



Kensington Nursery School Parents' Handbook

July 2025-June 2026

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Part 1

KNS Background and Daily Operations

KNS Background

Kensington Nursery School is an incorporated private non-profit parent co-operative. KNS offers a morning program with parent participation and an afternoon program without parent participation. KNS is a year-round school. We work from a twelve-month calendar. Our year runs from 1 July until 30 June. We do not have a summer off policy. An elected Board of Directors administers the school. The Board hires the director and teachers to set up and supervise the program and to oversee the daily operation of the school.

Children from the ages of 2 years and 9 months through kindergarten are admitted. Kindergarten-age children may be enrolled up to the day before their first-grade class begins. Children are not required to be toilet trained. The school is nonsectarian, and accepts children of all races, religions, cultural origins, and family lifestyles. We are licensed for 38 children and are members of PACE (Professional Association for Childhood Education).

History

The school was formed in the fall of 1940 by a group of Kensington parents under the sponsorship of the Works Project Administration (WPA). It opened with an enrollment of thirty-five children whose tuition was \$3.00 per month. The original location was at 50 Beverly Road. Parent participation was at a minimum; the WPA provided five paid workers, including one director, two assistants, and "one patron and one matron" for janitorial services. Mothers attended weekly educational meetings conducted under the guidance of the Berkeley Parent Education Program.

In 1942, WPA funds were withdrawn, and parents were faced with the total financial responsibility for the school. A paid director was hired, and mothers were required to participate in the program, rather than to observe. This marked the beginning of the cooperative plan.

In 1943, the school moved to its present location in the Arlington Community Church.

In 1946, the school was granted a license by the California Social Welfare Department.

Philosophy

At KNS, we respect each child as an individual, and celebrate each child's unique characteristics. We accept, embrace, and nurture children by listening, caring, and taking them (and what they do) seriously.

We believe that the parent/teacher relationship is vital to the success of a child's school experience. We strive to build respectful, non-judgmental, and trusting relationships with the children and their families.

Because children learn at different rates and with varying styles, a variety of activities is offered. Opportunities are provided for children to explore all areas of development:

social, emotional, physical, and cognitive. Pre-school children learn through play and by doing. Hands-on activities are offered to allow children to experiment and explore at their own pace. Activities are balanced: indoor and outdoor, large, and small group, energetic, quiet and reflective. Daily routines and weekly rhythms are developed, providing a safe environment with predictable rules. This provides children with the best opportunity to develop their creative energies, problem solving abilities, and social skills.

One of our educational goals for the children is to facilitate the development of autonomy and a positive sense of self. Open-ended activities are planned that have no right or wrong process. Giving children the opportunity to make choices fosters independent thinking. At KNS, children have the freedom to explore and to learn what they can do, leading to a sense of identity. As they interact with others at school, they develop a sense of community and their place within it.

Children are encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings verbally. Conflict resolution skills are learned by encouraging empathy and allowing all viewpoints to be heard. By honoring everyone's dignity, we strive to create an environment that makes each child feel that school is a good, as well as safe, place to be.

KNS Calendar

KNS is a year-round school (no summers off), open from 7:30am to 6:00pm Mondays through Fridays. KNS observes the following holidays: New Year's Day, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and the day after Thanksgiving. KNS shuts down for staff development (usually) during the second or third week of August, and Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Thanksgiving week. We are closed the last two weeks in December for Winter Break through the New Year. For certain events such as the KNS Science Fun Fair in May, KNS will close early on a Friday. Any changes to the schedule are publicized in advance.

School Director

The **Director** oversees program development, curriculum development and themes, staff scheduling, parent conferences, student observations, parent orientation, Parent-Teacher coordination with Parent-Teacher Handbook and meetings, the Parents' Handbook, the Emergency Handbook, Employee Handbook, school safety and maintenance, book orders, school purchases, licensing, and the monthly newsletter. Reviews requests related to salary and benefits with Administrative Coordinator and Treasurer and personnel issues. Oversees website with Administrative Coordinator.

An **Administrative Coordinator** assists the Director and is responsible for enrollment, tuition billing, accounting, budget planning, student schedules, school inquiries and tours, parent orientation and personnel. Coordinates revisions of Employee Handbook with Director, as well as reviews salaries, benefits, and the yearly budget with Director and Treasurer. Manages the website and assigns coop jobs to new and returning families.

Program Descriptions

Our programs are play-based and arranged into the following activity areas:

- Art, Cooking, and Writing Area
- Manipulatives, Fine Motor, and Dramatic Play Area
- Music, Movement, and Science Area
- Blocks, Puppet Theater, and Dollhouse Area
- Outdoor Areas
- Staff plans from monthly curricula based on an annual calendar with broad-based themes. Specific daily, weekly or monthly programs, covering the curricular areas of art, science, large and small motor, language, math, and social development are then developed based on these themes. The program is designed with a focus on the needs of individual children.

We recognize that:

- **Children come to us at different levels of maturity.** We plan a variety of experiences so that each child can feel successful.
- **Children learn at different speeds.** We plan a flexible schedule with time for free choice and experimentation.
- **Children need the security of limits, safety, order, and caring adults.** We show children love and appreciation. We plan the indoor and outdoor environment to allow for freedom within the limits set by safety considerations, by appropriate use of materials, and by the physical and mental wellbeing of children and adults in the group.
- **Children need to develop independence** and the ability to care for themselves and their belongings. We teach hygiene and good bathroom habits. We teach the children to care for themselves and their belongings, as well as caring for other's belongings.
- **Children need to learn respect for self and others.** We treat them with respect and give them opportunities to see teachers and parents being respectful with each other. We encourage them to be respectful of others.
- **Children develop language skills from what they hear.** We use the language we wish children to emulate. We speak directly to them and make eye contact. We seek opportunities for individual time with each child every day. We read stories and write children's own stories.
- **A fundamental right of every child is the right to play.** Play is the work of children. We do not interrupt play unnecessarily. We understand that children learn through play; thus, our curriculum is play-based.
- **Children learn by doing.** We offer manipulative materials that involve all five senses and promote the development of cognitive, language, self-help, fine and gross motor skills.
- **Children are creative and imaginative.** We provide materials that stimulate creativity, curiosity, and imagination. We allow each child to conceive his/her own ideas and express them to his/her own satisfaction.

- **Children interpret life literally and learn from concrete things.** We provide blocks, water, sand, playdough, plants, food, and art materials before we use symbols of shapes, letters, or numbers.
- **Children learn by repetition.** We provide variety, but we also provide for the familiar to allow children to do things repeatedly. We present the same idea in many different media to allow for reinforcement and familiarity.
- **Children respond best to loving, caring people in a positive climate.** We pay attention to the atmosphere of the day. We show children love and appreciation, and we see to it that we are well organized and ready for them.

Program Goals

Both the morning and afternoon programs seek to enhance children's development in the following areas:

- **Language:** Developing both receptive and expressive language skills. The goal is to help facilitate an interactive and ongoing communication – one involving expressing thoughts, feelings, and ideas with others – both adults and children.
- **Social:** Developing mutually satisfying interactions between children and adults; respecting the rights of others; understanding and accept school rules and limits; increasing language and communications skills; and learning values.
- **Emotional:** Developing healthy self-esteem; fostering independence, developing the ability to care for self and belongings; learning appropriate expression of feelings and emotions; developing self-control, patience and understanding.
- **Physical:** Learning healthy habits; developing coordination, strength, and endurance; developing fine motor control and hand-eye coordination; and understanding and following safety rules.
- **Cognitive:** Fostering curiosity, exploration, inventiveness, and creativity; developing self-motivation; experiencing a sense of wonder and the joy of learning; allowing mistakes to be made; promoting learning by discovery; developing concentration and learning to complete tasks; learning to solve problems and make decisions; and seeing oneself as a successful learner.
- **Creative:** Fostering and encouraging individual expression through art, dance, music, and language; and allowing time for individual expression.

The curriculum is based upon a combination of planned themes and children's interests. Our approach embraces the idea of the emergent curriculum, where the teachers follow the lead of the children.

Morning Program

The morning program is enriched by contributions and talents brought by parent-teachers, who compliment the work of the teaching staff. The children of KNS benefit from the low ratios and the wonderful sense of caring that comes from interactions with our parent community.

The morning curriculum includes outdoor yard activity each day (arts and crafts, science, and water play) and a variety of indoor games (daily art activity, board games, science projects and dramatic play).

Morning Schedule

7:30	KNS opens (breakfast club until 8:30)
8:30	Parent-Teachers arrive, set up designated areas (September – May)
9:00	Morning meeting: Calendar, songs, activities in all areas described
9:15	Activities begin in Art, Loft, M & M, Science, and Imagination room areas
10:05	Clean-up time; Hand washing begins followed by snack
10:15	Snack
10:30	Clean-up time: diapers changed and lower yard (access 10:30 – 11:30)
11:30	Upper yard play
11:55	Group 1 inside for lunch (nappers included)
12:25	Group 2 inside for lunch; nappers down by 12:40
1:00	Morning pre-school children leave

Morning Enrichment

Morning enrichment includes (but is not limited to) dance/stretching, science, music, cooking, and movement. There are occasional walking field trips that include nature walks to Blake Gardens and the library.

Afternoon Program

The afternoon program provides a full program for afternoon pre-school children, continuing activities for full-timers, and an after-school enrichment program for kindergartners. To encourage continuity between the morning and afternoon programs for full-time children, the morning themes are also used in the afternoon program.

The afternoon curriculum includes outdoor yard activity each day (arts and crafts, science, and water play) and a variety of indoor games (daily art activity, board games, science projects and dramatic play). Some of these activities are specifically designed for our older children. The younger pre-school children are encouraged to participate in any or all of these activities, or they may choose an activity of their own.

Afternoon Schedule

1:00	Morning pre-school children leave, PM loft, science, and pre-writing table activities begin
1:15	Reading and rest time
1:30	Art Begins and Tk & Kindergartners picked up from Hilltop (Aug – Jun)
2:20	Clean up inside; nappers up; snack tables ready
2:30	All children outside;

3:00	Children signed up until this time depart
3:05	Remaining children inside for hand washing and snack time
3:30	Clean up and outside play time
4:55	Outside clean up
5:00	Inside table activities in loft, block, and/or M&M rooms; Children signed up until this time depart
5:15	Final inside clean-up of activities. Backpacks, etc. of children placed on green bench
5:30	Quiet reading and/or drawing time
6:00	KNS is closed

Afternoon Enrichment

Afternoon enrichment activities are planned with the kindergarten children in mind, but all are welcome to participate. Outdoor activities include short nature walks in the neighborhood, often to Blake Gardens, and cooking, which focuses on fine motor and creative art skills.

The afternoon enrichment program may include the following activities: yoga/stretching, science, cooking, movement, and music.

AM & PM Enrichment Activities

Movement through Ballet with Tai

Monthly we offer a movement class with Tai Vogel. Tai has been teaching dancers of all levels at Berkeley City Ballet for over 10 years and we are lucky to have her here at KNS to introduce to the children movement through ballet.

Cooking

Cooking is done almost every Friday am. Parent teachers and teachers cook/create fun projects with the children. Cooking incorporates science, math, and fine motor skills.

Spirit Days

The **first two school days of every month**, we have what we call Spirit Days. We try to think of wonderfully fun and silly ways to dress up differently on those days. Yearly calendars are handed out in the summer that highlight the big events for the year, as well as let you know what the Spirit Day dress ups will be! Spirit Day information can also be found in the monthly KNS Newsletter.

Pre-K Readiness Program

There is also a kindergarten readiness program (Pre-K) offered to children who will be entering kindergarten the following August/September. The children meet in small groups each week from the beginning of January through the end of May. The Pre-K program focuses on letters, writing, numbers, and kindergarten readiness in general. A fee of \$50 will be added to your tuition bill for each child attending Pre-K. Because children who are going to TK will have plenty of opportunity to practice similar Pre-K skills, we will reserve our time and resources for those children going to kindergarten in the fall.

Guest Speakers

KNS works from a theme-based curriculum calendar, where different themes, ceremonies, and celebrations are incorporated. In lieu of car field trips, we invite outside speakers to come in and talk to the children at Morning Meeting and Circle Time regarding those themes and celebrations. We welcome any family to participate in this as well – telling us about your work, your family festivities, hobbies and/or your cultural heritage.

Transitional Kindergarten & Kindergarten/Walk Down Program (TK/KWD)

KNS offers a TK/Kindergarten Walk Down Program (TK/KWD) from the Hilltop School in Kensington to the KNS site for children enrolled in a morning kindergarten or transitional kindergarten class. A KNS teacher walks up to the Hilltop site and escorts the children down to KNS. **Only KWD parents are exempt from attending the KNS general meetings, the Science Fair, work parties, and having a coop job. TK parents are still required to participate in all the above listed items.** Of course, any KWD family that wants any of those service responsibilities is welcome!

KNS does require a commitment to be enrolled for the entire school year, from your initial start date through the last day of Hilltop or other school end date, otherwise you forfeit your tuition deposit fee. When Hilltop is closed, TK/KWD children are welcome to come at their regularly scheduled time (when Hilltop ends ~1:30pm) or sign up for morning drop-in—which is done on a first come, first-serve basis, if space is available. Children attending kindergarten programs outside of Hilltop School are welcome to attend KNS; however, parents are responsible for their transportation to KNS.

Assessments and Observations

Teachers observe and discuss children’s abilities daily and provide activities that focus on all areas of development and activities that can be scaled to the children’s developmental stages. If you are interested in learning what is appropriate for your child’s age, we use the CDC’s Milestone Tracker. You can visit the website and click on your child’s age and see a checklist of different skills your child may be doing. If you’re not sure if your child does certain skills, feel free to ask one of the teachers as often kids will do things at school that they rarely do at home and vice versa. If we notice something needs to be addressed, then we will reach out to you. Your pediatrician is a good source of information too.

We assess in six developmental areas:

Language—receptive and expressive areas

Fine Motor—manipulation tasks, visual perception tasks, pre-writing tasks

Gross Motor—walking, balancing, jumping, throwing tasks

Self-Help—eating, toileting, dressing, hygiene skills

Cognitive—classification, matching, serialization, answering logic questions

School Adaptive—personal, social, and emotional development

Program-Related Policies

Breakfast may be brought to school and eaten by the child between 7:30 and 8:30 AM. Eating in the morning after 8:30 A.M. (other than at morning snack) is discouraged. Children must be sitting down at the table when eating.

Children must respect the rights of others for physical safety and mental security.

Violent play is not allowed. Children are not permitted to bring violent or scary action figures, toy guns, knives or war play materials to school.

Children are assisted with **conflict resolution** by talking about problems with adults to help facilitate the process. They are encouraged to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution. Adults at school are expected to reinforce this approach when problems arise by redirecting, using reminders, alternative suggestions, and by allowing all children's viewpoints to be heard. **There are no "time outs" at KNS.**

Toys from home need to remain at home.

Health & Illness

Please refer to COVID Addendum at the end of this document for additional information.

A **medical examination** is required of all children before admission to determine the child's ability to take part in activities and to ensure the absence of communicable disease.

Vaccinations. Parents supply a copy of their child's immunization record by the first day of enrollment. Our school health policies are consistent with the requirements of the California Department of Social Services Child Care Regulations.

If your child is exposed to a communicable disease, please inform the Director immediately so that incubation and isolation dates can be verified, and the health needs of all children are protected. If anyone is exposed to a communicable disease, an exposure notice will be posted on the main bulletin board by the entrance.

If your child needs medication during school hours, you must fill out a medication form. Ask the Director or a staff member if the Director is not present. Indicate the dosage, time(s), and days the medication is to be taken on the form. *We cannot administer medication without this form. Also, we must see the original doctor or nurse practitioner's prescription with your child's name on it.* Please write a note in the Parents' Message Book about your child needing medicine as well.

KNS cannot administer non-prescription medications (such as Tylenol or cough medicine) unless accompanied by a note from the child's doctor. We administer homeopathic remedies only with a note from your practitioner or doctor.

When should I keep my child at home? We offer both general and specific guidelines for answering this important question. Your child should be kept at home if any of the following situations apply:

- Your child is too ill to participate in activities at school. If your child does not want to do much more than lie around at home, chances are s/he won't want to or be able to do much at KNS. If your child is unable to participate in all regular activities - indoor and outdoor - please keep your child at home.
- The child's illness results in the need for an inordinate amount of care on the part of the KNS staff, which could only be provided by compromising the health and safety of the other children.

- The child has had a fever of 99°F or greater within the past 24 hours.
- The child has had diarrhea within the past 24 hours.
- The child has been vomiting within the last 24 hours.

Your child must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

These are the most common illness situations, but many others exist. There are specific guidelines about when children should be allowed to return to school following mumps, measles, rubella, tuberculosis, chicken pox, pertussis, conjunctivitis (pink eye, whether bacterial or viral), bacterial infections, parasites, skin conditions, and infestations.

The Director and Teachers are responsible for the health inspection of all children brought to school. In case of suspected illness, the Director has the authority to ask you to come for your child or to refuse admittance that day. Should such a situation arise, the Director will honor your doctor's decision regarding when the child should return to school. County Health Department Guidelines will prevail over your doctor's authority in cases of communicable diseases.

Regarding colds: Research indicates that most colds are spread by hand. To prevent the spread of colds, we encourage lots of hand washing and we keep food surfaces clean. We disinfect the tables before snack and the eating equipment after use in the dishwasher. Adults wash their hands before handling food and before snack. Children are taught to carefully wash their hands after using the toilet before snack, lunch, and handling of food. Everyone is also taught to wash hands after wiping noses, sneezing/coughing, etc., and handling tissues. We teach the children to cough and sneeze into the crook of their arm rather than into their hands.

Children with runny noses will not necessarily be excluded from school. However, if the runny nose is associated with a fever, sore throat, profuse mucus, congestion or a persistent cough, the child will need to be taken home. We are firm about this policy.

It is not required for a child to be treated by a doctor for head lice. Our policy is that a child must have completed a lice removal treatment and be **completely nit-free** prior to returning to school. Upon return the director or head teacher will examine your child's head to determine if they are indeed nit free. We reserve the right to send your child home for even just one nit.

If your child has food allergies, inform the Director. We post the necessary information on the refrigerator in the kitchen, on their snack nametag, and on their emergency forms. We also ask that the child bring his/her own snack and birthday treats.

Injuries at school. We will call you if the injury requires medical attention or if your child is unable to participate in activities. We post an "ouch list" for minor injuries on the main bulletin board in the Loft Room.

Each child spends a fair amount of time outside during the school day. For protection, **please apply sunscreen on your child before school.** We will reapply it later in the day. Every child should have a labeled container of sunscreen at school.

A parent-teacher who is ill when scheduled to participate should not come to school. The parent should do everything possible to arrange for a substitute or exchange with another parent-teacher, preferably at least 24 hours in advance. The Director provides a list of the current KNS parent-teacher substitutes. If a substitute cannot be found, the Director should be contacted.

Communications

As an organization, we are only as good as our communication. From a simple phone call to another parent to the sheaf of administrative forms that greet new enrollees, communication among parents and staff assumes many forms. Some are structured; others, like the brief comments exchanged while dropping off children in the morning, are more casual. All are important.

The **Administrative Coordinator** is a great resource for information about the school, and is *generally* in the office Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. You can also reach them at the knschool@sbcglobal.net email address.

Important announcements are emailed and posted on the **main bulletin board** including notices of special events, notices to families from the Director and President, meeting minutes and other school business. **Distributing materials or information not related to KNS business requires approval by the Director or the Board President.**

The **Parents' Roster** gives the names, email addresses, and phone numbers of parents and children. Roster information is not shared outside the KNS community. If you do not want your name in the Roster, please notify the Administrative Coordinator.

A **monthly newsletter** is prepared and emailed, informing parents of activities, special projects, events, the curriculum for the upcoming month, and other items of general interest. Parents can use it to exchange information with other KNS families such as baby-sitters, vacation tips, successful parenting techniques, etc.

When the school is closed or when the office is not staffed, an **answering machine takes messages**. The office telephone number is (510) 524-7963.

When your child will not be coming to school as scheduled, please always call the Parent Line (510-524-0964) to notify the staff. **If you have advance notice of your child's absence, please email the Director or Administrative Coordinator**

To speak to your child or a staff member, please use the **Parent Line: (510) 524-0964**. Please leave a message if no one picks up.

To email the school:

- **mardi-kns@sbcglobal.net** (for questions to the Director, generally other than billing and enrollment)
- **knschool@sbcglobal.net** (for billing and enrollment questions)

To speak with the Director at length, please call on the Office Line to set up a meeting or telephone call. The Director will make time available as needed and will schedule meetings or calls at times that will be the least likely to disrupt the daily KNS routine.

Parent/teacher conferences can be arranged at any time.

Use written memos, email notification (both Director and Admin), permission slips, etc., whenever the information imparted has legal, financial, medical significance, or information regarding your child's well-being. Some examples:

- There is a Note's section on the sign in sheets. Parents can write special instructions in the Note's section; **please also communicate verbally to a staff member if possible**. The Note's section is a good place to write about a different pickup time or person, and to tell teachers about your child's state of being (tired, grumpy, etc.), and days your child will be absent.

General Meetings are held via Zoom on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 P.M. unless that day falls on a holiday. The KNS Calendar lists the actual meeting times and dates. They are in September, October, January, March, and May. Attendance at these meetings is mandatory for all families, except KWD families. The **Parent-Teacher Orientation Meeting** is held during first week of Parent Teaching in September. A \$30 fine will be added if you miss more than one of the General Meetings.

In addition to business and policy discussions, these meetings have two important, livelier functions: parent education and strengthening our KNS community. Meetings give our school community the opportunity to voice opinions and ask questions so we can make changes, if necessary, based upon an understanding of our group. (See the Service Obligations Section in Part 2 of this handbook for additional information.)

The **Board of Directors** is a group of parents that is elected to represent the interests of all parents. Its function is to make decisions about the management of the school. The duties of the Board are to discuss school policies and make recommendations to the membership, set the tuition fees annually, authorize expenditures, hire and dismiss staff, and maintain the physical plant of the school. Each of the members of the Board has a particular function in these management duties (see the job descriptions for the Board of Directors in Part 3 of this handbook).

Board meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month, right after the General Meeting. Board members, the Director, and the Administrative Coordinator attend them. The meetings are open to all parents, although some matters are discussed in closed session.

Conflict Resolution

The philosophy of KNS is to work in a cooperative and educational way with parents and children. Problems at school provide an opportunity to put this philosophy to work by using open communication and negotiation to resolve problems. The process then becomes a positive learning experience for all involved.

Behavior Problems

The Director will inform parents of any disruption caused by their children and will offer suggestions, informal conferences, and referrals as appropriate to the behavior.

Parents will be talked with for excessive or frequently occurring behaviors from their child(ren), e.g., hitting, biting, or chronic disrespectful behavior to adults and/or children.

Should repeated aggressive behavior occur that impacts the safety of the other children or adults, that family may be asked to leave the program.

If a child exhibits behavioral problems consistently, and seems unresponsive to adult directives, the family will be asked to seek guidance from a child development specialist/therapist at their own expense.

Communication Guidelines

The KNS staff is strongly committed to promoting cooperative, problem-solving discussions between parents and staff. If you have a problem that needs to be discussed, **please go to the**

source of the problem first. Effective communication is always aided by having first-hand information.

If you have a communication problem with a **teacher**, talk to that teacher first. If that is not satisfactory, go to the **Director**.

If you have a problem with the **Director**, talk to her first. If that is not satisfactory, go to the **Board President**. Please do not go to the **Board** regarding program concerns unless you have spoken with the **Director** first.

Concerns should be discussed with the Director during working hours. Please use discretion when calling the Director at home.

Discipline Policy

The goal of providing young children with discipline is to lead them from adult control to the development of their own inner control. The foundation for discipline is set by creating an atmosphere of trust and caring. This is done by building a warm and trusting relationship with each child - by recognizing each child's unique qualities and strengths. All children are treated with dignity and respect.

The teacher's role in the development of discipline is to be fair, firm, consistent, watchful, and affectionate. Teachers show children that they care enough about them to provide good, clear rules and boundaries for their safety and well-being. Teachers help children learn self-control by using the following discipline techniques, as suggested by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

1. Guiding children by setting clear, consistent, and fair limits for classroom behavior.
2. Valuing mistakes as learning opportunities.
3. Redirecting children to a more acceptable behavior or activity.
4. Listening when children talk about their feelings and frustrations.
5. Guiding children to resolve conflicts and modeling skills that help children to solve their own problems.
6. Reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed.
7. Facilitating the development of self-esteem by respecting, accepting, and comforting children, regardless of the child's behavior.

Occasionally, when redirection or verbalization is not effective, a child may take a quiet break to get away from the problem and renew his or her ability to deal with peers.

Parent/teacher communication plays a major role in the effectiveness of discipline. Teachers and parents are encouraged to have open, honest, and consistent communication with one another. We rely on parent support at home to enhance the effectiveness and consistency of discipline methods at KNS.

Emergency Plan

In the event of an emergency affecting the school, such as fire, smoke, earthquake, outbreak, etcetera, the care and safety of the children is our priority. KNS will do their best to notify parents via the communication devices that work (watch for emails and unknown phone numbers) during such an event.

The following steps were established to make it as easy as possible to locate your children if an emergency develops. The steps are purposely kept simple. Keep copies of this document anywhere you might have access to, in the event of an emergency (in your car, with your emergency supplies, at your office, etc.). Each child has his/her own emergency supply pack that is stored in the lower yard in our emergency storage cabinets.

If you *can* get to the school:

- Come to the school.
- ***Do not call the school.*** Telephone lines, if working, must be kept open for emergency calls.
- If the Director considers the school unsafe, the children will be brought to the Kensington Community Center, 59 Arlington Avenue. If possible or time allows information on the location of the children will be posted on the front entry door and the back door or on earthquake supply containers in the lower yard.

If you *cannot* get to the school:

- The Director and teachers on duty will remain responsible for your child until a parent or designated adult comes to pick them up.
- Your child will be released to people designated on his/her Emergency Information Form. In the event of an extreme emergency, other steps may need to be implemented.
- If you cannot be reached, the school will try to call the person listed as your out-of-state contact.
- In addition to this Handbook, there is a **KNS Emergency Plan Handbook** distributed to each family.

Should KNS be required to close due to a fire, smoke, earthquake, outbreak, etc., KNS will follow closure guidelines as determined by the Department of Health or WCCUSD, including but not limited to neighboring school districts. KNS will require parents to pay monthly tuition for the month during the closure. KNS staff will be compensated for up to two weeks at full pay. If it is determined that KNS must remain closed for more than two weeks the Board will convene to discuss possible ways to reduce costs, reduce tuition payment, make insurance claims, help teachers file for unemployment and anything else required to re-open the facility.

Part 2

Parent Responsibilities at KNS

Daily Procedures

Parking

Parking is extremely limited in the neighborhood around the KNS school campus. This site is shared with another pre-school and the church. The site is also bordered by neighbors on Rincon Road. Please refrain from using Rincon Road as Hearts Leap conducts their drop off/pick up along that entrance. **For the safety of all children, please drive slowly on Arlington Avenue.** When dropping off or picking up your children, please be aware that other families are looking for parking spaces. **Please DO NOT make U-turns on Arlington Avenue and no double parking!** Communication and socialization with other families is important, but please be cognizant of the parents who need to park. The KNS entrance is located through the front doors of Arlington Community Church, so consider parking either on the Arlington or at the Kensington library parking lot.

Sign-in / Sign-out

For families arriving between 7:30 am and 8:30 am please enter through the door located across from our play yard on the northern side of the church. Please sign in, help your child to wash their hands and hand your child off to a teacher.

For families with children attending KNS at 9:00 am, we will begin signing in children at 8:45 am at the door across from the play yard. KNS does provide a grace period of 15 minutes from 8:45AM to 9:00AM to minimize the parking/traffic congestion on Arlington Avenue. Parents who drop off their children between 8:45AM and 9:00AM will not be charged a fee

For 1 pm pick-ups, parents shall wait outside near the upper play yard, and we will bring your children to you. For 3 pm, 5 pm & 6 pm pick-ups, please go to the KNS door located across from the upper play-yard.

Be sure to sign in and out **with your full legal and legible signature** each time you drop off or pick up a child. That signature must be legible and readable by an independent third party. Please notify the school when your child will be absent by calling the Parent Line (510-524-0964). The person who signs the child in or out must be 18 years or older and listed on your emergency forms.

Signing in and out is an IMPORTANT licensing requirement! The hours during which your child has been signed in represent the time that KNS is responsible for your child on any given day. The sign-in sheet is also used as a roster in case of emergency. **Parents must sign their own child in and out** as well as any other children they bring or pick up. Licensing mandates that you return to KNS to sign in or out if you have forgotten to do that.

During arrival times, children sometimes need special attention from their parents. This is an important transition time, so create a parting routine – read a story, play a game, have a hug. Tell your child when you will return and return on time.

Please **sunscreen your child** before coming to KNS. If you forget at home, sunscreen your child here yourself, rather than asking a teacher to do it. Teachers will re-apply throughout the day.

We strongly believe in **self-help skills** as part of each child's development. Please encourage your children to carry their own things. While we do help with both, please help them learn to wipe their noses and bottoms independently.

It is important for children to see their parents and teachers talking together, and we encourage parent/teacher communication. However, **conversations with teachers should be brief during drop off and pick up**, because the teacher's primary role is to connect with the children and to supervise their activities. More information on this subject is included in the section on "Communication" in Part 1 of this Handbook.

We encourage parents to develop friendships with other parents; however, please conduct lengthy conversations **outside** the school. We recommend that you park on the Arlington or in the library parking lot if you anticipate such conversation. **Please recognize that parents need those few parking spaces on Arlington Avenue during the peak drop-off and pick-up times.**

When you **pick up** your child after morning session, please remember that it is the afternoon children's time here – **keep to your schedule and make a quick departure** – extended stays are disruptive to the afternoon program.

KNS is closed at 6 PM. We ask that you be out of the school before that time. A late fine of \$5.00 per minute will be due for children who are picked up after their scheduled departure time. Late fines incurred after 6 p.m. are a direct payment to the staff person who has stayed late with the child. Pick-up at 1pm, 3pm and 5pm program late fees will be reflected in your next statement. As a courtesy to the staff, we strongly encourage you to call us if you think you will be late. Repeated late pick-ups may result in dismissal from the school at the board's discretion.

Drop-in Care

Drop-in care may be available depending on enrollment for that day. If available, it **must be approved by the Director**. Given we are fully enrolled, drop-in care is available only when there is space. Drop-in hours cannot be arranged in advance, **so you must call early on the day of anticipated drop in** (that is, between 7:30-9:00 for AM drop-in, and by 11:30 for PM drop-in) to see if space is available. You will be charged on the following month's bill at a rate of \$10.00 per hour.

Nut/Egg Free School

ALL NUTS (this includes coconuts), HARD BOILED, SCRAMBLED EGGS, FRITTATA or QUICHE ARE NO LONGER ALLOWED AT KNS. THIS INCLUDES ALL NUT BUTTERS (including Nutella, peanuts and coconut). This year we have several children that have severe anaphylactic reactions if they ingest or are exposed to nuts and eggs so, please take caution when packing snacks and lunch for your children.

Snack

Snack is at 10:15-10:30 A.M. for the morning program and 3:05-3:30 P.M. for the afternoon program.

Families must provide their children with a daily snack or two if you are a Full Time or Afternoon family. **Please do not send yogurt tubes or containers that are too difficult for your child to open.** Please include your own utensils if needed. We will not heat up any snack foods.

Snacks should be placed in separate bags or containers to make it easier for children to locate.

Please send your child with a large, full bottle of water. Flip top lids with straws or bite valves are preferable rather than screw tops. Staff will refill water as needed.

Lunch

Morning children bring their own lunches. We ask that children bring healthy choices for lunch. Eliminating dessert allows for a relaxing lunchtime without the constant question, "May I eat this now?" **No candy or gum or yogurt tubes, please.** If you forget your child's lunch, we'll call and let you know to drop off a lunch for your child. Afternoon children (1:00-5:00) need to bring a snack only.

It is preferable that you send your child to school with a lunch that is ready to eat. Please include your own utensils if needed. If you must send your child with a lunch that needs to be heated, it must be in a separate, microwaveable safe dish. We will not remove any food from another container to heat it and then replace it in your child's lunchbox. This is to help prevent cross contamination.

Parents should never include medication (either prescription or over-the-counter, such as cough drops) with children's lunches.

Napping

Naptime is directly after lunch (Lunch at 12PM). Each child who naps needs to bring bedding. This may include a pillowcase for storage, a pad for sleeping on, a pillow, a blanket, and perhaps a stuffed toy. An inexpensive indoor sleeping bag can be used instead of a pad and blanket. Please label all bedding. Bedding is kept in the nap room closet in a bin labeled with your child's name.

Licensing requires you to take your child's bedding home weekly for washing.

Whether or not your child naps can be worked out on an individual basis with the nap teachers. If your child normally naps and you would like us to keep your child up for play instead of napping (e.g., your child will be picked up early), please leave a note on the Sign in/Out Sheet so the nap teacher can accommodate your request. We **strongly** discourage parents from giving their child the option to nap.

Clothing and Diapers

We encourage parents to dress children in comfortable play clothes and shoes so that they can enjoy themselves. Please send your child to school with rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes. No flip flops or party shoes, as they are difficult and dangerous to run and climb in. Children should not be inhibited by having to keep clothes clean. It is to be expected that not all stains will wash out. Hooded sweatshirts and sweaters with string ties at the neck are discouraged to avoid any choking danger.

Each child needs a box of extra clothing at school in case of toilet accidents, water play, or messy projects. These clothes should be labeled with your child's name, as should jackets and sweatshirts. If you can, please help supply our general KNS spare clothes box for those who have occasional accidents and are out of clothes. Remember to keep your child's spare clothes seasonal and the correct size.

Children who are not yet toilet trained should have a necessary supply of diapers, wipes, underwear, etc. brought with them and labeled. We accept cloth diapers, disposable diapers and pull-ups with Velcro sides only.

Any KNS clothes borrowed, must be washed before returning. This includes jackets and sweaters.

Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays by giving your child a special acknowledgment at the regular morning meeting and afternoon circle. Birthday circles supersede all other circle events; most notably share day.

We have an established tradition at school: on your child's birthday, we encourage you to give the school a gift of a book with your child's photo attached. We find this a good way to reinforce continuity, friendships, warmth, and caring in children. It has also helped us build a wonderful library, which is a great resource for everyone.

On a child's birthday (or closest weekday), that child's family may bring a special birthday treat such as stickers, tattoos, pencils, bag charms. Please bring enough for all children in attendance that day.

When birthdays fall on the same day or week, we ask the parents to arrange between themselves which day they would each like to celebrate their child's birthday circle at school, so as not to conflict by having them celebrated at the same time. Please also make a notation of that on the calendar in the Loft Room.

To avoid hurt feelings or feelings of exclusion, birthday invitations to KNS children are to be mailed from your home and *not put into cubbies at school*.

Artwork

Artwork is placed in your child's cubby. We will send it home weekly unless it is hung on the walls for decoration.

Service Responsibilities

The success of KNS as a co-operative is directly related to the involvement of KNS families in our community. Our children are the primary beneficiaries. We hope that families are excited about being involved in all aspects of KNS. Parents form a community of families who take responsibility for various aspects of the administration and operation of the school. It is hoped that during each family's tenure, a parent will try to serve as a Parent-Teacher or a Board Member. Chronic failure to fulfill coop obligations may result in dismissal at the discretion of the Board.

General Meetings

One parent is required to attend General Meetings, which (when held) are on the second Wednesday of each month, at 7pm. Meetings are held in September, October, January, March, and May. The KNS Annual Calendar lists when the meetings are held. In addition to business and policy discussions, these meetings are a source of parent education and strengthening our KNS community. If one parent is a parent-teacher in the morning program, it is preferable for that parent to attend. Only Kindergarten families are exempt from the meetings. Transitional Kindergarten families are required to attend meetings. Generally, the meetings last one hour. **Currently all General & Board meetings are held via Zoom. A link will be emailed to you for each meeting.** Parents are expected to arrive close to the start of the meeting. Arriving 15 minutes late or not attending shall constitute a missed meeting. After one absence, the family will be fined \$30.00 per additional meeting missed. Once we resume in person meetings, childcare is provided for a nominal charge of \$10 per family for the first hour and \$5 for the second hour or portion thereof. **A childcare**

sign-up sheet will be posted the week prior to the General Meeting. Payment is made directly to the childcare providers at the time of the meeting. 24 hours' notice of cancellation is required, otherwise payment is still due to our childcare providers.

Work Party

There are two scheduled work parties each year, one in October and one in April. In addition to upgrading and maintaining the physical plant of the school, work parties provide the opportunity for parents to come together as a community. The fall and spring work parties are scheduled on a Saturday from 9:00AM-1:00PM. **Each family is required to participate at both work parties.** In certain cases, hours may be spent on specific projects separate to the events of the work party.

A fine of \$200 (per missed work party 4-hour period) will be charged to those who do not fulfill their work party obligation. The deadline for completing the October work party obligation is December 1st. The deadline for completing the April work party obligation is June 1st. A fine will be implemented after that date.

Co-op Jobs

Co-op job participation is necessary for the existence of KNS. Co-op jobs support both the morning and afternoon programs for the children, provide administrative assistance, maintain the facility (both indoor and outdoor) and are responsible for fundraising activities. Each family should expect to spend an average of four hours per month on a co-op job. A co-op job may require weekly attention (1 hour per week), bi-weekly attention (2 hours, twice a month) or monthly attention (4 hours per month). Some co-op jobs require a concentrated amount of work during specific months of the year.

In May, returning families may opt to keep their existing co-op jobs or select a new co-op job, which will become effective September 1st. New families are assigned co-op jobs when they start at KNS. The Administrative Coordinator is responsible for assigning families their job. Descriptions of the specific co-op jobs are presented in Part 3 of this Handbook. Adequate completion of each co-op job will be assessed on a monthly (or annual if appropriate) basis, and a fine of \$125 per month will be charged to those who do not fulfill this essential obligation. You are responsible for finding someone to do your co-op job when on vacation or out for an extended period of time. You must also inform your board member as well. You will be fined for any missed duties.

Science Fair

KNS sponsors an annual Science Fair. The Science Fair is coordinated by our Board Vice President and the Science Fair coordinators. This event is a wonderful opportunity for the children at KNS and the surrounding community to explore science through hands-on activities. Each family is required to work on a Science Fair Committee (Stations, Set Up, Clean Up, Food, Publicity, etc.). The family obligation for this event is approximately 3-1/2 hours. A fine of \$200 will be charged to those who do not fulfill this obligation.

Reimbursements

If you make purchases for KNS with your own money (e.g. for work parties, cooking projects, Science Fair, shopper, etc.) you will be reimbursed only if you submit your receipts within 60 days of your purchases. To obtain reimbursement, please complete the "Request for Payment and/or Reimbursement Form," which is located in the folders next to the office door. *Purchases must be approved by the Director ahead of time.*

Fundraising

The school's annual budget is augmented through various fundraising activities by the membership. Through fundraising, we can purchase major items and provide scholarships to families in need.

Fundraising events include T-shirts and sweatshirt sales, class photos, photo book, Trike-A-Thon and other mini fundraisers all contribute to our fundraising efforts.

Enrollment and Tuition

Enrollment Forms

By law, the following forms must be on file before a child can be admitted to the school:

- Identification and Emergency Information Form (Licensing form 700)
- A copy of the child's Immunization Record
- Notification of Parent's Rights Form (Licensing form 995)
- Personal Rights Form (Licensing form 613A)
- Consent for Medical Treatment Form (Licensing form 627)
- Child's Pre-admission Health History – Parent's Report (Licensing form 702)
- A Physician's Report must be on file within 10 days of starting school (Licensing form 701).
- An Admission Agreement must be on file within 7 days of starting school.
- We will also ask you to sign a Walking Trip Permission.
- Photo Release Form
- Sunscreen Form
- Face and fingernail painting Form

Legal Custody

Parents must notify the Director in the event of a change in legal custody of a child. **Legal documents supporting custodial and non-custodial agreements must be on file in the school office.**

Authorization to Pick Up Your Child

People who are authorized to pick up your child from school must be designated on your Emergency Form. **We require picture identification and written authorization from parents** before any person not known to the staff may pick up any child. This person must also be 18 years or older.

Licensing Agency Rights

Every parent needs to be aware that the State of California Licensing Agency (Community Care Licensing) has the authority "to interview children or staff, and to inspect and audit child or facility records without prior consent, and to observe the physical condition of the child(ren), including conditions which could indicate abuse, neglect or inappropriate placement, and to have a licensed medical professional physically examine the child(ren)."

Tuition Payments

KNS is a year-round school. Parents are responsible for tuition payments throughout the year, even if on an extended vacation, taking the summer off, quarantine or isolation requirements due to Covid-19 or other infectious disease or closure due to air quality.

Tuition statements will be emailed to you on approximately the 2nd of each month. through Procure our online billing system.

Tuition is due on the 5th of the month, subject to a grace period until the 10th. The amount of tuition due is your **base tuition number plus any extended care hours, plus any drop-in fees or charges and less any parent-teacher and/or Board credits**, which your family has earned, in the prior month. For example, the October tuition bill is your October base tuition plus any drop-in fees for September and less any parent-teacher and/or Board credits earned during September.

If payment is not received by the 10th of the month, a \$10 late charge will be assessed, and you will be given a reminder letter. If an alternative payment plan is needed, the parent(s) must contact the Director and the Treasurer.

If the tuition has not been paid by the 15th of the month, you will receive a second letter stating that if payment is not received by the 28th of the month, your child's enrollment will be temporarily suspended. Payment must be received in full for your child to return to school.

If full payment is not received within 50 days after the first due date, and you have not agreed upon a payment plan, then your child's enrollment will be terminated. Unpaid accounts will be turned over to a collection agency as a last resort.

Chronic tardiness related to late tuition payments is grounds for dismissal from KNS.

The fee for a bounced check is \$25. It is equal to the fee the bank charges KNS for the bounced check.

If your child's first day or last day falls mid-month your tuition will be prorated based on their first or last day of attendance.

Board Credits

Board members will receive tuition credit as follows: President, \$100 per month; all other members, \$75 per month.

Enrollment Fees

An Application Fee is required each year. This fee is \$75 for new families and \$40 (billed in January) for returning families. In addition, there is an annual Materials Fee of \$100 (billed in September) for all students, and \$50 for Pre-K students to cover provided materials.

Space Guarantee Fee/Enrollment Deposit

A tuition deposit equal to one month's tuition is due upon acceptance of enrollment. This deposit will be returned after your child's last day, if the required notice is given (See Withdrawal section below). If it is more than 60 days from your child's start date on your Acceptance Letter) \$300 of this deposit is considered a Space Guarantee Fee and will not be refunded if your child does not attend KNS as scheduled. If it is less than 60 days before your child's start date and you choose not to send them to KNS, the total Enrollment Deposit will be forfeited.

Kindergarten Evaluation/Recommendation Fee

A \$25 fee is required for each Kindergarten or Pre-K evaluation/recommendation form.

Schedule Changes

You may change your child's schedule, with 30 days' notice, any time throughout the year if space is available. There is a \$50 fee to reduce your schedule and no fee to increase.

Re-Applications are given to the families of current students in January for the upcoming September. These should be completed and returned to the Administrative Coordinator by the specified due-date (usually mid-January.) Thereafter, enrollment will be opened to new incoming families.

If you reduce your child's schedule for the summer and then increase it again in September, you will need to reapply in September for the added days, as your desired schedule may not be available.

Children enrolled in the Kindergarten/Transitional Walk Down program (KWD/TK) may attend the afternoon program when Kensington Hilltop School (KHS) for Presidents Week and Spring recess. The KWD/TK program begins the first day that KHS is in session and ends in mid-June when KHS ends its school year. If space is available KWD/TK children may continue their afternoon schedule through the summer and are welcome to add mornings.

Withdrawal

Parents are required to give 30 days written notice to the Administrative Coordinator if they intend to withdraw from KNS. Should a family withdraw from KNS with less than 30 days' notice, their Tuition Deposit will be prorated based on the days of notice given. Please notify the Director and the Administrative Coordinator of prolonged absences of your child for whatever reason. Should a family re-apply after withdrawing during a regular school term, the application will be treated as a new application (that is, without the priority that would be given to a continuing student). Tuition Deposits will not be refunded until all outstanding debts are reconciled. KWD/TK children who withdraw before the end of the school year will forfeit their Tuition Deposit.

Standards of Conduct

Parent conduct has a significant bearing on the school. All KNS parents are expected to conduct themselves in a professional and exemplary manner and to be good role models for children. Although it is impossible to provide an exhaustive list, you are expected to:

- Observe KNS policies, procedures, and health & safety rules.
- Respect the rights of all staff, parents, and children.

Parents must never display negative emotions in front of the children. Outbursts may be grounds to ask a family to leave KNS. Any parent conduct that, in the opinion of the Director and/or the Board, interferes with or adversely affects KNS is sufficient grounds for dismissal.

Parent-Teachers

Parent-Teachers are required to give 30 days written notice to the Parent-Teacher Director and the Director if they are unable to continue their participation.

Scholarships

Kensington Nursery School provides some financial assistance to make it possible for families to enroll despite limited resources. The financial position of KNS is considered before scholarship decisions can be made. To receive scholarship information, contact the Administrative Coordinator or the Director.

Tuition and Fees/Fines Schedule (7/2024-6/2025)

KNS 24/25 Tuition Rates

Program Description	3 days	4 days	5 days
Mornings 9:00-1:00	\$757	\$922	\$1,072
Extended Mornings 9:00-3:00	\$1,057	\$1,307	\$1,517
Afternoon 1:00-5:00	\$580	\$650	\$740
Full Day 9:00-5:00	\$1,337	\$1,572	\$1,812
Full Time 7:30-6:00	N/A	N/A	\$1,930
TK/KWD 1:30-5:00	\$580	\$650	\$740

Continued next page

Annual Application Fee (non-refundable):

\$75 (new families)

\$40 (returning families)

Annual Materials Fee (non-refundable):

\$100 billed in September.

\$50 pre-K billed in January.

Extended Care: (7:30 AM - 9:00 AM & 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM): \$10/hour and fraction of.

Drop-in: \$10/hour

Parent-teachers receive a \$35/day participated **tuition credit**. The Board President tuition credit is \$100 per month; all other Board members receive a \$75 per month tuition credit.

Fines:

General Meetings: A family may miss one general meeting. A family will be fined \$30 for any subsequent general meeting missed.

Work Party: For each missed work party (4 hours obligation), the family will be fined \$200.

Co-op Job: A fine of \$125 per month will be charged to families who do not fulfill their co-op job.

Science Fun Fair: A fine of \$200 will be charged to families that do not fulfill their Science Fun Fair Obligation.

Late Pick Up: A fine of \$5.00 per minute will be charged to families that arrive after their scheduled pick-up time.

Part 3

KNS Administration

KNS Staff

Mardiann Kaneko, the KNS Director, has been a part of the KNS community since 2004. She has a bachelor's degree from UC San Diego's Revelle College. She has only thirteen children who all attended KNS. During her kids' preschool years, Mardi was a parent-teacher, teacher-aide, qualified teacher and a member of the Board of Directors. "Even though my kids are in college I still remember their time at KNS fondly...well I remember most of it despite the copious amounts of tequila, I mean coffee I drank." You can check out some vintage photographs of her kids at KNS in the office and some of Serene Quinn when she was much younger and not so wrinkly.

Heather Aquilino, the Administrative Coordinator, started working at KNS in February 2015. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California in Urban Planning and Development. Prior to KNS, Heather worked as a project manager at EAH, Inc. a non-profit housing developer. In her spare time Heather enjoys gardening, reading, and volunteering at her children's school.

Martha Ramirez, Head Teacher, was born in Guanajuato, Mexico. She graduated from Richmond High School and then attended Contra Costa College where she received her certificate in Early Childhood Education. Martha is the mother of three beautiful children, Lucy, Jaime and Isabel. Martha loves working with children and has been at KNS since 2006. In her spare time, Martha enjoys being with her family.

Maritza Centeno, Teacher, is a Bay Area native and resident. I graduated from De Anza High School in 2009 and later received by Certificate in Early Childhood Education. Since the age of 18 I have been working with children as a nanny, group leader, and now a teacher at KNS. I have found that I love shaping the minds of little people. Outside of work the gym keeps me sane, I love to spend time with my friends, family and my most favorite little person in the world my God daughter.

Cristina Millado, Teacher, joined KNS in June 2017. She previously worked at a Montessori preschool and thinks KNS is so much better, not to mention cleaner! Cristina has a daughter named, Isabella "Bella", who attended KNS and is now in first grade.

Mia ("Maya") Ascencio, Teacher, was born in South Carolina but raised in the Bay Area. She graduated from DeAnza High School in 2009. She earned her A.A. in Liberal Arts, Sociology and Early Childhood Education from Contra Costa College in 2016. She has a 10-year-old daughter also named Mia but goes by her middle name Giselle (cuz that's not confusing!) She joined the KNS family in May 2019. "I'm excited to be here and teach as well as learn from the children." I've always enjoyed working with children, even at an early age. Growing up she worked as a Sunday school teacher at her church. While not at work, she enjoys exercising (she'd love to go pro as a bodybuilder) and spending time with her loved ones.

Serene Quinn, Teacher, has been part of the KNS community since 2007. She had seventeen children go through KNS. During her kids time here she was a parent teacher and served on the Board of Directors because she couldn't afford it otherwise. She is Canadian (please don't hold that against her) and graduated (barely) from Carleton University in Ottawa Canada with a degree in sociology and criminology. In her free time during covid she earned her Early Childhood Education credits and grew her hair out. She doesn't tweet or understand English

grammar or #'s. #idon'tknowhowtohashtag, #sereneisthebest, #vpezyforlife, and #onlyhereforthetoys.

Veronica Medrano, Teacher join KNS last year. She has been working with young children for several years and has enjoyed her new role at KNS.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has six elected officers and is responsible to the general membership for the management of the school. The Board discusses school policies and makes recommendations to the membership, establishes fees, authorizes expenditures, approves appointments and duties of all staff, and under extraordinary circumstances requires withdrawal of members. Each officer has one vote on the Board. The Director has one vote on the Board.

President

The President does the following:

- Coordinates teacher appreciation week
- Plans and attends quarterly “play date in the park” for KNS families (Not KNS staff sponsored event).
- Oversees staff gifts for the holidays. This is started right after the Thanksgiving break.
- Meets with the Director to discuss personnel, administrative, co-operative, and educational concerns of the school. Reviews Board and General meeting agendas with the Director prior to such meetings.
- Plans agenda and presides over General and Board Meetings.
- Sends regular reminders to Board Members regarding co-op job management.
- Communicates regularly with other Board Members regarding current issues and events.
- Assists Vice President with Science Fair duties as needed.
- Is an *ex officio* member of all committees.
- Mediates situations that are not handled directly by the staff or the Director, including disciplinary issues that arise within the co-op, such as fines, mandatory co-op assignments, and PT terminations.
- Represents the school in legal matters.
- Signs checks.
- Drafts, compiles, and delivers Director’s Performance Evaluation.

Vice President

The Vice-President does the following:

- Presides in President's absence.
- Oversees the organization of the Science Fair and the co-op jobs related to the Science Fair involving food, publicity, stations, and actual setup and clean-up at the Science Fair. Generates records of Science Fair participation that are copied to the Administrative Coordinator.
- The Science Fair is one of the KNS events requiring special budgetary attention. The Vice President oversees the Science Fair Budget) approving all normal expenditures incurred by the science fair committees *prior* to money being spent and 2) bringing additional budgetary questions to the Director or Administrative Coordinator.
- Tracks co-op job completion of those jobs overseen, by calling, e-mailing, or talking directly monthly to parents, reminding them to fulfill their co-op job responsibility and answering any questions they may have about that co-op job. Checks in regularly with the Director to discuss any problems or out of compliance jobs. Problems are reported to the President for written notification.
- Signs checks.
- Provides information for the newsletter, including thank you notes for the membership for all events where Vice President has primary oversight.

Treasurer

- Reviews and submits federal tax form (IRS Form 990 and Schedule A) and state tax forms (CA Form 199 and Schedules) by November 15.
- Analyzes monthly cash flow information prepared by Administrative Coordinator and presents to the Board.
- Reviews budget prepared for the Board for approval and presents approved budget to general membership consistent with timing in bylaws.
- Reviews fees and develops a schedule of fees comparable to other pre-schools in the area and consistent with the school's needs.
- Assists in setting salaries and assigning yearly raises with President, Director, and Administrative Coordinator.
- Meets with the Director and Administrative Coordinator, as needed to address/discuss financial issues of the school.
- Advises Board regarding major expenditures.
- Evaluates potential for receiving grants as a source of revenue.

Secretary

The Secretary does the following:

- Transcribes and posts minutes of all meetings, including the General Meetings and the Board of Directors Meetings. A copy of the Board and General minutes are to be posted on the loft room bulletin board and another copy filed in the office. Closed minutes are to be filed in the office and **not** posted.

- Writes and sends correspondence from the Board as needed.
- Oversees co-op jobs of social events planner/ photographer, and laundry. Committees, such as social events planner, are required to obtain budget approval from their managing board member in advance of purchasing any items for events.
- Tracks co-op job completion of those jobs overseen by calling, e-mailing or talking directly monthly to parents, reminding them to fulfill their co-op job responsibility and answering any questions they may have about that co-op job. Checks in regularly with the Director to discuss any problems or out of compliance jobs. Problems are reported to the President for written notification.
- Signs checks.

Fundraising Director

- The Fundraising Director does the following:
- Organizes and supervises the school's fundraising events, including class photo and Trike-a-Thon.
- Oversees Fundraising Assistants.
- Sets an annual goal at the beginning of each year (September) with input from the Board and membership.
- Tracks co-op job completion of the Fundraising Assistants by calling, e-mailing or talking directly on a monthly basis to parents, reminding them to fulfill their co-op job responsibility and answering any questions they may have about that co-op job. Checks in regularly with the Director to discuss any problems or out of compliance jobs. Problems are reported to the President for written notification.
- Provides information for the newsletter, including thank you notes for the membership for all event's where Fundraising Director has primary oversight.
- Signs checks.

Maintenance Director

- Oversees co-op jobs related to outdoor maintenance, emergency safety and emergency repairs.
- Tracks co-op job completion of those jobs overseen by calling, emailing or talking directly on a monthly basis to parents, reminding them to fulfill their co-op job responsibility and answering any questions they may have about that co-op job. Checks in regularly with the Director to discuss any problems or out of compliance jobs. Problems are reported to the President for written notification.
- Meets with Director to determine work the party projects. Assigns take-home work for parents who cannot attend work parties. Generates records of work party participation that are copied to the Administrative Coordinator and Director. All families including TK Walkdown are required to attend. Kindergarten Walkdown families are not required to attend.
- Plans coordinates and oversees two work parties each term—on a Saturday morning 9-1 in the fall (October) and in the spring (April). Responsible for planning, coordinating and

overseeing any work party projects planned outside of the regularly scheduled fall and spring work party hours. Obtains necessary tools and supplies and helps assign jobs to families (useful to own some tools, but not necessary). This job requires a concentrated amount of work during the month prior and month in which each work party is scheduled, and potentially some time spent during the remainder of the year. Works from a budgeted amount.

- The Work Party is one of the KNS events requiring special budgetary attention. The Maintenance Director oversees the Work Park budget by 1) approving all normal expenditures incurred by the work needed prior to money being spent and 2) bringing additional budgetary questions to the Director or Administrative Coordinator.
- Provides information for the newsletter, including thank you notes for the membership for all events where the Maintenance Director has primary oversight.

Cooperative Job Descriptions

Every family, except Kindergarten families, must assume responsibility for a co-op job for the entire school year (September 1st through August 31). Parents are responsible for completion of co-op jobs while on any vacation from KNS. This may be done by getting a substitute or making a trade with another family. Co-op job participation is necessary for the existence of KNS. Co-op jobs support the morning and afternoon programs for the children, provide administrative assistance, maintain the facility (both indoor and outdoor) and are responsible for fundraising activities.

In May, returning families may opt to keep their existing co-op jobs or be reassigned a new co-op job, effective September 1st. New families are assigned a co-op job when they start at KNS. The Administrative Coordinator is responsible for assigning families their job. After a co-op job is assigned, any questions regarding the job should be directed to the Board member overseeing that responsibility. The Director and Administrative Coordinator may also be contacted with any questions regarding a co-op job, throughout the year.

Each family should expect to spend an average of two-four hours per month on a co-op job. A co-op job may require weekly attention (1 hour per week), bi-weekly attention (2 hours, twice a month) or monthly attention (4 hours per month). Some co-op jobs require a concentrated amount of work during specific months of the year. Following are descriptions of the co-op jobs, categorized according to the overseeing Board Director for each job.

Jobs Overseen by the Vice President:

Science Fair Assistant - Food (three people – one lead person, two assistants)

Assists the Vice President in coordinating the annual Science Fair. Initial planning begins in February and involves a concentrated effort beginning two months prior to the event and continues through the Science Fair. Plans the food menu. Requests and picks up donations from regular vendors. Purchases the food/lunch supplies (at least 3 shopping trips that have been pre-approved). Requires set-up and preparation on the Friday before the event, and set-

up/BBQ/clean-up on the day of the Science Fair. Orders from rental agency, picks up and returns tables and chairs for the event.

Science Fair Assistant – Station Design/Set-up/Clean up (six people)

Assists the Vice President in coordinating the annual Science Fair. Initial planning begins in February and involves a concentrated effort beginning two months prior to the event and continuing through the Science Fair. Prioritizes and implements upgrades and repairs of Science Fair stations as well as designs new stations when needed. Organizes art projects for Nature World. Oversees the stations before and during the event, evaluating how stations are operating during the day. Participates in setup the Friday before the event. Organizes setup/cleanup and acts as a “floater” for the day of the Science Fair.

Jobs Overseen by the Secretary:

Laundry (one person)

Responsible for washing the KNS laundry, which consists of towels and washcloths and occasional KNS spare clothes. Laundry is to be picked up on Friday afternoon and clean laundry returned to the appropriate drawers in the kitchen the following Monday. Occasionally may need to have laundry done more than once a week.

Jobs Overseen by the Staff:

Please note: These jobs are best done by parent-teachers because of involvement with morning projects and activities.

Paint and Dress-up/Baby Dolls, and Stuffed Animals (one person as needed)

Checks availability of **paints** and **paper** on a weekly basis. Cleans paintbrushes throughout the week. Mixes paints on Monday mornings and replaces paper and paint as needed. Maintains organization of paint supplies in Tunnel and paper supplies in upper yard cabinet. Notifies Director when paint and paper supplies are low. Checks playdough on a regular basis. Maintains organization of playdough supplies in Tunnel. Makes or buys playdough and washes playdough equipment monthly. Maintains art supplies in art cabinet in upper yard. On a weekly basis, straightens dress-up clothes (including shoes, purses, and doll clothes), washes clothes every other week and mends as needed. Rotates dress-up clothes. Cleans stuffed animals regularly and repairs them as needed. Cleans baby dolls weekly. Maintains and cleans all baby doll clothes and animals in the basket under the loft stairs. Periodically looks for good deals on dress-up for children and baby dolls.

Loft/M&M/Nap Room (one person as needed)

Tidies up rooms weekly. Dusts all furniture surfaces and all shelves weekly. Sanitizes all plastic chairs weekly. Cleans bins and toys and sterilizes play food and kitchen every week. Keeps science area and manipulatives cleaned and arranged. Sanitizes trampolines/tumbling mats regularly. Keeps blocks in Nap Room organized and neatly arranged. Checks wood blocks for rough edges.

Enrichment Assistant (one person as needed)

Helps the Program Director to select and schedule guest speakers from local businesses and community workers using our curriculum themes for the year as a guideline. Arranges at least one visit per month – can include parents coming in as speakers. Guests usually present during circle times, morning and afternoon, but alternate times can be arranged. Writes thank you letters to all guests.

Curriculum Assistant (one person as needed)

Assists Director in preparing materials for monthly curriculum packets, as needed. Weekly cuts out shapes and objects for the themes of the month. Helps build a file of pre-cut shapes, insects, bodies, flowers, holiday items, etc. to help facilitate projects on a weekly basis. Assists the Director in procuring supplies for specific projects during the year. Keeps all curriculum materials filed and organized by month in their storage file in the paper closet.

Jobs Overseen by the Fundraising Director:

Fundraising Assistants (four people)

This group will be the organizational team behind the fundraising events for the year. The group will have a planning meeting in the beginning of the year (September) and draw up a list of events or fundraising activities that they feel will raise the desired amount for the year. Different fundraising assistants can be responsible for different events, each taking a turn at being the lead organizer.

Recycling (Staff)

Responsible for taking cans, bottles, cardboard, paper, etc., that have been collected during the week to Rincon Road for pickup. Regularly (at least three times a week) empties the classroom recycling bins into the big bins outside classroom door. Recycling is put outside every Tuesday night and the containers brought back inside every Wednesday morning. Regularly cleans, sanitizes, and maintains recycling bins and, when needed, drops paint, varnishes, etc., to the Hazardous Waste Recycling Center.

Kitchen and Bathroom (Staff)

Maintains/sanitizes water fountain in the hallway. Wipes toilet seats and handles with sanitizing solution. Sanitizes potty rings and door handles and trashcan. Wipes tops of clothing boxes and tops of KNS extra clothes boxes in the hall. Checks, tidies, and wipes the bathroom shelves with bleach solution. All sanitizing is done weekly. Wipes down cabinets and counters in the kitchen with bleach solution weekly.

Jobs Overseen by the Maintenance Director:

Work Party Assistant (one person)

In conjunction with the Maintenance Board Member: plans, coordinates and oversees two work parties each term-- on a Saturday in the fall (October) and in the spring (April). Responsible for planning, coordinating and overseeing any work party projects planned outside the regularly scheduled fall and spring work parties. Obtains necessary tools and supplies and helps assign jobs to families (useful to own some tools, but not necessary). This job requires a concentrated amount of work during the month prior and the month in which each work party is scheduled, and potentially some time spent during the remainder of the year. Works from a budgeted amount.

Emergency & Safety Coordinator (one person)

Undertakes repairs as needed, completing tasks in a timely manner. Must have tools and skills. Should there be fewer repairs to perform than usual (4 hours per month), the Director will request assistance with larger projects, including those associated with work parties. Reviews safety and general maintenance with Director monthly. Purchases emergency snack and water by September 1st of the year and reviews expiration dates for KNS children (Nut free granola bars, dried fruit, fruit snacks). Surveys emergency

supplies in lower yard, reviews expiration dates, tests batteries and arranges necessary replacements and/or additional supplies in the fall and in the spring. Checks smoke alarms monthly, replacing batteries as needed. Replaces door security alarm batteries as needed. Submit for reimbursement to the Administrative Coordinator.

Jobs Overseen by the Director and Administrative Coordinator:

General Yard and Garden Maintenance (five people)

Takes care of vegetables and flowers in yard. Waters and weeds once per week. Trims the trees, hedges, berries, etc. to fence height, as necessary. Sweeps all asphalt and concrete in upper yard, including garden area, to remove sand. Weekly loosens and digs down 12 inches of sand around the play structure and swings. Fills sand under swings weekly. Rakes leaves from sand and evens out sand in other areas of the upper yard. Removes dirt and other debris from under front and back door rubber mats. Places clippings in green debris bin. Hoses and/or wipes down play structure, bar, swings, play houses. Cleans roof of sandbox. Sweeps out playhouses as well. Places the green debris bin from the upper yard to the Rincon Avenue curbside for the regular Wednesday bi-weekly pickup. This job is done on the weekend or when KNS is closed. Please do not perform this work on a Sunday prior to 1 p.m.

Notes

KENSINGTON NURSERY SCHOOL

Parent Handbook Addendum: COVID-19 Related Policies and Practices August 2024 (Updated)

The health and safety of the KNS community is dependent on the measures each family takes to limit their exposure. By adhering to the policies and practices as detailed below we can protect one another. KNS understands the ever-changing nature of this virus and will make changes to its policy and practices as needed.

Health Practices:

KNS will amend policies and practices to comply with and uphold the guidelines as set forth by the CDC, Community Care Licensing, Contra Costa Health Services, CalOSHA and any other agencies deemed trustworthy, at their discretion.

Masking at KNS:

As the state and county are no longer recommending masking indoors for childcare the Board of Directors has removed this requirement from the KNS COVID-19 Parent Addendum. It's understood that we are still expected to minimize the spread of COVID so we will continue to adhere to the following precautions and policies once masks are removed.

- Children/Staff/Parent Teachers may continue to mask if they want.
- Additional air purifiers have been purchased and will be placed in the classrooms to improve ventilation.
- Masking indoors may be reinstated for 10 days after multiple confirmed positive cases at school for any staff/student/parent teacher.
- Masking may be reinstated when community levels are moderate to high according to the CDPH:
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Respiratory-Viruses/RespiratoryDashboard.aspx>.
- During times of poor air quality and low transmission, when we must close our windows and stay inside, we will not require masks however some individuals may want to wear one. If the air quality index is above 171 KNS may close and anything above 185 KNS will close.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Children who are continuing to mask should bring several clean masks to school every day. KNS will help your child to put on and take off their masks properly.
- Gloves are available to staff to wear as needed.
- Face masks are available to staff to wear as needed.
- Pediatric face masks will be available for children who need them.

Handwashing and Coughing/Sneezing Etiquette

- Handwashing for staff and children is and will continue to be mandatory, especially upon arrival, departure, after using the bathroom, blowing noses and eating.
- KNS staff will continue to teach the importance of frequent hand washing and proper handwashing technique.
- Hand sanitizer is available when soap and water are not.
- KNS staff will continue to provide gentle reminders and lessons on coughing and sneezing etiquette. Several boxes of facial tissue will be available in each classroom and within children's reach.

Cleaning:

- Frequency of cleaning and disinfecting "high touch" surfaces and areas will be increased, this includes toys.
- Classrooms will be disinfected each night.

Physical Distancing:

- Physical distancing is no longer required among children and adults.

Daily Wellness:

- Only symptom free children may attend KNS (no fever, bad cough, congestion, sore throat, profuse mucus, stomachache, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.).
- Children who exhibit unusual behavior patterns such as poor sleep, poor appetite, or an overall sense of just being "out of sorts" should remain home for observation.
- Staff will use their best discretion to admit well children and are not obligated to admit children who demonstrate any symptoms at all.
- Please use the Symptom Checker, located on the next page, each morning to assess your child's ability to attend school.
- Additionally, if a child becomes sick at KNS, they will be isolated immediately. Parents will be notified and must come **at once** to pick up their child. The child may not return to school for the period specified in the Symptom Checker.
- If a COVID case is confirmed or medically presumed (a doctor confirms based on symptoms alone), then Parents will be notified immediately via email of an anonymous positive case.

Potential Closures/Shelter in Place Plans:

- In order to maintain your enrollment at KNS, tuition must be paid in full with no refunds even if your child is asked to stay home due to sickness or shelter in place orders. Any changes to this policy is at the Board of Directors' discretion.
- KNS will close in order to comply with any Shelter In Place order issued by the State of California, WCCUSD and/or Contra Costa County.
- KNS may have to close school if at any time we do not have enough staff due to illness and quarantine/isolation requirements. Tuition must still be paid in full with no refunds due to closure from staffing shortages because of illness, quarantine and isolation requirements.

KENSINGTON NURSERY SCHOOL - SYMPTOM CHECKER
COVID-19 EXPOSURE PREVENTION GUIDE (Updated September 1, 2024)

Parents should use the following chart to assess the health status of their child daily.

Symptom/Diagnosis	Stay at Home	Return to School
** <u>Diagnosis of COVID-19</u> or Medically Presumed COVID-19	Stay at home <u>AND</u> -Contact Mardi or Heather immediately	5 days from onset of symptoms or when you tested positive. Day 1 starts the day after you tested positive or become symptomatic. Can return on day 6 if: -Negative antigen test on day 5*: and -Symptoms significantly improved <u>AND</u> -Contact Mardi or Heather prior to returning to school. *Can continue to test on day 6, 7, 8 etc. until child returns a negative test. May return once the test is negative and symptoms significantly improved. <u>OR</u> Stay at home for 10 days, no testing required. Symptoms must be significantly improved.
<u>Close Contact to COVID-19 and symptomatic</u> Close contact is anyone who has shared the same indoor airspace with an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.	Stay at home <u>AND</u> -Contact Mardi or Heather immediately	Stay home and quarantine (regardless of vaccination status, masking, or recent COVID infection history.) Testing is required. If test returns positive refer to actions and follow up for "Diagnosis of COVID-19."
<u>Close contact to COVID-19 without symptoms</u>	-Contact Mardi or Heather immediately	-Child can stay in school so long as they remain asymptomatic and test negative at least 3-5 days after last contact. -Monitor for symptoms for 10 days after the last known close contact. -If they test positive or develop symptoms stay home and follow isolation instructions.
COVID-19 Symptoms and Not a Close Contact (e.g. Fever, coughing, sore throat, diarrhea, runny nose, congestion, headache, body aches, fatigue, loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath)	Stay at Home. PCR or Antigen Test required. Recommend contact with primary care provider to discuss symptoms.	-If negative COVID-19 test result (PCR or Antigen) or COVID-19 ruled out by primary care provider, may return 24 hours after fever resolves without the use of fever-reducing medications, such as Tylenol, Advil, etc. <u>AND</u> -Is 24 hours symptom free -Contact Mardi or Heather via email prior to returning to school.

Family Acknowledgment Parent Handbook/Covid Addendum Updated August 2025

Child /ren Name(s): _____

Parent's Name(s): _____

I/we commit to following regular KNS Parent Handbook policies in addition to these new COVID-19 related policies and practices. Signing this Parent Handbook and Addendum Acknowledgment serves as a family's acknowledgment of group childcare risk, commitment to adhering to all school policies and new COVID-19 related policies and practices, and that all evolving practices will be emailed with the heading "Parent Handbook & Covid Addendum."

I/we understand that group childcare is not a zero COVID-19 risk. Though KNS will follow local and state government guidelines regarding cleaning and disinfecting, typical bacteria and viruses can still circulate through the community.

I/we understand that KNS's policies and practices will change as the health department, community care licensing and CDC directives on guidance in the childcare setting shift.

I/we understand that committing to the Parent Handbook and the Parent Handbook Addendum is a choice, and that should parents choose not to continue enrollment for whatever reason, the Parent Handbook and school contract outlines a process for withdrawal.

Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____