changing areas are separate from areas used for food preparation, food service, and any other activity. Changing tables are never used for any other purpose. Changing table paper of adequate size to prevent children from coming in



contact with the table surface is used and disposed of after each child has been diapered, when the changing surface is also washed and disinfected with bleach and water solution.

We check and change children's diapers every two hours throughout the day and also whenever they are wet or soiled. During each diaper change, children are washed and dried with their own wipes. After each diaper change, teachers wash their hands with liquid soap and running water, using friction, and dry their hands with paper towels, and the child's hands are washed with liquid soap and running water and dried with paper towels. Soiled diapers are placed in a closed container that is lined with a leak-proof disposable lining. The diapers are removed from the school at regular intervals throughout the day. Any wet or soiled clothing is placed in a sealed plastic bag, labeled with the child's name and returned to you at the end of the day. Please take all wet or soiled clothing home with you promptly at the end of each day. We will dispose of any soiled clothing left in the school overnight.

Only disposable diapers are used at the school. You are responsible for maintaining a supply of diapers, wipes, and any creams or lotions at the school adequate for your child's needs.

#### Toileting Policies and Toilet Training Procedures

Children begin toilet training when both teachers and parents agree that the child is ready both physically and emotionally. Please coordinate with your child's teachers on a start-date after which your child becomes diaper-free (no pull-ups either) at school and at home. At that time, you are expected to bring in extra clothes, especially underwear and pants, to school every day. Consistency is very important throughout the toilet training process. Once a child goes diaper-free, we expect everyone to continue with the plan, with the same set of expectations at home as at school. Teachers will not toilet train a child without equivalent consistency at home.

At school, whenever there is a transition between activities, teachers remind the child to use the toilet and praise the child for trying. The teachers also work with the child to express his or her needs with words so that if there is a need to use the toilet during an activity, the child will be able to let the teachers know. Children may use the toilet as needed. They are encouraged to use the toilet before meals, snacks and going outside. No child is disciplined for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.

The toddler, preschool, and pre-k classrooms all have toilet facilities that provide adequate privacy, handicap accessibility, and child-accessible facilities. Running water for hand washing is located in each bathroom area and in every classroom. After using the toilet, children wash their hands with liquid soap and running water, using friction, and dry their hands with paper towels. After assisting each child in the bathroom, teachers wash their hands with liquid soap and running water, using friction, and dry their hands with paper towels.

Any wet or soiled clothing is placed in a sealed plastic bag, labeled with the child's name and returned to you at the end of the day. Please take any wet or soiled clothing home promptly at the end of each day. We will dispose of any soiled clothing left in the school overnight.





## Rights of Children and Families

### Children's Involvement in Classroom Routines

Whenever possible, we encourage children to participate in establishing rules and routines for the classroom and in helping maintain classroom organization. Children as young as toddlers help with putting toys and materials in their proper place, setting out snacks and lunch, getting coats or other materials for outside time and setting up mats. Interaction with peers and the society of the classroom around these cooperative tasks plays a constructive role in encouraging appropriate behavior. The structure of the day also helps children anticipate transitions from one activity to the next and provides a sense of control and self-mastery.

### Behavior Management Policy

Sunshine Academy strives to help children learn cooperative, considerate behavior without the threat of punishment. Teachers set realistic and positive expectations for children and reinforce them in consistent, reasonable and appropriate ways. Strategies include direct instruction, providing alternative choices, giving children opportunities to verbalize feelings and expectations, and redirecting children from inappropriate behaviors. Such strategies help children develop self-control through understanding.

Adult behaviors that are never acceptable at Sunshine Academy, from a parent or a teacher, include yelling in anger at a child, inflicting physical or emotional pain, spanking or handling children in a rough manner, humiliating or making fun of a child, withholding food or water as punishment, force feeding, or disciplining a child for wetting or soiling their clothing or not using the toilet.

### Assessment of Children's Progress and Developmental Reports

Throughout all curriculum activities, activity choice time, circle time, outdoor time and all other times while interacting with the children, teachers observe and make notes of the children's strengths, challenges, interests, and interactional styles. All teachers are trained in how to observe children during new teacher training sessions and periodically at evening staff trainings throughout the year. Teachers also review their observations at weekly assessment meetings with the director when they also plan curriculum and write the children's reports.

The primary means we use to communicate our assessments to you is the Development Report. Teachers prepare a formal written development report every three (3) months for infants and children with special needs and every six (6) months for all other children. Teachers make two copies of the report. One goes into the child's file and the other goes home with you.

When you receive the development report, please schedule a time to meet with the teachers to discuss their observations and share with us your observations and concerns. These parent-teacher conferences provide an opportunity to discuss your child's strengths, interests and learning styles and enable us to coordinate how to address any challenges.



### Children's Portfolios

Teachers in all classrooms also collect samples of children's work throughout the year and assemble them in a portfolio. You are entitled to view the contents of your child's portfolio at any time. The portfolio is kept in the classroom, reviewed at conferences, and presented to you when your child graduates from the program.

### Use of Assessment Reports

We use our observations of the children, our weekly assessment forms, the children's development reports and the portfolios for a number of purposes. First, we use them to communicate with you about your child's progress, interests and needs. Second, we use them in team meetings as we plan the curriculum so that we may better support the children's learning. Third, we use them in our teacher performance reviews to help us identify professional development workshops or trainings teachers may need. Finally, we use them in our strategic planning process, as we plan program improvements and report them to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC).

### Observation of Children for Coursework

Teachers may also, on occasion, request your permission to observe your child for coursework they are completing in the field of early childhood education. Teachers who wish to fulfill their observation requirements at Sunshine Academy must provide the director with a plan for observation, along with a copy of the syllabus outlining the course requirements, a minimum of two weeks in advance of the date when the observation is to begin. The director then informs all staff and parents, in writing, of any such activities. You may opt your child out of the observation by submitting such a request in writing. No activities that would compromise the care and education of the children are permitted at any time. At all times, children's privacy is ensured through the use of pseudonyms to conceal their identities.

### Transition Policies and Procedures

The decision about when to transition a child from one classroom to the next is based on many factors including the child's age and developmental level, the mix of children in the sending and receiving classrooms, and the availability of a space. The decision usually involves a discussion among the teachers, the director, and the parents. We strive to inform parents at least one month in advance of any transitions we anticipate for their child. Transitions typically take place over several weeks. During the transition period, a teacher from the sending classroom brings the child to the receiving classroom for a series of visits of increasing duration. At that time, the teachers discuss the child's interests, learning style and any concerns they may have. The goal of the visits is to familiarize the child with the classroom and the new teachers with the child.

Throughout the transition period, we inform you of the expectations of the new classroom. Although children tend to adjust quickly to the new expectations, it sometimes takes parents more time to become accustomed. We ask that you work with the teachers to understand what is





expected of you to help support your child. We allow a 30-day period for parents to adjust to the new routines, after which time, we reserve the right to discuss alternative arrangements for your child, including referrals to other schools or programs that may be more appropriate for you.

Children typically start officially in their new classroom on the first day of the month. On that day, all of the child's belongings are transferred to the new classroom and we ask that you drop off your child in the new classroom from then onward.

### Transition Packets

Whenever a child is preparing to transition to a new classroom, the director provides you with a transition packet that includes a welcome letter, a transition schedule, the classroom daily schedule, the monthly curriculum plan, the monthly menu, teacher information pages from our faculty directory, and handouts such as developmental milestones for the relevant age group. Please ask the director and/or the classroom teachers if you have any questions about the materials or would like to schedule a meeting about the transition.

### Enrolling Children with Special Needs

Sunshine Academy welcomes and accepts applications from all families. We believe that all children and families can benefit from the inclusion of children with varying abilities in the classroom. Children and families can and should learn about helping one another and developing an awareness and respect for human differences.

If you are applying for admission to Sunshine Academy and your child is already receiving services from Early Intervention or the Public Schools or has an already identified disability for which accommodations may be necessary, you are required to contact the director in writing during the enrollment process to discuss any accommodations and provide appropriate documentation, such as an Individual Education Plan or an Individual Family Service Plan. The director will review the documentation and decide whether Sunshine Academy can meet your child's needs. The director will inform you in writing within 30 days of receipt of the documentation as to Sunshine Academy's decision regarding enrollment and the reasons for the decision. Considerations include but are not limited to the nature and cost of the accommodations, the ability to secure funding or services from other sources, the school's overall financial resources, the number of employees, the size of the classroom, the effect on expenses, and any other impacts on the school.

If the director determines that the accommodations required to serve your child would cause an undue burden on the school, the director will inform you of other resources available to your child as well as your right to contact the Department of Early Education and Care for a review.

If the director determines that the accommodations do not present an undue burden on the school, the director will enroll your child and name a liaison for your child, who is usually one of the child's classroom teachers. The liaison is responsible for assessing your child's progress and coordinating all communications regarding your child's accommodations. Parents are required to sign our "Family Agreement Regarding the Exchange of Information" form and provide our



liaison with copies of all assessments and reports that the service providers produce for your child. The liaison and the teaching team will meet with you every three months to discuss your child's progress during our regular Parent-Teacher Development Report meetings.

### Interventions, Referral Services, Individual Service Providers

If your child is already enrolled at Sunshine Academy and you or your child's teachers believe that your child could benefit from evaluation and assistance with physical, emotional, behavioral or medical issues, including vision or hearing screenings, Sunshine Academy will work with you and your child's teachers to assess whether and when such services would be beneficial and what role Sunshine Academy can or should play in the intervention.

You have a right to request early intervention services under Part C of IDEA, as provided by the Federal Government, and under M.G.L. 71B, as provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the public school system.

Should you initiate an assessment or services with an outside provider, you are required to inform the director in writing of the assessment and work with the director to determine what role Sunshine Academy will play in the intervention. If the assessments or services are to be conducted at the school at any time, you are required to sign our "Family Agreement Regarding the Exchange of Information" form and provide the director with copies of all assessments and reports that the service providers produce for your child.

If the teachers initiate a request for an assessment for services, we ask that you work with them to ensure the assessment is done in a timely manner. The director may provide you with contact information for our preferred service providers, or if you prefer, the director may, with written consent, contact a service agency for you.

If it is determined that services are necessary, the director will review the documentation and decide whether Sunshine Academy can continue to meet your child's needs. If the director determines that the school can meet your child's needs, the director will appoint a liaison for your child who will coordinate communications between the teaching team and the service providers and who will assess your child's progress. If the director determines that the accommodations would cause an undue burden on the school, the director will inform you in writing of other resources available for your child as well as your right to contact the Department of Early Education and Care for a review.

If it is determined that additional services are unnecessary, or that your child is ineligible to receive services at the time, the director will review your child's progress every three months to follow-up on any concerns.

### Conditions for Continued Enrollment at Sunshine Academy

Whenever a child's development or behavior are of concern to the teachers, the teaching team and director document the concerns in the form of incident reports, child observation reports, behavioral intervention plans and/or development reports. While in the process of assessing the



child, it may become evident that continued enrollment at Sunshine Academy is not beneficial to the child or poses a safety risk to other children, and in such cases, Sunshine Academy reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment. The following criteria are used to decide if continued enrollment is in the child's best interest.

- The potential for the child to present a serious danger to himself/herself or others.
- The continuing availability of necessary staff and resources to serve the child's needs.
- Evidence that the child has made progress toward effective participation in the classroom.
- Evidence that the child has made progress toward goals stated in his or her Individual Education Plan or Individual Family Service Plan.
- Parent cooperation in providing documentation, following up on referrals and implementing recommendations.

If it is determined that the conditions for continued enrollment are not met, the director provides parents with a written notice of termination and referrals for a more appropriate placement. When conditions allow, teachers will prepare the child for the transition in such a way that is appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding.

#### Confidentiality Regarding Children and Families

Children and parents have a right to confidentiality that will be respected at all times at Sunshine Academy. Information pertaining to any child, parent or family is discussed only on a need-to-know basis and only within the teaching and administrative teams. If there is a concern about a child's welfare, however, we are required to report to agencies who may be able to act in the child's interest. Teachers are protected by law when filing any report of abuse or neglect in good faith and are required by law to cooperate fully with the Department of Children and Family Services and the Department of Early Education and Care throughout any investigation.

#### Access to Children's Records

Only parents, teachers, the director, and Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) may view the contents of a child's file, unless parents provide written permission for the release of the records to another party. You may read and add information to your child's file by contacting the director and arranging a meeting. You may request copies of your child's file for your own use by writing to [director@sunshineacademy.com](mailto:director@sunshineacademy.com). Whenever anyone views or copies information from a child's file, a record is kept of the disclosure in the "File Access Log" that is attached to the front inside cover of the file. We keep all children's records for five years after the children have left the school. After that time, they are no longer available.

#### Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Sunshine Academy protects children from abuse and neglect while in the school's care. All staff are mandated reporters and will report suspected child abuse or neglect to the director and to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCF). The director will notify the Department of Early Education and Care immediately after filing a 51A report or learning that a 51A report has



been filed. If anyone suspects abuse or neglect but is concerned about formal reporting, he or she may report suspicions anonymously to the director in the form of a note in the tuition drop box. The director will investigate any and all allegations. All Sunshine Academy staff are required to cooperate in all investigations of child abuse or neglect. Any teacher who makes a suspected child abuse or neglect report in good faith, or who participates in any investigation by the DCF Protective Screening Unit, is immune from any liability, civil or criminal, for reporting a suspicion or for participating in judicial proceedings resulting from such a report.

Abuse is defined as the non-accidental commission of any act upon a child, which causes or creates a substantial risk of serious physical or emotional injury or constitutes a sexual offense under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Neglect is the failure, either deliberately or through negligence and inability, to adequately care for, protect or supervise children.

### Child Custody Documentation

Under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, both parents have the right to pick up their child unless a court document restricts that right. If an enrolling parent chooses not to include the child's other parent on the authorized pick-up list, an official court document must be on file (e.g., current restraining order, sole custody decree, divorce decree stating sole custody).

## Parent Responsibilities and Parent Involvement

Effective communication among teachers, parents and program administrators is an essential part of early childhood education. Children learn best when all of the adults involved in their care and education work together to address their needs and support their learning.

### Parent Communication with the Teachers and Director

We encourage and expect you to communicate information to the teachers and director that can be helpful in caring for your child and supporting his or her learning throughout the day. If your child has been ill, if you are traveling, if there has been a change at home in the child's eating or sleeping behaviors, or if there is an event that is causing anxiety or stress at home, please let us know so that we may understand any change in the child's behavior that we observe and address it appropriately. Information may be communicated to us in a confidential manner via email to [director@sunshineacademy.com](mailto:director@sunshineacademy.com). Teachers will be made aware of any information on a need-to-know basis.

### Parent Involvement in the Classroom, Family Participation Form

We welcome you to visit your child's classroom at any time and encourage you to participate in curriculum activities. We especially encourage you to attend potluck dinners, children's musical performances, and "young author celebrations," when children share their own or class-authored books. We invite you also to share information with the class about your profession, hobbies, special knowledge, or holidays you celebrate. Children enjoy parent presentations and are



especially excited to see their own parents participate in the classroom community. Upon enrolling your child into the school, we ask that you complete a “Family Participation Form” that communicates your preferences for participation in your child’s classroom. Teachers consult the forms as they consider and plan family events.

### Regularly Scheduled Parent-Teacher Conferences

When you receive your child’s development report, we ask you to schedule a conference with your child’s teachers to discuss your child’s experience in the classroom. We strongly encourage you to meet with the teachers, learn about how your child interacts in the classroom and share your comments, questions and concerns. We can offer a face-to-face conference, or if it is the only way you can meet with us, a phone conference. When only one parent can come to the school due to work schedules, we can include the other parent via phone conferencing.

For families whose first language is not English, you may request an interpreter to attend the conference. Whenever possible, Sunshine Academy will provide an interpreter by drawing on the skills of our teachers and administrative staff.

As you prepare for the conference, you may want to consider the following questions:

1. What activities does my child prefer during the day?
2. What do you consider to be his or her strengths?
3. What challenges are you working with my child to address?
4. What strategies do you use to help my child with those challenges? What can we do to help?
5. What does my child need to know before transitioning to the next classroom or kindergarten?

You may also want to share feedback about projects your child has done in the classroom, challenges have with your child at home, or observations of your child’s strengths or interests.

### Parent-Requested Conferences

We welcome and encourage you to request a conference with the teachers and/or director whenever you have a concern to discuss. We ask that you not use drop-off or pick-up times to discuss your concerns unless they can be resolved with a brief conversation. At drop-off and pick-up, the teachers must maintain their focus on the children they are supervising. By scheduling a conference, you may speak with the teachers and/or the director in the office, undistracted by the children and with full confidentiality.

### Parent Call-In Time

If you cannot attend a face-to-face conference, we encourage you to call your child’s classroom between 1:00 and 3:00 pm when the children are napping. If you email the director in advance, we can reconfigure the break schedule to make sure all members of the classroom teaching team are present to speak with you together to address your concerns.



### Family Events

We cordially invite you to participate in any and all of the family events we schedule throughout the year such as the Halloween Parade, Science Fair, Music Shows, and our “Stepping Up” celebration in August. We publicize the dates for events in our monthly newsletter and on our website. Parent assistance in coordinating such events is always welcome.

### Parent Advisory Board

An additional way in which you may participate in the school is through membership on the Parent Advisory Board. We invite any and all parents to serve on the Board. The Board meets quarterly with the administrative team to review policies and procedures, plan events, and provide feedback about the school and its operations. Please contact the director to participate.

### Birthdays

We enjoy celebrating children’s birthdays at the school. Please arrange a date and time with the teachers and then speak with the director about any foods you may want to provide to the children. No food brought into the school may contain nuts or any other ingredient to which a child in the classroom is allergic. We recommend 100% fruit juice popsicles, fruit salads, frozen yogurt or other natural treats.

Balloons are not permitted in the school at any time because of the dangers of choking and latex allergies. Birthday candles or any other source of fire or flame are also prohibited. Parents may decorate the classroom with streamers or bring party hats or noise-makers. Goody bags are permitted as long as contents are age appropriate and not candy. Please speak with the director for guidance.

If you are planning an at-home party, you may consult the school directory to distribute invitations using parents’ home contact information. Invitations, goody bags, thank-you notes and birthday gifts for at-home parties may not be distributed at school, as they cause a distraction in the classroom, especially if not all children in the class were invited to the party.

### Family Directory

The director maintains a list of family contact information, the “Family Directory,” to be made available upon request to other families in the same classroom. The purpose of the directory is to facilitate your efforts to plan events or play dates for your child with his or her classmates. You may opt out of the directory, if you wish, by contacting the director. Directories are never to be shared with anyone outside of the Sunshine Academy community.

### Language Appropriate to Children

We ask all parents to help us maintain a school environment respectful of children. Use of profanity or other forms of derogatory language is prohibited in the classrooms or at any time children are present and can be grounds for suspension or termination from the school.





### Prohibition Against Screens in the Classroom

Use of screens for any purpose in the classroom is strictly prohibited. We do not show movies or videos in the classroom to the children at any time on any device including laptop computers, tablets, dvd players or smart phones.

### Respect for Children's Space and Work

The classroom is the children's space where they learn together with the direction and support of their teachers. As you enter the space, we ask that you respect the work that the children and their teachers are doing by entering quietly and supporting whatever activity is underway before transitioning your child into or out of the classroom. When you walk through a space the children are using, or interrupt an activity such as a story the teacher is reading to the children, you disrupt the entire class and show disregard for the children's learning. When you receive work your child has done, please take it with you. If you do not want to keep it, please dispose of it where the children cannot see you doing it. We appreciate your support in honoring the children's work and the effort they put into their learning.

### Supervision of Siblings

We ask that when you pick up your child, if you have siblings with you, please keep them from disrupting the activities of the class and supervise them throughout whatever time you remain at the school. It is strictly prohibited for you to leave your children unattended in a car, the gym, the vestibule, or anyplace where you cannot see them. You also may not take out alternative activities or materials to entertain siblings. The classroom is not a drop-in play space, as we cannot be responsible for children who are not enrolled in the school. In general, picking up your child quickly and with minimal disruption to the class is easier for everyone. It becomes confusing for the children, and especially your own child, when pick-up times extend indefinitely and you must remind them continually that it is time to leave.

### Prohibition Against Babysitting

Sunshine Academy prohibits teachers and staff members from babysitting or tutoring children enrolled at any of the Sunshine Academy schools or their siblings. Sunshine Academy strives to ensure that all children receive the same consistent, high-quality care and education. Business relationships contracted between teachers and Sunshine families can compromise a teacher's ability to ensure consistent treatment toward all families and are therefore prohibited. The teachers and the families involved will be immediately terminated from the school.

We instruct our teachers never to share private contact information with parents and we ask that you not approach them for it.

### Incident Reports

We use incident reports to remind parents and children of the expectations we have at the school. An incident report contains a description of any event that causes a concern, any additional



details we learn through discussion about why it occurred, and next steps to prevent its recurrence. We ask that you sign the report to acknowledge that we discussed the concern with you and how to prevent its recurrence.

### Parent Grievance Policy

Working cooperatively to ensure the care and education of children can, at times, be difficult and miscommunications, misunderstandings and differences of opinion can cause unnecessary frustration. When such concerns arise, we expect parents to bring the issue first to the teaching team as soon as possible in a courteous, cooperative manner. Many issues can be resolved quickly and easily with mutual communication.

If you are unable to get what you believe to be an adequate response from the teaching team, please speak with the director about adding the issue to the next team meeting. If the issue cannot be resolved at the team level, the director may address it through counseling or other disciplinary action. What action to take is the discretion of the director in coordination with the administrative team.

Throughout any grievance process, we expect everyone involved to remain courteous, respectful and cooperative. Gossip will not produce an effective outcome and does interfere with our ability to serve the children effectively. Parents who regularly resort to gossip or other disrespectful behaviors as a means to effect change in their child's classroom may be subject to termination of their child's enrollment.

### Suspension, Termination or Withdrawal of Families

On occasion, a family may be asked to leave the school. The circumstances may include but are not limited to:

- Jeopardizing the safety of children, families or staff
- Non-payment of tuition
- Theft or damage of personal or school property
- Violation of school policies or other reasons to be determined by the director

Prior to suspension or termination, the director will provide written notification to the family giving reason along with information about referral services. When possible, families and children will be given time to say good-bye to teachers and classmates. Tuition and security deposits will not be refunded. When a family is suspended for non-payment of tuition, it is possible to return to the school when the account is brought current, if space is available.

Families wishing to withdraw from the school are required to provide us with a 30-day written notice. The security deposit will then be used for the final month of tuition. The child will be prepared for the change in a manner consistent with his or her ability to understand. Upon suspension, termination, or withdrawal from the school, all security access cards held by the family will be deactivated and must be returned immediately.





## Health and Hygiene

### Hand Washing Policy

Hand washing is the most effective means to prevent the spread of illness. We wash our hands with liquid soap and running water upon arrival for the day, after diapering or toileting, after handling bodily fluids, before and after handling any food, before and after administering medication, before and after using the water table, after handling garbage, dirt, animals or other potentially contaminated materials, and when moving from one group of children to another.

We help children learn proper hand washing technique and we help children wash their hands until they can do it properly themselves. Children are required to wash their hands with liquid soap and running water upon arrival for the day, after diapering or toileting, before and after meals and snacks, before and after using the water table, and after handling any potentially contaminated materials. We welcome your assistance in reminding your child to wash his or her hands regularly and in teaching proper hand washing techniques.

### Infection Control

The teachers are trained in infection control procedures and regularly wash and decontaminate the play surfaces and materials throughout the day. Materials and equipment that are disinfected after each use include cutting boards and other surfaces used for food preparation, tables used to serve food to children, toys that have been in children's mouths, changing tables, and any mop or cloth used to clean up bodily fluids. Materials and equipment disinfected daily including toilet seats, trash cans that hold soiled diapers, sinks and faucets, drinking fountains, water tables and water play equipment, play tables, smooth surfaced floors, mops and any washcloths or towels.

Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water play does not spread infectious disease. No child drinks the water. Children with sores on their hands are not permitted to participate in communal water play. Fresh potable water is used, and the water is changed before each new group of children participates in water play. Water tables are completely drained, dried and disinfected with bleach solution at the end of each day.

### Cleaning Formulas

We do not use commercial cleaners or products that could pose a hazard to children. We follow NAEYC guidelines for cleaning, which involve mixing our own bleach and water solutions on a daily basis. The formulas are as follows:

- I. For dishes, baby toys, and thermometers: 1/8 teaspoon bleach to 1 quart warm water
- II. For tables, countertops, and sleep mats: 1/4 teaspoon bleach to 1 quart warm water
- III. For sinks, toilets, diaper tables, and pails: 1/4 teaspoon bleach to 1 gallon warm water
- IV. For blood spills: 1 part bleach to 10 parts warm water



### Universal Precautions

We follow universal precautions whenever responding to a child who is bleeding or otherwise exuding body fluids. Universal precautions were designed by the U.S. Centers of Disease Control to protect everyone from potential infection from blood borne disease, such as AIDS and hepatitis B. Since there is no way to know who is infected, universal precautions are used with everyone, regardless of perceived risk. Teachers wear disposable gloves, which are readily available in all classrooms, bathrooms and in the park backpacks, to assist anyone who is bleeding or who has vomited, and wash their hands thoroughly afterward. We discard or decontaminate anything that has direct contact with anyone's blood or body fluids.

If your child bleeds or vomits on his or her clothing, we will return it to you at the end of the day in a sealed and doubled plastic bag with your child's name on it. We will not keep contaminated clothing in the school and will dispose of it in the trash if it is not taken home. Please replenish your child's extra clothes bin regularly.

### Accident Prevention and Reporting Procedures

All teachers and administrative staff check the school daily for any safety hazards, including but not limited to obstructed exits, outlets without safety plugs, sharp objects or cleaning materials not secured in a locked cabinet. Any hazards are removed or repaired immediately. We do not allow any toxic substances, poisonous plants, sharp objects, matches or other hazardous objects in the school. Medications are kept in a secure place, out of the reach of children.

### Emergency Procedures for Injuries

All teachers maintain up-to-date training and recertification in Pediatric First Aid as well as Infant/Child CPR. We sponsor Infant/Child First Aid/CPR Trainings every six months.

Teachers treat all minor injuries (cuts, abrasions, bumps) by cleaning any wounds with soap and water and applying an ice pack if there is swelling. Teachers then notify you at pick-up time unless the injury is to the head or face when we will call you in advance to report the injury.

In the event of a serious accident or injury, one teacher calls 911, then the school director, then the child's parents, while another teacher stays with the child to provide immediate and appropriate first-aid. If parents cannot be reached, teachers call the emergency contacts in the order listed on the emergency contact form. If necessary, the child is transported to Children's Hospital or the hospital of your choice via ambulance with a teacher and/or the child's parents, guardians, or emergency contacts.

### Health and Illness Policies

When your child will be absent due to illness, we expect you to call the school before 9:00 am to let us know that he or she will not attend school for the day. If your child presents any of the following symptoms upon arrival at the school, we will ask you to take your child home:



- Loose bowel movements or diarrhea
- Head lice
- Inflammation of the eyes or conjunctivitis
- Persistent cough
- Unexplained rash
- Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or above
- Thick, green copious mucous
- Any other symptoms of illness at the discretion of the director

Teachers will complete an Illness Report to inform you of our concerns. Any child sent home cannot return to the school for a full school day to enable parents and the child's pediatrician to assess the symptoms. The child must be fever free without the aid of Tylenol or other fever reducers, must have no vomit or diarrhea, and must no longer be contagious before returning to school. We do not accept doctor notes as a way to bring a child back to the school before a full school day has elapsed. Teachers will continue to send a child home if the symptoms persist and/or spread to other children.

If, for example, a child is sent home with illness symptoms any time on Tuesday, the child cannot return until Thursday, with Wednesday being the full day at home. It is to your advantage, therefore, that if your child presents illness symptoms, such as a fever or vomiting on Tuesday morning, you keep your child at home for assessment so that if the illness passes, the child may come to school on Wednesday. If you bring your child to the school, and teachers have to send your child home, then the earliest your child may return is Thursday. Teachers reserve the right to call your emergency contacts to ensure a timely pick-up. A group environment necessitates consideration for other children. Working together, we can prevent illnesses from spreading unnecessarily throughout the school community.

#### Care of Mildly Ill Children

If your child shows symptoms of any mild illness, such as fatigue or a stomachache, we will remove your child from group activities and allow him or her to rest quietly on a mat. We will determine the nature of the child's illness to the best of our ability and call you with our concerns. If your child develops a fever, we will call you to pick-up your child. A child sent home with a fever is not allowed to return to the school for a minimum of 24 hours.

#### Management of Infectious Diseases

We ask that you notify us immediately of any infectious disease (e.g., strep, chicken pox, coxsackievirus) to which your child may have been exposed. Whenever any infectious disease is introduced into any classroom, we notify all families in the classroom in writing about the potential exposure. Notification includes signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, control measures being implemented at the school and suggestions you can and should implement at home. Any child diagnosed or suspected of an infectious disease is allowed to return to school only after being evaluated by a physician and considered to pose no health risk to himself/herself or the other children. The physician's note must specify that the child is not contagious. If you are a pediatrician, we will not accept your

own signature on your child's medical report, as per the American Medical Association Code of Ethics Opinion 8.19 "Self-Treatment or Treatment of Immediate Family Members."

### Immunizations

All children must be examined by a licensed pediatrician prior to enrollment as required by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. Parents who are pediatricians may not examine their own child.

Parents must submit documentation of the physical exam and all immunizations. Immunizations must be up-to-date for protection against the following illnesses: diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus (DPT), polio myelitis, measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR), Haemophilus influenza type B (Hib), and Hepatitis B. All children who are 19 months or older must have one dose of varicella vaccine or a physician-certified history of chicken pox. Under rare circumstances, and only after consultation with the director and a written letter on file attesting that the family has a religious objection to immunization, can a child enroll in Sunshine Academy without immunization, and in such cases, the allergy list will contain information about the child's special status. If any vaccine-preventable disease occurs within the program, any child who is not immunized cannot attend the school until the danger to his or her health passes.

All children enrolled in the school must have a medical exam every year and a new medical form with updated immunizations must be on file. For all children over nine months of age, the medical exam must also include a lead test. Failure to comply with our medical exam and immunization requirements could result in suspension or termination of the child's enrollment.

### Allergies/Dietary Restrictions

Please inform us immediately of any allergies that you suspect your child may have. The director circulates an allergy list to all classrooms to inform teachers of all of the children's allergies, dietary restrictions and emergency procedures for treatment. If your child has been prescribed an epi-pen for allergic reactions, you must give the director two pens, with the prescription label on them, along with an Individual Health Care Plan specifying procedures for treatment. Both epi-pens go in a secure bag zippered into the classroom backpack. Epi-pens must be replaced annually.

The catered lunches that the school provides are free of most food allergens that the children might otherwise bring into the school. Lunch menus are posted in each classroom for parents to review to ensure their child is not allergic to any of the catered food. At snack time, children with allergies (e.g., wheat, milk products) are given an alternative choice that meets their needs.

### Individual Health Care Plans

If your child has a chronic medical condition (e.g., asthma, allergy, seizures, diabetes), you must complete an Individual Health Care Plan form and maintain it on file with us. The plan includes a diagnosis, symptoms, medical treatment plan, potential side-effects and potential consequences to the person's health if the treatment is not administered. The plan includes provisions for a



teacher or staff member to be trained in appropriate medical interventions and to provide emergency treatment for the condition.

### Administration of Medication

If you bring medication into the school for your child, you must hand it directly to the director or classroom teachers. Please never leave medication in your child's mailbox, backpack, nap bag, or anywhere children may have access to it. Under no circumstances will we allow a child to self-administer any medication. Teachers and staff can administer prescription or over-the-counter (non-prescription) medication to a child *only* in the following circumstances:

- Parents have completed a Medication Consent form that includes the name of the child, the name of the medication, the specific dosage, and procedures for administration.
- The child's record includes instructions from the licensed health provider who prescribed or recommended the medication for the child.
- The medication is in its original container, labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it.
- We will never administer the first dose of any medication. Parents or the child's health care provider must administer the first dose. After the first dose of any medication has been given to a child, the child must remain home for 24 hours before returning to school.
- No medication will ever be administered contrary to the directions on the label unless authorized in writing by the child's physician.

Teachers maintain a written record of the administration of all medications. The record includes the child's name, the date and time of each dosage, the amount given and the name of the staff member administering the medication. The record is maintained in the child's file.

Any teacher who administers medication has (a) specific training and (b) a written performance evaluation updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration verifying that: (1) the right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. The person giving the medication signs documentation of items (1) through (5) above. All medication is stored in a closed cabinet or refrigerator out of the reach of children and under proper conditions for sanitation, preservation, security and safety. All unused medication is disposed of or returned to parents when no longer needed.

### Topical Medications and Creams

On your permissions forms, you can provide us with written authorization for non-prescription topical medications to be administered to your child, such as petroleum jelly, diaper rash ointments, or anti-bacterial ointments for wounds, rashes or broken skin. The authorization is valid for one year from the date it is signed and includes the child's name, medication, and procedures for administration. All topical medications must be stored in their original



containers, labeled with the child's name. Teachers and staff can administer only the medications that parents provide and will not under any circumstances apply one child's medication or cream on another child.

## Safety and Security

The safety and security of the children enrolled in Sunshine Academy is of primary importance and takes precedence over all other procedures and policies. Below are outlined our day-to-day policies with regard to protecting the children and ensuring their safety. Please also consult our Emergency Preparedness Handbook, which we prepared in cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security, for a more complete description of emergency scenarios and our procedures for responding to them.

### Emergency and Evacuation Contingency Plans

There are five basic scenarios that we rehearse in preparation for emergencies and evacuations:

- Shelter In-Place Emergency: When there is a hazardous situation nearby or a dangerous storm, children and staff remain inside the school while the director notifies parents of the emergency via e-mail and telephone.
- Lock-Down: If there is a dangerous situation outside that necessitates securing the school and keeping the children away from any windows, the director orders everyone into the Preschool classroom, gives the children popsicles or milk to keep them quiet, and coordinates with Public Safety officials as to how long to remain in lock-down. Under no circumstances may anyone enter or leave the building during a lock-down.
- Immediate Area Evacuation: If it ever becomes necessary to leave the school to ensure the safety of the children (e.g., fire, loss of heat or electricity, gas leak), staff vacate the children in an orderly manner and convene on the Vernon Street sidewalk next to the school. If it is too hazardous to remain outside, we proceed to Stop and Shop and remain indoors until emergency personnel advise whether to call parents or return to the school.
- Neighborhood Evacuation: If it is necessary to leave the neighborhood, teachers vacate the children and convene at Sunshine Academy, 302 Harvard Street, 617-232-6600.
- General Evacuation: If it is necessary to leave Coolidge Corner or Brookline, local and state emergency personnel will designate shelters. Sunshine Academy teachers remain with the children at all times until they can be handed over to parents. Staff and children evacuate the area by walking, trolley or by buses and gather at the designated shelters.

### Evacuation Procedures and Drills

Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. In the event of an emergency, the director calls 911 and remains in the building until all children are accounted for. Teachers are responsible for evacuating their own classrooms. All classes exit by the nearest door, unless it is blocked or unsafe, when they exit through their designated back-up route.





Teachers evacuate their classes in an orderly manner, take attendance at the designated pick-up area, stay with the children until all of them have been picked up, bring first-aid kits for treating minor injuries, and bring cell phones for contacting parents.

The director ensures that all procedures are followed correctly and that evacuation drills are held at least once a month, at different times of the day, and are practiced with all groups of children and staff. The director documents the date, time and effectiveness of each drill and keeps all documentation on file in our Fire Drill log. If the director is out of the building for any reason, the designated administrator assumes the director responsibilities in an emergency.

### Emergency Phone Procedures

Emergency telephone numbers are posted at each telephone in the school. Whenever calling any emergency number, always provide the following information: Your name and the name of the school, the nature of the emergency, the school's telephone number and address, directions to the school, the exact location of the injured person or emergency situation (e.g., the toddler two classroom, the outdoor classroom, the parking garage). Please request no siren or lights on the premises so as not to scare the children. Our emergency contacts include:

Emergency Telephone Number: 911  
Fire Department: 911  
Mass Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

Health Care Consultant: Dr. Elizabeth Taglauer  
Children's Hospital  
300 Longwood Avenue  
Boston MA 02115  
857-753-7003

Emergency Health Care Facility: Children's Hospital  
300 Longwood Avenue  
Boston MA 02115  
617-355-6000  
Emergency Services: 617-355-6611

Designated Adults: Ann and Andrew Haber, Owners  
617-504-5768

### Emergency Weather Closures (Snow Day Policy)

Sunshine Academy closes for snow days or other weather-related emergencies only when a State of Emergency is declared by the MA Emergency Management Agency. In such circumstances, the owners will notify all families, teachers and staff members via email.

In cases of an MBTA shut down or Brookline parking ban, the director may declare a delayed opening or early closing to be in effect until such time that the ban is lifted due to the inability to



staff classrooms appropriately. We ask in such circumstances, if you are able to keep your child at home to do so. If you bring your child to school, please understand that not all classrooms may be open and that your child may have different teachers than his or her regular classroom team.

#### Classroom Pets, Pet Visits and Other Animal-Related Issues

Family pets are not allowed in the school at any time unless specifically approved in advance by the director for curriculum purposes. Seeing eyes dogs and any other assistance animals are welcome. We inform parents in writing a minimum of seven days in advance when animals are introduced into the classroom for curriculum purposes (butterflies, tadpoles, hermit crabs, etc.). When you receive such notice, we ask that you contact us with any concerns.

#### Prohibition Against Pesticide Use

We use an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan to control pests (e.g., ants, mice, termites, roaches), as recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency. Under no circumstances do we use pesticides in the school.

#### Prohibition Against Smoking on Premises

In accordance with the Town of Brookline Smoking By-Law, smoking is prohibited in the school as well as within 100 feet of any school entrance.

#### Prohibition Against Firearms in the School

All teachers, staff, families and visitors are prohibited from bringing firearms, ammunition or flammable materials onto school property. Police or security personnel who enroll their children into the school must not wear their firearm to the school when dropping off and picking up their child. Only active on-duty police are exempt from this policy.

#### Data Security and Data Privacy

Sunshine Academy respects and appreciates the absolute need for proper security and safeguarding of personal information contained in both paper and electronic records. We are in support of and fully compliant with the Massachusetts Standards for the Protection of Personal Information [201 CMR 17.00], effective March 1, 2010. For information about our procedures to protect data privacy, please contact Andrew Haber at [andrew@sunshineacademy.com](mailto:andrew@sunshineacademy.com).



Parent Handbook Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received the Sunshine Academy Parent Handbook, as revised on June 1, 2018. I have read it and understand all policies, procedures and requirements.

I agree to adhere to the policies, procedures and requirements as stated in the handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature (1) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature (2) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name (2) \_\_\_\_\_