

ALCOTT SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK 2017 - 2018

ALCOTT SCHOOL LOCATIONS:

27 Crane Road
Scarsdale NY 10583
Tel: (914) 472-4404
Fax: (914)472-7547

535 Broadway
Dobbs Ferry NY
10522
Tel: (914)693-4443
Fax: (914)693-2820

46 Fox Meadow Road
Scarsdale NY 10583
Tel: (914)725-7551
Fax: (914)725-7540

Website: www.alcottschool.org

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Alcott School!

We look forward to sharing your children during the coming school year. We appreciate the trust you have placed in us and would like to take this opportunity to share our philosophy and policies with you.

Our purpose over the past 49 years has remained the same; to provide a quality educational experience for young children in a multicultural preschool and kindergarten environment utilizing developmentally appropriate methods and materials. Our primary goal is to foster a feeling of competence and build self-esteem, while providing the foundation for each child to attain their personal best.

Please read the following information carefully and if you have any questions, feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

*Monica Zenda
Executive Director*

Alcott School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin in administration of its policies or admission procedures.

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History of Our School

Alcott School is a Montessori preschool which was founded by two professional educators, Kathleen Rohrs and Arlene Donegan, in September 1968. Alcott School has expanded its range of programs and relocated many times over the years. The school began operations at the Bryn Mawr Park Presbyterian Church in Yonkers. It has moved successively from St. Clare's Academy on Jackson Avenue to Ardsley School on Concord Road, and currently resides in Scarsdale and Dobbs Ferry.

Alcott School expanded to include special education programs for toddler and preschool children. These programs began in the Concord Road School and subsequently relocated to the Ardsley Middle School, followed by Rumsey Road in Yonkers and finally, to our Broadway site in Dobbs Ferry. The Early Intervention program began in New Rochelle and now resides on Fox Meadow Road in Scarsdale.

We provide a developmentally appropriate early childhood education program for toddler and preschool students. Our staff and students come from diverse backgrounds. We offer a continuum of special services to address the individual needs of each child enrolled.

Mission Statement

The Alcott School is a Montessori preschool whose objective is to provide all children with the opportunity to develop independence, an awareness of their own abilities and a feeling of self-worth. These objectives are met by providing developmentally appropriate, multi-cultural learning environments. Alcott School recognizes the important role parent education and support for the family plays in the development of young children. Alcott School is dedicated to helping support the families enrolled in its programs.

Program Goals

- To provide a stimulating and enriching learning environment
- To foster a sense of independence in all areas of development
- To develop respect for others and the environment
- To guide children towards an attitude of openness and discovery in approaching new ideas and activities
- To foster a child's ability to socialize and maintain friendships
- To develop feelings of positive self-esteem and accomplishment
- To establish a love and foundation for life-long learning

Regulatory Oversight

The Alcott School is affiliated with the American Montessori Society and is voluntarily registered with the New York State Department of Education. Alcott is a non for Profit Corporation chartered under the New York State Board of Regents. Both our Crane Road, Scarsdale and Dobbs Ferry sites are licensed as day care centers with the New York State Office of Child and Family Services.

A copy of the Office of Children and Family (OCFS) regulations can be found in the lobbies of our locations.

**Our licensor, Cathy McGlothin can be reached at:
New York State OCFS
Spring Valley Regional Office
11 Perlman Drive
Spring Valley, N.Y. 10977-5281
Tel: (845) 708- 2414
The OCFS Child Care Complaint Line is 1-800-732-5207**

Board of Directors

Alcott School is governed by its Board of Directors:

Co-Presidents – Barbara Klein and Melinda Raffe Trovini

Treasurer – Michael Bianchi

Secretary – Debbie Mumford

Members:

Simrun Gialleonardo
Karen A. Porter

Montessori Classroom Hours

Class start times are staggered so we can make better use of parking spaces.

Toddler Classes:

The toddler program will run from September through mid-June.

The hours are as follows:

	Crane Road Scarsdale	Fox Meadow Scarsdale	Dobbs Ferry
AM Session (M-Th)	9:00 - 11:30	9:00 - 11:30	9:15 - 11:45
AM Session (Fri only)	9:00 - 11:00	9:00 - 11:00	9:15 - 11:15
PM Session (M - Th)	12:30 - 3:00	NA	1:00 - 3:30
PM Session (Fri Only)	1:00 - 3:00	NA	1:00 - 3:15

Three to Five Year Old Classes (Monday – Thursday):

The 3-5 year olds attend class according to the following schedule. These classes run from September through mid June.

	Crane Road Scarsdale	Dobbs Ferry
AM Session	8:45 - 11:30	8:45 - 11:30
PM Session	12:30 - 3:15	12:30 - 3:15
Full Day	8:45 - 3:15	9:00 - 3:15
Half Day/Full Day Combination Classes	N/A	9:00-11:45/ 9:00-3:15
Extended Day (Crane Rd.)	8:00 - 5:00	N/A

Three to Five Year Old Half Day Classes (Friday Schedule):

Friday sessions are shortened for all half day classes. The time is used for staff meetings to discuss classroom plans, create new materials, and do staff training.

	Scarsdale	Dobbs Ferry
Mornings	End at 11:00	End at 11:00
Afternoons	Begin at 1:00	Begin at 1:00

Special Note

Our schedule is based on a five day week. Children who attend fewer than five days may miss specials like music, movement or nature scheduled for days they will not be in attendance. It is not possible for children who are registered for 2 day or 3 day classes to switch their days. There are NO makeup classes. On occasion there may be a special event scheduled on a day when your child is not in school. Please understand that it is not always possible to accommodate children who are not scheduled to attend on a given day.

Phase In

Toddler Phase In:

Toddlers will be phased in during the month of September. During this time our sessions will be shortened. During the first week, the children attend for one hour. Only 6-7 children attend each group. The time is increased to two hours during the second week. A regular schedule is followed beginning with the third week of school. **You will receive a notice about our phase in schedule before school begins.**

Three - Five Year Olds:

During the first week of school, children in the 3 - 5 year old classes will be phased in on a gradual basis. This means that on the first day of school, 8 to 10 children begin classes. Each day thereafter 5 or 6 more children will be added to the class. Phase in week allows the teachers to devote maximum time to each child during the critical first days.

You will receive a phase in schedule near the end of August.

During phase in week:

	Scarsdale	Dobbs Ferry
AM Classes	8:45 - 10:45	8:45 – 10:45 /9:00-11:00*
PM Classes	12:30 - 2:30	12:30 - 2:30
Full Day Children	8:45 - 2:30	9:00 - 2:30
Extended Day Class	8:00-3:30 or 5:00	N/A

*See phase in letter for specific time

Arrival and Dismissal

Parents/caregivers are responsible for bringing their child to the teacher in the classroom or other designated area; e.g. the gym or playground.

No child should be dropped off at the front door of the school.

We cannot be responsible for your child unless we actually know he/she has arrived.

Doors to the classroom will remain closed until class time begins.

The teachers use the time before and after class to prepare for the day, to keep records, and set up new activities. If parents arrive early with their children they may wait in the hallway, playground or gym area. The children must be supervised during that time by the parent or caregiver. Please follow school rules while using school equipment and space in order to keep your child safe and create a sense of continuity. It may not be possible to use the gym if early drop children are using the space.

When class is over it is important for your children to be picked up on time. Parents who arrive late add to the anxiety many young children have regarding their first school experience. Teachers use the time after class to prepare for the following session.

Please be punctual!

Playdates/Carpools/Changes in Pick-Up

To ensure the safety of your child if he/she will be going home from school with a different family member or a friend, please give the classroom teacher a note with the following information:

- your child's name;
- who he/she will be going home with and at what time;
- parent signature; and
- date.

*It is important to provide this information **even if the person is one of your emergency contacts listed on the Blue Card and/or Emergency Form.***

Please note that your child will not be released without this information in writing.

There are forms available from the classroom teacher, the front desk, or on our website at www.alcottschool.org.

Early Arrival

If you need to drop your 3-5 year old child early, please contact the school in advance. We do have a supervising staff member who is at school as early as 7:30 am. We need to keep within the teacher and child ratio. There is a fee per day for this service which is charged as follows:

Early drop off fee:

1 hour 30 minutes	\$30.00
1 hour 15 minutes	\$25.00
1 hour	\$20.00
45 minutes	\$15.00
30 minutes	\$10.00
15 minutes	\$5.00

Late Pick Up

In case of an emergency, e.g. car breaks down, etc., please notify the school that you will be late. We can then explain the situation to your child and relieve his/her anxieties.

If parents are consistently late picking up their child there will be a late charge.

Late pick up fee:

15 min. late	\$5.00
30 min. late	\$10.00
1 hr. late	\$20.00

Important: *If we have not heard from you and are unable to reach a caregiver or parent within one hour of dismissal, Child Protective Services will be called.*

Tuition

Tuition payments are due on the first of each month as specified in your contract. We do not send out monthly bills!

Payments made after the 15th of the month are considered late. A cumulative charge of \$10.00 per month will be incurred for each late payment.

Sibling Discount

A \$200 discount is applied to an enrolling sibling's tuition.

Tuition Refund Policy

According to Alcott's tuition contract, families are responsible for all payments for the entire year - whether or not they move before the end of school.

We understand that some of our families are required to leave Alcott on short notice prior to the end of the school year.

The following refund schedule will be used if a family has paid their tuition in full:

- Families that leave by January 1st will receive two (2) months refund if all tuition has been paid.
- Families that leave by February 1st will receive one (1) month refund if all tuition has been paid.
- Families that leave after February 1st will not receive a refund.

The Scholarship Fee and Application Fee are non-refundable.

Fees for Extra Time

From time to time parents request that their 3-5 year old child attend school for an extra half day. If possible we will accommodate you. You will be billed according to the following:

\$20	Lunch only (Monday - Thursday)
\$30	Lunch and Rest (Monday - Thursday)
\$50	Lunch and PM (Monday - Thursday)
\$50	AM and Lunch (Monday - Thursday)
\$40	Friday Lunch (11:00 – 1:00)
\$60	Friday Lunch and PM (11:00 - 3:15)
\$90	Additional Full Day
\$45	Additional Half Day (AM or PM)

Forms

We are required by law to have certain forms and information in your child's file. The list of required forms is as follows: Day Care Registration (Blue card), Medical Statement, Doctors and Professionals Form, Emergency Release, Photo Policy Form, Communication Form, Transportation Release Form, Dental Form, Rest Form, and Summary of School Policy.

Each medical form is valid for one year from the date of your child's physical.

These must be completed and returned to school before your child's first day of school. The medical and immunizations record must be filled out and returned before your child can attend school.

Please post the Alcott calendar in a conspicuous place. You will need to refer to it frequently during the year. The calendar is also available on the school website at www.alcottschool.org.

Safety/Emergency Plans

Your children's safety is very important to us. Children are supervised at all times during program hours. In our toddler program we have one adult per every four children, and in the 3-5 classrooms there is one adult per every seven children. Please walk your child to his/her classroom at drop off time and ensure that you have a classroom staff person's attention before you leave your child there.

Emergency Drills

In order to be prepared for emergencies we conduct monthly fire drills and two shelter in place drills per year. Our K12 Emergency Alert system will be utilized in the event of an emergency to inform you of events and student collection locations.

Evacuation Plans

Relocation may be necessary if the staff and students are unable to safely remain in the school building.

Crane Road Location:

Primary evacuation site:

The Trinity Lutheran Church. The children and staff will walk around the Crane Road parking lot and enter the church.

Secondary evacuation site:

Our Fox Meadow location. The children and staff will safely walk to the rear driveway, turn left onto Stonehouse Road which leads to Crane Road. Make a right onto Crane, walk one block and make a right onto Fox Meadow Road.

Dobbs Ferry Location:

Primary evacuation site:

Mercy College. Staff and children will proceed to 565 Broadway (formerly Our Lady of Victory Academy, now part of the Mercy College Campus) and into the school gym.

Secondary evacuation site:

Sacred Heart Church hall. Staff and children will safely walk down Broadway and enter the church which is at the intersection of Broadway and Ashford Avenue.

Fox Meadow Location:

Evacuation site:

Our Crane Road location. Staff and children will safely walk along a short cut between the Temple and Trinity Lutheran Church. They will shelter at Alcott School, 27, Crane Road.

Safe Sheltering in Place:

At all of our locations we have systems in place to immediately notify the staff and children of the need to shelter in place. **All plans are available for review in each location's front office, however, for obvious reasons we will not make public where our students and staff will safely shelter. All safety plans were made in consultation with our local police departments. Please note** that although we hope emergency situations will not arise, should one occur the safety and well-being of your children are of upmost concern to us. The children will believe that we are going on an adventure. The staff will bring food, water and other necessary supplies with them.

Child Injuries/Accidents

In the event that your child is injured on the school premises a staff person will inform you in person (at pick up time) about minor scrapes. You will be informed about bumps to the head, large or small, by telephone after the incident occurs. You will be asked to read and sign an accident report at pick-up time on the day the accident occurs.

Clothing

*****Label each piece of clothing*****

Children should be dressed in washable play clothes which they can handle themselves. Try to use child friendly fasteners whenever possible. Zippers, snaps, belts and suspenders can make it more difficult for children to dress and undress independently. Use elastic waist pants and velcro shoes/sneakers whenever possible. Only closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes may be worn at all times. Flip-flops and Crocs are not acceptable for safety reasons.

All children should come dressed to play outdoors . . . even in the cold.

(This means warm coats, hats/hoods, mittens, snowsuits and boots when there is snow!) When your child wears boots to school please send sneakers with him or her to change into once inside.

For the 3-5 Year Olds:

Please send in a box of baby wipes and a complete change of clothes on the first day. Please put them in a labeled shoe box, with two pairs of underpants, socks, a shirt, and pants.

For the Toddlers:

Send in a box of baby wipes and 2 complete changes of clothing (including socks and sneakers) in a labeled shoebox. A package of disposable diapers should be sent if your child is not toilet trained.

The Toddler staff changes all of the children wearing diapers throughout their class time as is necessary. The children are encouraged to participate in this whole process. Please leave onesies, buttons and overalls for non-school days. This will help develop independence.

Alcott School Lunch Program

As parents and staff we all share a basic desire that our children eat nutritious food in a pleasant atmosphere. Good nutrition is important and something that we are all concerned about. We feel strongly that to be consistent with our interest and concerns, we need to do our best to insure that each child in our school is provided with wholesome, healthy foods.

We hope you will read carefully our policy regarding lunch:

1. Please send your child's lunch in a soft sided lunch box or reusable bag, with his/her name clearly marked on it. Send a plastic spoon with your child if they need one for yogurt, etc.
2. Send foods your child likes. Food can be warmed in the microwave at lunch time. Please send any food you would like heated in a microwavable container. All lunches will be kept in the refrigerator. When packing your child's lunch, consider using some of your child's favorites from this list:
 - strips or chunks of fresh raw vegetables like: carrots, string beans, celery, whole peas in pod, peppers, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes
 - cut up cheese, sliced egg, yogurt, cottage cheese, cereal, leftovers from dinner
 - fruit, tuna fish sandwiches, cream cheese on raisin bread, etc.
 - whole grain breads or crackers
3. ***Please do not send any of the following for lunch:***
soda, cracker jacks, candy, gum, lollipops, any junk food, nor any of the cake and cookie type things like: Twinkies, Ring Dings, etc.

Additional Suggestions:

Remember to choose foods your child enjoys eating. Preparing lunch with your child the night before often leads to a more leisurely morning routine.

Due to the increased incidence of allergies and asthma, we request that you also avoid sending peanut or nut products to school. We are a nut restricted environment.

Food Allergy Guidelines

Our staff strives to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children. We follow these guidelines to the extent possible but we do not guarantee that we can keep our environment completely free of food or other allergens that might cause a severe reaction.

- All children's allergies that require treatment must be documented by a medical professional, including symptoms that indicate a reaction is occurring and instructions for administering medication. Appropriate Alcott School documentation must be completed and turned in before the start of school.
- We talk to the children about the importance of keeping the classroom safe and healthy for fellow classmates.
- We encourage frequent hand washing, especially before and after meals and snacks.
- We clean tables and other work surfaces several times a day, before school begins, before lunch, after lunch and at the end of the session.
- We do not permit the sharing of lunches.
- We post lists of allergies in every classroom. The teachers and assistants are required to be familiar with every child's allergies.
- We make every effort to avoid serving foods that contain peanuts or tree nuts or may contain traces of such foods.
- Other foods such as shellfish, eggs, or milk may be served on a classroom-by-classroom basis depending on the food allergies present in that classroom.
- If children have life-threatening allergies to foods, we ask that the family provide an acceptable snack to be kept at school and served as an alternative, as needed. If their parents request, these children may sit apart from the others when eating snack or lunch.
- We ask that parents speak with their child's classroom teacher regarding children with allergies in the classroom before sending in special snacks or treats.
- Our guidelines apply to all functions in the school building in areas where children are present.

Promoting Healthy Living Habits

The following is to share information with you about healthy food and beverage choices and the prevention of childhood obesity.

The foods children eat and lifestyle habits they learn have a lasting effect on their health. There are ways that Alcott School is promoting healthy habits while your child is in our care:

- We offer a fresh fruit and vegetable snack program.
- We serve 1% milk to students in the extended day class.
- We engage in daily physical activity.
- The children engage in food preparation activities at school. For example, peel and slice a carrot.
- We involve the children in food preparation, table setting, and self-serving.
- Our staff sits with the children at meal times and models appropriate table manners and conversation.

The following are ideas, in partnership with us, to help your child set healthy living habits:

- Offer the fruits and vegetables you see served in your child's classroom at home. Sometimes new foods take time. Offer new fruits and vegetables many times.
- Ask us about our policy on celebrations. We prefer yogurt and fruit to make parfaits rather than sugary foods.
- Share your child's favorite healthy recipes with us.
- Allow your children to help with food preparation, table setting and food planning at home.
- Cook and bake together.
- Chart how many different fruits and vegetables the family eats each week using stickers or drawings.
- Eat together.
- Talk about the healthy foods that you eat as a family.
- Stay active together. Going for walks or bike rides, or playing in a local park are great ways to enjoy activity with your children.
- Limit screen time. Physical activity helps children's bones and muscles grow strong and lowers the risk of weight gain.

For more information about healthy eating and exercise, visit:

Choose My Plate

www.choosemyplate.gov

Eat Smart New York

www.otda.ny.gov/programs/nutrition

Core Nutrition Messages for Healthier Food Choices

www.fns.usda.gov/fns/core-nutritionmessages/default.htm

Physical Activity Guidelines for Children

www.nrckids.org/default/index.cfm/parentsguardians/

Rest

We believe that preschool children who follow a full day or extended day schedule require a daily rest/nap period during their school day. It's a way for the children to "re-charge their batteries" since their minds and bodies are busy working really hard at practicing and learning new skills. Learning how to relax your body in this high paced world is a life skill that plays a part in our overall health.

All children enrolled in the full day or extended day program at Alcott School have a daily rest/nap period in their classroom after lunch. Each child brings a blanket or bedroll from home along with a small soft animal and inside shoes. These items stay at school during the week and go home for laundering on the weekends. Each child has their own labeled rest mat which the school provides. These mats are cleaned and sanitized on a weekly basis by the classroom staff. During rest/nap time, the lights are dimmed, the blinds are closed, and teachers are available to rub backs. Sometimes soft music is on, audible stories are played or a teacher reads a book aloud.

During rest/nap time all the children are expected to rest their minds and bodies for a reasonable amount of time while lying down on their mat. Many children will sleep each day but those children who don't fall asleep after an acceptable amount of time will be able to engage in quiet work while the rest of the class naps. The length of time that each child sleeps varies depending upon multiple factors such as: when did the child fall asleep, did the child have a poor night sleep, how the child is feeling, etc. The classroom staff will share with you your child's rest/nap patterns at school and we ask that you please do the same in regards to in the home.

Child Abuse – Mandatory Reporters

Employees of the Alcott School are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and/or neglect according to New York State law. If any school employee has a reasonable basis to suspect that a child may be the subject of child abuse, maltreatment or neglect, the school employee **MUST** make a phone call to the Child Protective Services Hotline and provide them with enough information that the government may conduct an investigation to determine if the child is being neglected, abused or maltreated. A written report must also be submitted. It is not within the authority of Alcott employees to investigate suspected situations of abuse, but it is an illegal act to fail to report the suspicion.

Keeping Your Child Healthy

Our goal is for all of the children enrolled at Alcott School to have a healthy and productive school year. We are asking your help in achieving this goal. The following guidelines will minimize the chances of your child contracting an illness during the course of the school year.

- Wash your child's hands before entering the classroom and when leaving the school.
- Teach your child to blow his/her own nose and to wash hands afterwards.
- Teach your child to cough into his or her elbow.
- Teach your child to keep their hands out of their mouths and away from their faces.

Keep your children home if they are sick (see Sickness for a list of illnesses which require children to stay home) or look like they may become sick during the day. Young children who do not feel well do not enjoy their time at school.

While at school, the children will wash their hands with soap and running water when they are dirty, after toileting, before and after food handling or eating, after handling pets or other animals, after contact with bodily secretion or fluid, and after coming in from outdoors.

Hand Sanitizers are alcohol based hand cleaners which provide a convenient, effective way to reduce the spread of germs in school. They are used for your child only under the direct supervision of a staff member when hand washing is not possible. They do not replace hand washing during bathroom use, nor are they used when children have eczema or cuts on their hands. If you do not want your child to use hand sanitizers, please notify your child's teacher in writing.

Sickness

If your child will be absent, please call the school office. Children who are absent **5 or more days** must have a doctor's note before returning to school.

Children with the following conditions should stay home until the symptoms/condition have resolved or until evaluation by their health provider determines that they are well enough to return. Children with symptoms of diarrhea, fever or vomiting may return to school **when symptoms are resolved for 24 hours. Children who are prescribed antibiotics for any reason may return after 24 hours after receiving their first dose** of medication. An absence note must be completed for all children when returning to school explaining the reason for their absence. The following is a list of symptoms which meet the criteria for staying home:

1. Fever over 100.2 degrees or higher via ear thermometer.
2. Diarrhea: runny, watery or bloody stools.
3. Vomiting more than twice in a 24 hour period.
4. Mouth sores or ulcers if child cannot control his/her saliva.
5. Sore throat with fever &/or swollen glands.
6. Severe coughing: child gets red or blue in the face or makes a high-pitched whooping sound after cough.
7. Eye discharge: thick mucus or pus draining from eye or watery discharge with redness.
8. Yellowish skin or eyes.
9. Evidence of severe illness: lethargy, unusual sleepiness, irritability, prolonged inconsolable crying, labored breathing, or wheezing.

If your child has been diagnosed with the flu or has flu symptoms (fever of more than 100 F accompanied by other flu symptoms such as aches, cough, sore throat, etc.), your child should be kept home for 7 days or 24 hours after the symptoms resolve whichever is longer.

Frequent hand washing is the best way to prevent the flu. We suggest washing your child's hands when they arrive at school, leave school for the day, enter your home from being outside in the community, before meals and before bed.

Please do not send your children in if you suspect they are ill; for example, if your child has a high fever, has vomited, has a green or yellow discharge from the eyes or nose, etc. If your child can not go out to the playground because of illness or requires more intense care and attention than the staff can reasonably provide, he/she belongs at home.

On occasion a child may become ill while in school. Alcott's policy is to notify the parent and request that the child be picked up at school as soon as possible. Young children who are ill in school are a health risk to their classmates, the teaching staff, and are generally uncomfortable. We appreciate your efforts to pick up your sick child in a timely manner.

If you have a caregiver who makes the decision on whether to send your child to school, please discuss our policy with them. We understand how difficult it is for ALL parents when their child is ill. The staff appreciates your cooperation with this difficult problem.

Medications

No prescribed medications will be administered to children except in the event of an emergency. If your child has an allergy, asthma, seizure history or any other medical condition which may require the emergency administration of medication, a health care plan will be written. A *Request for Administration of Medication* for each medication must be completed by your child's health provider including signed parental permission.

Medication forms and instructions can be obtained in the school office. Medication consent forms must be renewed by your child's health provider every 6 months.

If your child requires non-emergency medications during the school day, only a relative including a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin may come to administer the medication on-site. This is due to regulation requirements from the Office of Children and Family Services. A written note from the parent/legal guardian permitting a relative to administer medication must also be given to school.

Health problems such as a history of sudden febrile seizure may require that the child's temperature be monitored daily upon the child's arrival to school.

Thank you for your cooperation. Your child's safety and well-being is important to us

Emergency Closing

Inclement weather may sometimes necessitate closing school. School closings will be posted on the school website at www.alcottschool.org, on Cable Channel 12 News in Westchester and on Fios 1 News. A message via robo call, text and/or email will be sent using information provided on your communication form. If you are in doubt call the school and listen for our message on the answering machine.

Please understand that delaying and/or closing school is not something done without a great deal of thought. Our primary concern is the safety of your children.

Bus Transportation

Bus transportation is available by private contract between the parent and the bus company. If you are interested in more information about the bus, please contact the Crane Road office at 914-472-4404 for the Crane Road and Fox Meadow Montessori programs or the Dobbs Ferry office at 914-693-4443. **The school is not affiliated with the bus company in any way.**

If your child normally takes the bus, but because of illness or other plans he/she will not be taking the bus on a specific day, please notify the bus company directly. If the bus is late, please call the bus company first, then the school.

Parking

Do not pass school buses with flashing lights!

Do not leave children in your car unattended!

Do not leave your car running!

Do not park, or wait for or drop off passengers in the fire lane!

Crane Road Parking:

- Make a right turn at the STOP sign as you enter the parking lot.
- The traffic flow is one way in a counter clockwise direction.
- Park in the lot in an unnumbered spot and come in the front school entrance.
- Walk your child to the classroom or designated meeting spot and wait until the teacher greets him/her before leaving.

Please **do not**...

- ***Send your child into the school building unescorted;***
- ***Park blocking the front entrance of the building or alongside the playground;***
- ***Park in any numbered parking spot; or***
- ***Park or drop off in the fire lane in front of the entrance to the building.***

Dobbs Ferry Parking:

- Park in designated spots only and escort your child to the door of their classroom.
- Drive slowly and with extreme caution.
- Be prepared to wait for a parking spot to become available.
- Be considerate of others and leave yourself plenty of time.
- During drop-off and pick-up, you may park behind cars facing Broadway in the lower lot. Those cars belong to staff members.

Please **do not**...

- ***Park in the fire lane;***
- ***Park in the circle in front of the building where buses pull up;***
- ***Leave your car parked in the middle of the parking lot, blocking other cars from pulling out;***
- ***Leave your car running with the keys inside; or***
- ***Send your child into school unescorted.***

Fox Meadow Parking:

- Enter the parking lot on the north side of the building and drive slowly around the building to the Alcott School entrance. Park your car in a parking spot.
- Do not park along the building or block the driveway around the back of the building.
- Do not park on Fox Meadow Road. If there are no available spots, you may park in the lot on the north side of the building.
- **The driveway behind the building and the south side exit are one way!**
- **Do not park in the spaces labeled for buses.**

Classroom Observations

Parents are welcome to visit their child's classroom any time after October 15th. We encourage all parents to try to come in and share an activity with their child's class at least once a year. Some ideas include: sharing your family's traditions, reading a favorite book, playing a game, teaching a song, cooking, and so much more! Please speak with your child's teacher to arrange a good time to come in. Remember to stop by and observe a regular class day a couple of times during the school year. The more you visit, the more you will know what is going on in the class!

Parent – Teacher Conferences

Two conferences are scheduled each year. One is conducted in late fall and the other in the spring. We encourage both parents be present at conferences whenever possible. At any time during the year if you should have any questions about the program, policy, or procedures please speak with the Site Director at your child's location or your child's classroom teacher. The director and teacher are always available for special conferences whenever they are necessary. Children should not attend conferences. Please make arrangements for their care.

Do not hesitate to ask questions or share information (re: illness, separation, a death in the family, etc.) with the staff. It helps us respond to the needs of your child if we are informed of anything unusual occurring within your family. Very often what is happening at home affects a child's behavior in the classroom. If more than a few minutes are needed to speak with a teacher, please make an appointment for a conference, or request a phone call. We will be happy to arrange one at a mutually convenient time.

Consultants

On occasion during the year it becomes necessary for our staff to speak with a psychologist, speech therapist, physical therapist or occupational therapist regarding a specific child.

These professionals will observe and offer suggestions, but will not formally test any child that a parent or staff member has questions or concerns about. Sometimes these concerns involve learning problems or a family crisis such as death, divorce, illness, and separation. Sometimes these observations are formally scheduled, and other times the therapist is in the building and a child may be informally observed or discussed. A parent conference to discuss the findings and recommendations will be scheduled when necessary. We will then use the information obtained to plan a better program for that individual child, or if it is indicated we will help find your child a more appropriate class placement.

As professionals we feel it is essential to call upon our consultants whenever it is necessary to gather additional information about a child. We know from research in early childhood education and our forty plus years of experience that the early identification of any learning difficulty is extremely important for both parent and child. Early detection and remediation of learning problems (mild or otherwise) will decrease the time needed for special intervention or tutoring at a later age.

Our goal is to see that your child's first preschool experience enhances both his/her self-esteem and overall development.

Student Behavior Management Plan

Preschool children and toddlers are inherently working upon and refining their social skills. At the Alcott School we help the children to develop internal self-control, independence, and empathy for others. At times it becomes necessary to intervene in a child's behavior and therefore, we have developed and implemented a behavior management plan.

Alcott School's behavior management plan consists of the following techniques to pre-empt instances where behavior management is necessary and to intervene in a child's behavior as needed:

- We redirect, i.e. in a conflict we provide choices and alternatives. For example, "You can either sit on the rug or at a table for story time."
- We focus on "Do" rather than "Don't." For example, "We walk inside," instead of "Stop running inside!"
- We encourage children to use friendly words rather than physical acts. For example, "This is my work."

Student Behavior Management Plan (continued)

- We praise positive behavior. For example, “I like the way you used your words.”
- We model desired behaviors in order for the children to learn by example.
- We arrange the classroom space to positively impact children’s behavior. For example, avoid large open spaces that might encourage children to run indoors.
- The classroom is the children’s place. We listen to the children and respond to their needs proactively to achieve their goals. We aim to keep the children engaged with activities thus helping to prevent conflict.
- We involve the children in the development of the classroom rules.

The Alcott School adheres to the following guidelines when implementing behavior management techniques with a child enrolled in the program:

- Children may only be disciplined by the director, head teacher, assistant teacher or substitute.
- The Alcott School applies all rules consistently and appropriately to the ages of the children and their developmental level and abilities.
- Any behavior management used will relate to the child’s actions and be handled without prolonged delay.
- A child may be briefly separated from the group, but only long enough to gain self-control and will be in view of, supervised and supported by the director, head teacher, assistant teacher or substitute.
- We do not use corporal punishment.
- We do not use methods of interaction that punish, demean or humiliate children. Nor do we physically restrain children.
- Any abuse or maltreatment of a child, either as an incident of discipline or otherwise, is prohibited. Please note that, we do not tolerate or in any manner condone an act of abuse or neglect of a child by an employee, volunteer, or any person under the program’s control.

Birthday Observances

Children will be recognized in class on their birthdays. If you wish to send in a snack for your child's birthday please speak with your child's teacher. We prefer that parents send in fruit, fresh vegetables, cheese, crackers, and muffins or home baked items rather than sugary snacks. If you send cupcakes, mini cupcakes are the perfect size for children!

- Our birthday celebrations include a story about your child's life. Please ask your child's teacher about photos and milestones to create the story.
- **Alcott's Birthday Book Program** is a fun and easy way to celebrate your child's special day. Ask your child to pick a favorite book. Then choose someone special in your child's life to visit us and read it to the class.
- **To commemorate your child's birthday, donate a copy of the book to the school.** An inscription form provided by the teacher will be placed inside the book with your child's name and birth date.
- *For safety reasons we cannot light birthday candles in the classroom.*

Toilet Training

Children attending 3-5 year old classes are expected to be toilet trained, or at least actively working on the process. If you are concerned about this, please speak with your Site Director.

Toddlers are not expected to be toilet trained.

Personal Belongings

Toys, jewelry, baby bottles, candy, gum are best left at home or in the car. Such items are often lost and present a problem for the other children. Invite your child to leave such items in the car for the trip home. A child may bring in a book or music to share with the class. Special items such as shells, bird nests, or items from a family trip are also welcome.

Pocket Treasures

From time to time every child takes home something from school, usually inadvertently. Often these items are very small in size like a penny or small gold bead. Frequently these tiny treasures are part of a classroom activity and without them the activity is incomplete. If any unidentifiable objects like this turn up at home, please return them to the school. We can usually tell at a glance whether or not they are pieces of apparatus from the classroom or sometimes a random object picked up from a friend.

Parent Volunteers

A joint effort of parents and staff is the most effective way to provide a quality school environment. We welcome your visits and participation in our classrooms. Please speak with your child's teacher and/or your building site directors about how you can help. You will receive notices about meetings for class parents early in the school year. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to be actively involved in your child's school experience and meet other parents.

Special Notes for Toddlers

Separation

Parent-Toddler separation is different for each individual. Some children separate easily and may need a parent or caregiver present only once or twice. Others may take more than a month. Parents or caregivers can best help with this process by following some simple suggestions:

- Talk about the program **only** a few days before classes begin;
- Use simple, matter of fact words; and do drive by the school building and point out this is where you will be going to school.
- Do not "over sell" the activities.

Remember: Arriving too early or too late can lead to confusion, tears, or clinging behavior. Goodbyes are most easily accepted when brief and confident, e.g. "I will pick you up after story time/bubbles. All the mommies come back after story time / bubbles."

Anxiety

If your child is not ready for you to leave, relax. **Turn off your cell phone.** Stay with us in a low key manner. Sit in the grown up chairs provided in the classroom and let your child come and visit you. You might want to bring a book or magazine to read to occupy yourself while sitting in the classroom. Try not to bring younger siblings with you. They make it harder for your child when you do leave. Soon you should be able to leave the classroom for coffee breaks in the office or kitchen area. If your child asks for you, a teacher will escort him/her to you and then back to the classroom. As brief separations lengthen, friendships and trust of peers will replace your child's anxiety, and he/she will relax and begin to enjoy the program.

Class Routine

Following a routine helps to provide comfort and confidence to the toddler. The knowledge of the order of the activities helps the child acquire a sense of time - a beginning, middle, and end to each session. Here is an example of a typical day in a Toddler class:

MORNINGS		AFTERNOON
9:00 - 9:25	Outdoor play/bikes	12:30 - 12:55
9:30 - 10:45	Work Time, Circle, Special Activities	1:00 - 2:15
10:45 - 11:15	Playground Time	2:15 - 2:45
11:15 - 11:30	Circle/Dismissal	2:45 - 3:00

The classroom is divided into areas including: block building, practical life activities, art, reading, gross motor, and manipulatives. Art projects are open-ended and focus on the process rather than the end product.

What Toddlers Do Not Need in School

Large blankets, bottles, pacifiers, etc. should be left at home or in the car. They should not be brought into school. We appreciate the fondness your child may have for these items, but they are not easily shared in a group setting and can, in fact, inhibit the separation process. A small stuffed animal or similar object of transition is acceptable for initial separation adjustment. Please do not bring food or drink into the classroom for your child unless you discuss it with the classroom teacher first. Snack will be supplied during the session.

Staffing

Monica Zenda

Executive Director

She can be reached at 914-693-7677 or at mzenda@alcottschool.org.

Pamela Serra

Crane Road Site Director

She can be reached at 914-472-4404 or at pserra@alcottschool.org

Sarah Marinelli

Dobbs Ferry Site Director

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Lisa Pantori

Dobbs Ferry Montessori Coordinator

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Marilia Menezes

Crane Road Montessori Coordinator

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A staff member will be available in all locations during the school day. An answering machine will be on when no one is available to answer the phone. Please leave your message on the answering machine or in our voice mail system if nobody is available to speak with you.