



Parent Handbook

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Providing Quality Childcare Since 1942

Table of Contents

- I. Welcome
- II. Philosophy
- III. Non-Discrimination Statement
- IV. School Calendar
- V. General Safety
- VI. Child Abuse Reporting
- VII. Communication
- VIII. Arrival and Dismissal Procedures
- IX. School Policies
 - 1. School Hours and Attendance
 - 2. Discipline
 - 3. Biting
 - 4. Illness
 - 5. Toilet Training
 - 6. Toys
 - 7. Social Media
- X. Lunches, Snacks and Celebrations
- XI. Maintenance Hours
- XII. Tuition Fees
- XIII. Clothing
- XIV. Grievance Procedure
- XV. Board of Directors
- XVI. Extra Programs

I. WELCOME

Welcome to the Oak Ridge Nursery School (ORNS). We accept students aged 12 months to five years of age. Our goal is to provide a safe and happy learning experience. This handbook is written to help inform parents of general policies, everyday activities, and events at our school. This will hopefully insure a smooth transition for you and your child in starting at our school.

Oak Ridge Nursery School has been a part of the Oak Ridge community since 1945. The school was started by a group of parents at the height of the Manhattan Project during World War II, and it is still owned and operated by parents of enrolled children. It began as the Grove Nursery School and became the Oak Ridge Nursery School Association after incorporation in 1952. In recognition of our historical significance in the community, the school was awarded the Oak Ridge Historic Preservation Award in 2005.

ORNS promotes teamwork amongst parents and teachers to provide a strong learning program for enrolled children. With considerable intellectual and professional resources living and working in Oak Ridge, the team effort results in a superior program. ORNS emphasizes the total development of each child intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally by providing a wide array of opportunities and experiences in each of these areas.

Since the year 2000, ORNS has earned the Tennessee Three-Star Rating for excellence in child care, the highest honor a child care facility can receive from the state. ORNS is also proud to be voted "Best Day Care in Anderson County" in 2006.

II. PHILOSOPHY

ORNS is a non-profit organization owned by the parents of enrolled children and governed by an elected Board of Directors who operate under a Constitution and set of By-Laws. ORNS emphasizes the total development of each individual child (intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally) by providing a wide array of opportunities and experiences in each of these areas. We promote parent and parent-teacher cooperation in providing a quality nursery school program for enrolled children.

III. NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

ORNS admits students of any race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to the students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship or loan programs, and athletic or other school-administered programs.

IV. SCHOOL CALENDAR

Part-time and full-time programs will operate during the year with these holiday exceptions: Labor Day, Fall Break, Thanksgiving and the day after, the week of Christmas, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Good Friday, Spring Break, Memorial Day, and July 4th. Exact dates for Fall Break, Christmas, and Spring Break can be found on the separate calendar.

In the event of severe weather, ORNS will follow the same schedule as Oak Ridge City Schools.

V. GENERAL SAFETY

Fire drills are held on a regular basis without advance notice. The children learn how to respond and to exit the building calmly and promptly.

All staff members strive to maintain a safe environment for the children at all times, both in the building and on the playground, by establishing and enforcing clear safety rules. There is always at least one staff member on duty who is trained in infant/child CPR and first aid. When an accident with injury does occur, the staff member involved notifies the Director and fills out an accident report to give to the parents. The parents will be notified immediately if injury appears to require medical attention.

VI. CHILD ABUSE REPORTING

According to Tennessee law, all persons (including doctors, police, teachers, child-care providers, mental health professionals, dentists, parents, family members, friends, and others) must report suspected cases of child abuse (physical, sexual and/or neglect). Failure to report suspected cases is a misdemeanor and is subject to stiff penalties.

VII. COMMUNICATION

Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled on an as-needed basis, and each time a child graduates to a new room. Any time you have a question or need a conference, feel free to call for an appointment. Parents are always welcome to visit our classes at any time. Many written communications (including forms, surveys, newsletters, and notices) are placed in your child's cubby at school to take home. We try to issue a room newsletter at the beginning of each month with important dates to remember and news concerning class activities. This is the primary communication with parents, so please read it carefully. There is also a public Facebook page for the school, and a private Facebook page for each room. Ask your child's teacher about being added to the classroom page.

VIII. ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Safety is of utmost importance to us. The following information details our procedures to help ensure the safety of our students and staff. Our doors open promptly at 7:00 am. We have a security door with an individualized code for all parents and persons who are on file as authorized pick-ups for students. If a student is going to be absent or late, parents are encouraged to call us at 865-483-3036. Each parent is responsible for signing their child in upon arrival and out upon pick-up.

- Daily Sign-In & Sign-Out Procedures: Children must be signed in and out daily with a FULL signature (equivalent to signature on photo ID) by an adult (an individual who is 18 years or older) with the EXACT times of arrival and departure, and a phone number where you can be reached that day. Remember that we cannot release your child to anyone without your written permission AND their picture I.D. It is your responsibility to communicate to other individuals this policy and procedure for picking up and dropping your child off.

ARRIVAL

- The teacher should greet the child warmly. Teachers and Parents should communicate about the child's evening, and any information that would influence the child's day (i.e., sleeping issues, distress, stressful event, company, etc).
- The teacher should give the child and caregiver a moment to say farewell. Parents are encouraged to keep goodbyes to a minimal amount of time. "Lingering," only gives the child false hope that the parent will stay and conditions the child for future departure. Ex: "If I cry mommy will stay longer." An appropriate goodbye instills confidence in the child that the parent feels comfortable leaving the child at the school. If you continuously hesitate the child may wonder why you are worried to leave him or her. At the very least your anxiety will be felt by the child.
- The teacher should guide the child to an activity.

DISMISSAL

- No child will be dismissed to anyone other than a parent, previously designated person, or carpool driver without specific instructions from a parent. It is necessary that the information (name, phone number, and description of the person picking up the child) to be written down and given to both the director and teacher. The person authorized to pick up your child must be named on the child's emergency card and present a picture ID. This helps ensure the safety of the students. Whenever possible, tell the child in advance if there is to be a different person picking him/her up.
- No child will be released to anyone whose behavior may place the child at risk.

IX. SCHOOL POLICIES

1. SCHOOL HOURS AND ATTENDANCE

- Your child may attend full-time daily or part-time for two days (Tuesday and Thursday), three days (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) or after school Monday through Friday. **Alternative or flexible schedules cannot be accommodated, due to a need to plan for adequate staffing.** If you need to change your child's schedule, please speak with the director to see if there is an opening or to be put on the waiting list.
- If the school is closed due to weather or a holiday, or your child misses school due to illness, there will be no make-up days or partial refunds given.
- Our full-time hours are Monday through Friday, year-round, from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Due to liability issues, students cannot be dropped off prior to 7:00 a.m. Please be prompt in picking up your children, as a late penalty will be charged after 6:00 p.m. Your child should bring a lunch and a sheet and blanket for the afternoon rest time. The school will provide milk for lunch and snack.
- Our part-time morning class hours are 8:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Part-time children should not arrive before 8:45 a.m. unless they are attending the early morning drop-off program.

They should bring lunch. Upon the director's approval, part-time students may use an occasional extended afternoon at an additional charge.

- The after-school care program is from the time of the child's arrival until 6:00 p.m. Please be prompt in picking up your children. A late penalty will be charged after 6:00 p.m. You are responsible for providing transportation from the child's school to our building.

2. DISCIPLINE

Discipline is positive in nature insofar as possible. Rules for behavior are clear and developmentally appropriate. Redirection is the first option for inappropriate behavior, removal from the situation in a time-out area is the second option (one minute for every year of age is the general rule). Referral to the director is the third option. If the inappropriate behavior persists after these options are exhausted, the parent will be asked to come for a conference to work together to modify the inappropriate behavior. If it is not improved within a reasonable time frame it is grounds for dismissal from our school.

3. BITING POLICY

When a child bites another child, we will:

- Intervene immediately and attend to both children involved.
- Assess the situation quickly to determine cause of biting (child's frustration, hunger, teething, fatigue, separation anxiety, etc.)
- We tell the child in a calm but firm voice, "No biting, biting hurts." Or "I do not like it when you bite people. You hurt him/her. He/She is crying."
- Redirect the biter to another activity or area.
- Finish the interaction on a positive note by reassuring the biter that he/she is still important to you and the rest of the staff.
- Notify parents of all children involved. We will not share the names of the children to protect the family's privacy.
- If the biting continues, the child will have to sit out from the group and we will try to shadow the child as best we can. Parents will be asked to work cooperatively with the childcare center staff to rectify the behavior.
- We will send a child home once he/she bites another child twice in one day. If a child is sent home a second time during the same week, he/she may not return to school the next day.
- Should the behavior continue without improvement, we will take further steps to ensure the safety of the children in our care and we may require that the child who is biting find another learning environment that will meet his/her needs.

4. ILLNESS

Please keep your child home if ill: he/she will recover more quickly at home and not infect others in the group. Please report to us if your child becomes ill with a contagious disease.

Parents will be promptly notified of the outbreak of any communicable disease. If your child is not well enough to go outside, he/she is not well enough to be at school. We are required by law to go outside daily, and we do not always have adequate staff to supervise children who cannot be with their class.

If your child becomes ill during the day (especially with fever, vomiting, or diarrhea), you will be notified to come to the school to pick him/her up. Sick children cannot be properly cared for in school. Please do not let your child return to school until they are free from fever, diarrhea, and/or vomiting for a full 24 hours. This precaution will help us to prevent the spread of illness. A child with a rash may attend school only if a doctor's note is provided to the Director, confirming that the condition is not contagious.

5. TOILET TRAINING

While ORNS recognizes that all children are unique in their readiness for toilet training, the following policy has been developed to assist in maintaining compatible age ranges and learning development in the classrooms.

As each child in the Orange Room reaches 2 years and 9 months of age, a reminder of this policy will be issued to parents. Children older than three years cannot be accommodated in the Orange Room. Children cannot be accepted to the Blue Room if they are not yet toilet trained. Therefore, if a child in the Orange Room is not toilet trained by the time he or she reaches the age of three, the child may be dismissed from the school until toilet training has been firmly established. At that time, the child will be placed at the head of the waiting list for the Blue Room. There may be exceptions made if there are extenuating circumstances, and ORNS staff is willing to work with the parents during the transition to assist with toilet training while the child is at school.

6. TOYS

We discourage children from bringing any toys to school. All toys in the classrooms are for everyone to play with. It is sometimes hard for children to share "personal" toys. It is also difficult for the teacher to remember who brought which toys. To avoid unnecessary problems, we ask that students keep their toys at home.

7. SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is increasingly relevant in today's society as a valuable communication tool. The school maintains a presence on Facebook, and each classroom has a private page in which we post updates, information about daily activities, and photos. You may opt out of having your child's photo posted. If you choose to post things about the school on your social media accounts, please remember to be respectful and aware of others' privacy. Making disparaging comments about the school or staff members can have a detrimental impact on the school and potentially the children's education. Your statements can be misinterpreted by others, shared publicly without your knowledge, and do not help in getting the problem solved. Depending on the situation, making defamatory statements online could lead to your child's dismissal from

the school. Please first address your concerns directly with the person involved, or speak with the Director. This will hopefully avoid any misunderstandings, and allow us to better meet your needs.

X. LUNCHES, SNACKS, AND CELEBRATIONS

Please label your child's lunchbox as well as any reusable containers you provide. This will ensure that each child is given the correct items for lunch and that containers will be returned to their owners.

Each child will be expected to provide a morning snack approximately once a month. Please check your monthly calendar for your child's special day. We ask that the snack be light and nutritious (e.g. fruits, vegetables, cheese, crackers) and include a gallon of either milk or 100% juice. (In the Yellow Room, only milk is allowed). The school will provide the cups and napkins.

Each child's birthday will be recognized. Your snack day will automatically fall on or near your child's birthday. We make an exception to the light and nutritious rule on birthday snacks. We encourage you to communicate any special plans with your child's teacher.

Easter, Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day are special party days at school. There will be a picnic for the entire school in late spring. The room parent or teacher will contact you for help with these parties. All celebrations take place in the morning hours. If a school celebration falls on a day on which your child does not usually attend, the child is welcome to attend with a parent present. Occasionally our classes will have special projects, such as cooking or gardening. We will inform you of any supplies that might be needed.

We welcome parents sharing their occupations, hobbies, interests, talents, or cultural celebrations. It is good for children to have new "teacher" sometimes. Contact the teacher if you are interested in scheduling a "share" time.

We have regularly scheduled "share days" and occasionally a special day on which your child may bring a particular item. We strongly discourage bringing toy weapons of any kind on these occasions. Watch classroom notices and monthly newsletters for these days.

We always welcome CDs and books to share with the class.

XI. MAINTENANCE HOURS

ORNS is a non-profit organization maintained by the parents of enrolled children. To foster greater parent involvement and to ensure this continued upkeep of our school, each family is asked to perform 24 hours per year (September 1 through August 31) or pay \$480 per year. The service or payment will be assessed on a quarterly basis: September 1, December 1, March 1, and June 1 at six hours or \$120 per quarter. The following are details of the maintenance policy:

- Most parent service activities count, including maintenance of the building and grounds, fund raisers, room activities, board meetings, school party events, baby-sitting for meetings or workdays, and special projects (check individual room lists). Time will be counted according to actual hours worked. Off-site jobs may only count for up to two hours per quarter. See the maintenance book or the Director for additional details.

- Workdays are held regularly on the second Saturday of every month beginning at 9:00 a.m. Check the Parent Info board for more information. Additional work opportunities will be announced in advance.
- The service (or payment) requirements are the same for part-time or full-time families.
- Friends, grandparents, or other relatives are welcome to perform service hours as well. Those hours will also count towards the total commitment.
- Single parents are only required to contribute 12 hours or \$240 per year.
- Additional children from the same family will not necessitate additional service or payment.

XII. TUITION FEES

Tuition is set by the Parent Board of Directors. Any changes in tuition will be communicated to the parents in writing at least two weeks before the change goes into effect. Tuition payments must be made in advance, and may be made on a weekly or monthly basis. Weekly payments are due by Monday of the upcoming week of childcare, and monthly payments are due by the first of the upcoming month. Late payments are subject to a late charge. If you become two weeks behind on payments, your child will not be able to attend the school until overdue payments are caught up. See separate tuition information for current amounts and details.

XIII. CLOTHING

Please send your child to school in clothes for learning: wash-and-wear items are best. Comfortable clothing that is easy for your child to manage is a great help, too. This convenience becomes very important at bathroom time. Overalls, snap pants, and belts are particularly difficult for preschoolers to handle. Pull-down, elasticized waistbands are best. No cowboy boots, flip-flops, sandals, or other shoes that inhibit outside activities such as running and climbing. Tennis shoes are the best shoes for children to wear to school.

Print names on all clothing that your child might take off at school (sweaters, coats, hats, mittens, scarves, blankets, etc.). Use a laundry pen that will not wash off, and re-apply names as needed. A change of clothing kept in your child's locker will help during times of unpredictable mishaps with paint, juice, mud, or bathroom accidents. As the seasons change and your child grows, switch out the clothing so that it will be appropriate for the existing weather and your child's size.

Be aware that the weather conditions can change noticeably during the day. Since we try to have outdoor play time every morning and afternoon, your child should have a sweatshirt or jacket available every day in spring or fall.

XIV. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

We hope to maintain open and positive parent relationships in which you feel comfortable approaching staff with any issues that may occur. Parents are asked to address their concerns first with the staff member involved. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, parents are asked to bring the concern to the Director. If no satisfactory solution is reached with the Director, parents are

asked to notify the Board in writing of their concern and address the issue at the next Board meeting. The Board's decision is considered final.

XV. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board of Directors is made up of mostly parents of students currently enrolled at ORNS. Grandparents or other caregivers are also eligible to attend and become voting members of the board. The board discusses and makes decisions about issues that are important to the school. All parents are encouraged to attend Board meetings, usually held once a month in the evening. You can be a member of the board, or even be elected for an officer position if one is open. Members or officers of the Board earn maintenance hours for attending meetings. Childcare is available if needed. Meetings and elections will usually be announced in the monthly newsletter and/or posted in the lobby.

XVI. EXTRA PROGRAMS (GYM BUS)

The Fun Time Gymnastics Bus is available to introduce your child to the basics of gymnastics and motor skills while having fun. The bus comes to the school once a week, on Fridays. Your child may try a class for free before enrolling. If you are interested in your child attending the class, please pick up consent form in the front lobby and return it to the director.