

Dover Gardens

Co-operative Nursery School

Parent Handbook



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www.dovergardens.ca

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Introduction to Dover Gardens

Welcome to Dover Gardens Co-operative Nursery School! The school, licensed for children aged 18 to 30 months and 2 ½ to 5 years old, opened in September 1983. Dover Gardens operates during the regular school year, from September to June. The co-operative employs a qualified E.C.E. Programme Supervisor and an E.C.E Teacher. The staff are assisted by parent volunteers in the class, allowing the school to meet the minimum child to instructor ratio and provide high quality care.

Programme Philosophy

Dover Gardens Nursery School offers children a variety of age appropriate experiences that promote their social, emotional, creative, physical and intellectual growth. In a nurturing environment, children are encouraged to have respect for others and to take responsibility for their own actions.

Children of different ages participate in the same activities but at their own level. The classroom setting is intimate enough to pay close attention to the children's individual needs and interests. Some activities that promote our goals are storytelling, singing, music, games, food, field trips, holidays and special events.

Dover Gardens is a non-profit, non-discriminatory, non-political, and non-denominational organization. We make available toys that stress our bias-free and non-sexist philosophy. Our Bias-Free Policy can be found in Appendix A.

What is a co-operative nursery school?

At Dover Gardens, families do not merely pay tuition so that their children can attend the programme. Instead, the school is run as a co-operative, meaning that each family contributes to the daily running and maintenance of the school. Parental involvement is not merely suggested, but required! The benefits of running a co-operative programme are many:

- Lower tuition than most nursery schools
- Higher quality of care ensured by the fact that there are more caregivers in the classroom
- Ability to foster a close working relationship with our highly qualified teachers
- Opportunity to experience and develop varied parenting techniques
- Chance to meet other parents and families in your community
- Time to share in your child's experiences and watch them grow intellectually, emotionally and socially!

Non-participating members

Dover Gardens Nursery School recognizes that not every family can contribute in the same way. Thus, starting in September 2005, the nursery school began offering a limited number of non-participatory spaces. The number of non-participating spaces will be determined each year by the Board. Tuition fees for these children are higher, reflecting the value of the work done by the other parents of the co-operative in administering the Nursery School.

Non-Participating parents and families retain the same rights and responsibilities of membership as Participating parents and families. They are encouraged to attend, and are entitled to vote at General Membership Meetings. As well, they are encouraged to participate in fundraising activities, and must abide by the policies and procedures as set out in the Parent Handbook. A Non-Participating family's relief of performing duty days and administrative tasks defines the difference in Member categories.

Parental Responsibilities

Since Dover Gardens operates as a co-operative, its members administer the nursery school – success is in their hands. We have attempted to outline below and elsewhere in the handbook all the responsibilities of member families, however, events of an unforeseen nature do sometimes occur, which require families to pitch in. If we all do our share, the work will be minimal and will contribute greatly to the experience of our children!

Every family with a child attending the school agrees to:

1. Abide by all policies, procedures and by-laws of Dover Gardens.
2. Assist in yearly fundraising events:

Registration and tuition fees cover all the basic costs of keeping the nursery school up and running. However, we undertake several fundraising events over the course of the year in order to pay for those special things that make Dover Gardens Nursery School a great place to be.

Each year, the Executive Board, in consultation with the general membership, determines what special projects ought to be funded. For example, we may need to repair or replace old toys, purchase new educational games and activities, or choose to bring in special classroom events. Events are organized and planned by the Fundraising Co-ordinator and the Fundraising Committee. All families must contribute time and effort to making the various events successful. It's a great opportunity to strengthen the finances and promote the profile of the school while building relationships with other families in our community!

3. Pay all fees in full and on time.
4. Attend each of the Semi-annual General Members Meetings held in October and May. (Non-participating families are welcome at the General Members Meetings, but their attendance is not mandatory.)

In addition, **participating co-op member families** agree to fulfill the following obligations:

1. Fulfill obligations of Executive Board position or of assigned Family Task.
2. Fulfill assigned duty days according to the roster.
3. Attend one of two toy-washing parties per academic school year.
4. Attend each of the semi-annual general meetings.
5. Attend the monthly executive meetings, if an Executive Board member.

The success of the school depends upon all families doing their share. Repeated violations may result in the forfeiture of membership. The Executive Board reserves the right to ask a family to withdraw from the programme if family obligations are not met.

Administrative Structure

The Executive Board members are as follows:

1. Co-ordinator
2. Assistant Co-ordinator
3. Treasurer
4. Secretary
5. Fundraising Co-ordinator
6. Registrar
7. Membership Co-ordinator
8. Marketing Co-ordinator
9. Past Co-ordinator
10. Principal (or their designate) of Dovercourt Junior Public School
11. Member at large

Aside from the principal of Dovercourt Jr. P.S., the Past Co-ordinator and the Member at large, all positions are to be held by parents of children who will be enrolled in the programme in the same academic year. The remaining officers are elected to the Executive Board by the co-operative membership at the semi-annual general meeting held in April or May. Vacancies after this AGM will be filled and approved by the Board.

A description of the duties of the Executive Board members, as well as of the Family Tasks, can be found in Appendix C.

Application Procedures

Admission Policy

Applications are processed on a first come, first served basis. Priority is given to children who have been in the programme and their younger siblings. When the programme is fully enrolled, applicants will be held on a waiting list until an opening is available. Children do not need to be toilet trained to attend Dover Gardens.

Programme Guidelines

At Dover Gardens, we currently offer a morning programme (9:00am to 11:45am) which is a mixed aged group, made up of a maximum of 16 children, three of whom can be under 2½. We also have an extended programme for preschoolers, which goes until 12:30. This programme does not include lunch.

Our Provincial Licence allows us to operate two separate programmes: a Toddler programme for children 18 to 30 months of age, and a Preschool programme for children 2½ to 6 years less a day.

Dover Gardens may also opt to operate a *mixed age group* programme, often referred to as a family model, by combining the toddlers and preschoolers in the same programme. A *mixed age group* programme operates with a maximum capacity of 16 children and may have no more than 20 per cent, or three children, below 2½ years of age in attendance.

In all circumstances, The Day Nurseries Act determines the ratio of caregivers to children that must be present for our programme(s) to operate. It is the E.C.E. Supervisor's and the Executive Board's joint responsibility to ensure that all Provincial Licensing requirements are met and adhered to.

We may offer programmes in either the morning or afternoon, but no programme may be more than 5 hours in length. No child may attend more than six hours per day. If a child is enrolled in a morning and afternoon programme, they must be picked up by their parent/guardian and leave Dover Gardens' premises during the lunch period.

Registration

Tuition Fees

The following fees are due at the time of registration:

1. Non-refundable registration fee - \$50.00 (\$30.00 Non-participating), which includes:
 - i. \$15.00 Co-op Membership Fee (one time, non-refundable).
 - ii. \$15.00 Administrative Fee (one time, non-refundable) to offset the cost of processing each child's application. Children returning to the programme after the scheduled summer break are not charged the Administrative Fee again. Children withdrawn from the programme for two months or more will be charged the Administrative Fee upon re-enrolment. Different children from past or current members will also be charged the Administrative Fee when enrolling.
 - iii. \$20.00 one Police Reference Check. Families that wish to have the flexibility of having more than one parent/caregiver able to volunteer in the classroom must pay an additional \$20.00 for each Police Reference Check submitted. (Non-participating families do not volunteer in the classroom, and therefore do not pay for Police Reference Checks.)
2. Last month's tuition (see Appendix D for a table of current tuition fees) to be applied to your child's last month in attendance at Dover Gardens Nursery School. This is **NON-REFUNDABLE**.
3. Post dated cheques, dated for the first of every month, for the remainder of the school year. (See Appendix C for a table of current tuition fees). Cheques returned because of insufficient funds will be charged \$25.00.

Please note:

When registering in the spring or summer for space(s) on the September roster, your registration fee, last month's tuition fees, plus post dated cheques for the remainder of the school year are due June 1st. Please see the registration checklist for complete details.

Forms

The following forms **MUST** be completed, signed and returned to the Supervisor before your child can attend Dover Gardens:

- Enrolment forms
- Permission form for medical attention
- Permission form for field trips
- Certificate of recent medical examination and immunization for the child and statement re: communicable diseases
- Criminal Reference Check Release Form (and payment) for all persons performing duty days. See Appendix E for our complete policy.
- Certificate of a medical examination for the duty parent, including a recent chest x-ray or TB test
- Signed declaration and checklist re: review of handbook policies and procedures

Withdrawal Policy

If you decide to withdraw your child from the programme, you must complete and return an 'Intent to Withdraw' form to the teacher, thereby providing one calendar month's prior written notice. Please take weekends and holidays when the classroom may be closed into account when submitting your 'Intent to Withdraw' form. At that time, the last month's tuition fees collected at the time of registration will be applied to your child's final month in attendance at Dover Gardens Nursery School. If your child is not in attendance during this time period, no refunds will be given. All remaining post-dated cheques will be returned.

Note that the Board may require families to withdraw from the programme for non-compliance with the policies and procedures of the school. One month's written notice will be given to families being asked to withdraw from Dover Gardens. The last month's tuition collected at the time of registration will be applied towards the child's final month in attendance. If your child is not in attendance during this time period, no refunds will be given. All remaining post-dated cheques will be returned.

Comfort Level Assessment

If your child is not settling in to the programme, the Supervisor will discuss any concerns with you and help develop strategies to help your child feel comfortable. If the family and Supervisor agree that your child ought to withdraw from Dover Gardens, all post-dated cheques will be returned.

Attending Dover Gardens

Arrival and Departure

If your child will not be attending school, please call to inform the teacher before class begins. (The phone number at Dover Gardens is 416-533-7337.)

Your child must be picked up promptly at the end of class. Thus far we have been able to avoid the late policy, common at nursery schools. Help us to avoid it again this year by picking up your children on time.

As the end of the programme approaches, you may pick up your child from the outside playground or from the gym. It is extremely important that you inform the teacher that you are leaving with your child.

Closures

Provincial Legislation requires that there is at least one E.C.E. qualified instructor in the classroom at all times (our goal is to have two). Therefore, in the event that both our teachers are unable to attend work and no replacement can be found, you will be notified of the school's closure for that day. If one teacher or assistant is ill, Provincial Legislation requires two parents to assist in the classroom. If you are called in, every effort will be made by the Family Liaison Officer to give you a credit for that duty day on the next roster. Extenuating circumstances such as extended illness, personal injury, or bereavement, or staff resignation; in short any ongoing demand for two parent volunteers per day, may prevent credits on future duty rosters. The Family Liaison Officer will endeavour to distribute duty days and any necessary roster changes in a fair and equitable manner so that no one family is unduly stressed.

Unfortunately, Dover Gardens cannot reimburse families for any missed days of school due to such closures. Therefore, it is in everyone's interest to volunteer to come in, when necessary.

Statutory Holidays

Dover Gardens operates during the regular school year, opening on the first day of public school in September and closing the following June on the last day of classes. Dover Gardens also follows the public school holiday schedule. We are closed during both Christmas and March breaks and on all Statutory Holidays.

Absences and/or Vacations

Children may be absent from the programme at the discretion of the parents, however the school will not reimburse the family for any days missed. Dover Gardens is unable to offer “make-up” days in response to a child’s absence.

In the case of an extended absence, families will be required to leave the programme (one month’s written notice is required) but will be permitted to re-enter on their return, if space permits.

Communication

It is vital that families update Staff with any changes in personal information: new contact information (address, workplace or phone), or a child’s health information (new or discontinued medication, recent development in a health related issue). This information is kept in confidence, in the child’s file.

Each family has a mail slot in the classroom. Check it often for information about upcoming field trips, meetings, Scholastic Book Club, and special events. As well, a bulletin board is available in the classroom with information for staff and parents regarding continuing education, workshops, meetings, news items and articles of interest in a variety of topics.

While only members of the Executive Board are required to attend Board meetings, everyone is encouraged to attend. Attendance at the semi-annual general meetings is mandatory for all participating members and encouraged for non-participating members. A schedule of meeting days is posted each September for the following year.

Snack

A healthy snack is served during each programme at Dover Gardens. E.C.E. staff draw up a weekly menu plan and the task of shopping is assigned to a participating member family. The Duty Parent prepares the food with direction from Nursery Staff and helps serve the snack to the children. Parents are welcome to supply a special snack for their child’s birthday. Please inform the teacher of any foods you do not wish your child to have at snack time. A list of sample menus can be found in Appendix F.

Posted in the snack preparation area, for everyone’s reference, is a list of children and their food restrictions. Nut allergies are usually severe and sometimes fatal. Therefore, the classroom is a “nut-free” zone, including items often containing nuts and nut oils, such as chocolate or granola bars.

When is your child too ill to attend the nursery school?

Sick children pose a risk to other children and the staff and volunteers who care for them. Further, they are unable to participate in the programme fully and often require a disproportionate amount of the teachers’ time. For everyone’s well being, sick children cannot be allowed to attend school. It is difficult to know how sick is “too sick,” so please refer to the guidelines below in determining when to keep your child at home.

Keep your child at home if they show the following symptoms/illnesses:

1. Fever (temperature of 101°F/38°C and over). The child may not return until his/her temperature has been normal for over 24 hours.
2. Vomiting and diarrhoea. The child may not return until the vomiting and/or diarrhoea has ceased for at least 24 hours.
3. An excessively runny nose where the discharge is not clear.
4. Extreme lethargy that prohibits participation in the programme.
5. Extensive rash, unless child brings a doctor's note confirming that the child may attend school.
6. Contagious diseases (e.g. chicken pox, rubella, pink eye, measles; pinworm, strep throat, head lice).

Dover Gardens follows the Toronto Public Health's Guidelines for Common Communicable Diseases in determining when a child needs to stay home (be excluded) from the school by reason of a communicable disease. Further, the school may have to report the illness to Toronto Public Health, in accordance with the Guidelines. Please inform the school immediately if your child has been diagnosed with any of the contagious conditions noted above.

As part of the daily routine, the teachers will conduct a daily health check to:

- a) monitor the children for any other signs of illness, which they will report to you;
- b) keep a log of when/why children are absent from the programme.

If any of the symptoms listed above become apparent while your child is at school, parents will be called to pick their child immediately, and the child will be isolated from the other children in the class by providing them with a comfortable and safe place to rest.

Clothing/Outdoor Attire

Shoes must always be worn; socks or bare feet are not permitted. The children play outside or in the gym everyday, so ensure that they have non-skid shoes at school. In wet, rainy or snowy weather make sure that your child has extra shoes (not slippers) for use indoors.

Families must ensure that every child has a hat to wear outside in cold or warm weather. Since putting sunscreen on each child is time-consuming, we ask that each family apply a long-lasting sunscreen on their child before arriving at school for the day.

Your child should have a complete change of clothes at school at all times. It can be kept in a bag, labelled with their name, hung on their hook in the classroom.

Playground Safety

The children of Dover Gardens will be given an opportunity to develop their gross motor skills through play, either inside the gym or outside on the school playground. There are many different play structures on the grounds of Dovercourt Jr. P.S.; however, the children will only be allowed to play on outdoor equipment that has been approved for their age group. The children will also play in the Northwest corner of the schoolyard, where there is a sand pit and large field. Note that when the weather is poor or the city has issued a “smog alert,” meaning the air quality is very poor, the staff will instead bring the children to the gym to play.

Please read the complete Playground Safety Policy, found in Appendix G.

Celebrations and Special Events

The E.C.E. Supervisor is responsible for setting appropriate themes and areas of exploration in the playroom. A very important part of the programme is to embrace the ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of our community. As such, Dover Gardens celebrates major holidays. For example, Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanza are celebrated as a month of light. Parents interested in helping to develop programmes around holidays are welcome to approach the E.C.E. Supervisor or Family Liaison Officer.

Occasionally, special events are planned for the classroom. In the past, musicians have come to sing and play instruments. In 2004-05, the Creepy Crawlers Express paid a visit – bringing a wide variety of bugs and lizards for the children to see and touch.

The children’s birthdays are also celebrated at Dover Gardens, however we ask that no other items besides a special snack be brought in (e.g. no loot bags, hats, ice cream etc.), so that all birthdays are celebrated equally.

Field Trips

Field trips offer the children a wonderful way to experience new learning environments with their peers. Parents and families will be notified in advance of upcoming field trips and special classroom events. In order to boost the child to adult ratio during field trips, a few extra parents will be asked to volunteer to accompany the class during the outing.

Specialized Services

As part of ongoing developmental observations of each child, it may occur that outside agencies such as the Child Development Institute or Surrey Place Centre are called upon for their expert advice and opinions. This is done to ensure that the children are receiving the best care that we can provide. These agencies are contacted only with the consent of the parents of the child. All information will be kept in confidence.

Participating Member’s Duties

Dover Gardens is a co-operative, and that means that all members must participate in order for the nursery school to function smoothly. Members are expected to participate in duty days, as well as the following activities: an orientation meeting, two annual toy

washings, two Annual General Meetings, and fundraising events. These are part of the obligation that members enter into. If a member determines that they are unable to participate fully, they might consider moving to a non-participating status (even for a short period of time such as a month).

Duty Days

The number of duty days you will be required to fulfill depends on how many families are enrolled at Dover Gardens and on the other responsibilities you accept at the school. If you take an Executive Board position, you will be required to commit to one duty day per cycle. Those members who perform a Family Task will be required to do two or three duty days per cycle.

Roster

A roster will be prepared by the Family Liaison Officer and posted in Dover Gardens' nursery school at least one month in advance.

It is the responsibility of every family to fulfill the scheduled duty day. Remember that any adult family member or caregiver is eligible to provide coverage so long as they have read and signed the Behaviour Management policy and have submitted a criminal reference check release form and payment. If you find it necessary to switch duty days with another family, please inform the Family Liaison Officer as soon as possible so that she/he may note the change.

In the event that you are unable to fulfill your scheduled duty day due to illness, it is the duty parent's responsibility to inform the family liaison officer once they are aware that they are not able to attend, either the night before the duty day but no later than 8 am of the scheduled duty day. The family liaison officer will then inform teachers and the backup duty parent.

Each shift on the roster will also have a member designated as 'back-up'. The back up is there in case of illness or emergency, e.g.: the scheduled duty parent or their child is ill and unable to attend on short notice, or one of the ECE instructors is absent. (Please note that Provincial Legislation requires that two parents assist in the classroom when one of the teachers is absent.) If you are asked to fill in as a backup, every effort will be made by the Family Liaison Officer to give you a credit for that duty day on the next roster. Extenuating circumstances (such as extended illness or injury, bereavement, staff resignation or dismissal) that present an ongoing demand for two parent volunteers per day may prevent credits on future duty day rosters. The Family Liaison Officer will endeavor to distribute duty days and any necessary roster changes in a fair and equitable manner so that no one family is unduly stressed. The back-up roster is not to be used as a substitute for finding a replacement for an assigned duty day.

Criminal Reference Check

Dover Gardens requires anyone who will have direct contact with the children to have a Criminal Reference Check through the Toronto Police Service before beginning work or volunteer service. This includes all staff, parents and caregivers. Please read our complete Criminal Reference Check Policy, found in Appendix E.

Behaviour Management Policy

All staff, parents and classroom volunteers must agree to abide by and implement Dover Gardens' Behaviour Management Policy (Appendix H). It details prohibited practises when working with the children as well as prevention strategies. Staff and parent volunteers will have their performance evaluated two times per academic year (October and April). The E.C.E. Supervisor reviews parents, while members of the Executive Board review the paid staff.

Child Abuse Policy

Dover Gardens Nursery School is committed to taking a pro-active position regarding child abuse. As such, our Child Abuse Policy details the responsibilities for recognition, reporting and documentation of suspicions of child abuse.

Orientation

Orientations sessions are held at the beginning of the school year and again in January if necessary. Parents and caregivers will be given a brief tour of the classroom areas: bulletin boards/communication centre, children's play areas, supply stations, and the food preparation area. In addition to reviewing what parents/caregivers are responsible for on duty days, it is an excellent opportunity to meet other Co-op families.

In-class duties

It is extremely important that all duty parents and caregivers are familiar with the policies and procedures found in this handbook and its appendices.

It is suggested that duty parents arrive 15 minutes before their session begins to help the teachers with any remaining classroom preparations and to assist with arrivals. A daily schedule is posted noting the timelines of the various classroom activities. Interacting with the children as they play, and preparing and helping to serve the snack are a duty parent's main responsibilities. Time permitting, duty parents are expected to pitch in with the general toy wash schedule posted in the food prep area.

Snacks

Following the menu posted by the E.C.E. Supervisor, the duty parent is responsible for preparing the children's snack each day. This supports the Provincial Regulations that require that the snack be prepared at the school (i.e. fruits and vegetables washed and cut up at the school) and only unopened packages of food (crackers, muffins, cheese) be supplied. Unfortunately, home made food items are not permitted.

Be sure to check the list of children and allergies posted in the preparation area and use separate dishes and utensils in preparing foods that some children may have an allergy to. Nuts and foods containing nut products are never permitted at the school. If you have any questions or concerns about the food you have been instructed to prepare for the children's snack, please ask the Supervisor to help clarify the situation. Bringing nuts or foods containing nuts into the classroom, or serving allergens to affected children will result in the immediate forfeiture of your co-op membership.

See Appendix F for sample menus.

Sanitary Practices

Hand washing

Hands should be washed, following the chart posted in the washroom:

- after toilet routine and/or assisting a child with his/her toilet routine
- after changing a diaper
- after contact with potentially infectious materials (e.g. after blowing one's nose, sneezing, or touching nose, ears or eyes, cleaning up after a sick child)
- after contact with animals
- before and after preparing or consuming food
- after handling toxic substances
- after handling garbage or recycling
- after coming in from outside
- whenever they feel dirty

The toilet/diaper change area must be sprayed with the disinfecting agent provided, and wiped dry, after every use.

Dover Gardens' staff follows what is known as "universal precautions" in dealing with infectious diseases and bodily fluids in the classroom. A chart detailing what these precautions are and what steps to follow is posted in the washroom.

Diaper Changing

A diaper change pad is provided in the washroom. Parents must supply diapers, but disposable wipes, single use paper towels, liquid soap and disinfectant are available. The diaper change area must be sprayed with the disinfecting agent provided, and wiped dry, after every use.

Cleanliness in the Classroom

Detailed instructions for the proper cleaning of dishes and preparation of food are found near the food preparation area.

The snack tables and the counter where the food is prepped must be washed before use and then used solely for that purpose.

A roster of items that need to be cleaned and sanitized every month will be posted in the prep area, along with instructions on how to clean toys. Duty parents should try to clean as many toys as possible while on duty.

Dover Gardens Co-operative Nursery School

Appendices



228 Bartlett Avenue
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www.dovergardens.ca

Appendix A: Bias-Free Policy

Dover Gardens Co-operative Nursery School is a non-discriminatory, non-profit, non-political, and non-denominational organization

Dover Gardens' Bias Free Policy recognizes the dignity and worth of every person and ensures equal rights for all, without discrimination on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed or religious beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, handicap, age, family status, marital status or class.

All employees are hired solely on the basis of their Early Childhood Education Qualifications and any pertinent life experiences. Dover Gardens' policy ensures that all employees work in a harassment free environment. The nursery school will not tolerate any sexual, racial or degrading comments of any kind to any individual.

Dover Gardens has an open door policy in its acceptance of children and families in our programme according to our license set by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. As the enrollment of parents and children change each year, Dover Gardens must also change to make possible incorporation of diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. These diversities are a source of enrichment and strength.

Dover Gardens actively promotes racial and ethnic diversity on its Board of Directors and Committees. Every family is represented on this Board. Complaints of any kind will be brought to the Executive Board, on which each member has an equal voice in dealing with the complaint. Disciplinary action imposed in response to a discriminatory or harassment incident may take the form of a warning reprimand, suspension, termination or a mandatory withdrawal from the nursery school.

This Bias-Free Policy will be included in every staff or membership application to the nursery school. An agreement to comply will be incorporated in a contract that will be signed by staff and parents in the nursery school.

Appendix B: Job Descriptions

The Membership Co-ordinator will attempt to meet each family's preferences for tasks but the ability to do so will depend on the number of families enrolled at Dover Gardens each year. If the arrival of new members allows it, the membership co-ordinator will attempt to meet your preferences later in the year.

Executive Board Members:

1. Coordinator
2. Assistant Coordinator
3. Treasurer
4. Secretary
5. Membership Coordinator
6. Registrar
7. Fundraising Coordinator
8. Marketing Coordinator
9. Past Coordinator
10. Member at large
11. Principal (or their designate) of Dovercourt Junior Public School

Coordinator

- Attend monthly Board meetings
- Ensure programme is running smoothly; oversee any problems that arise
- Register with CIBC (on Ossington & Bloor) for signing authority
- Act as the liaison with Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), City of Toronto's Children's Services and Public Health Departments, and the Toronto Board of Education (TDSB)
- Act as the liaison with Principal of Dovercourt Jr. Public School
 - Periodically review financial statements with the Treasurer
- Chair 10 monthly Executive Board meetings
- Chair semi-annual general membership meetings (October/April)
- Conduct evaluations of E.C.E. Supervisor, assist E.C.E. Supervisor with evaluations of staff
- Activate ad hoc committees (planning, hiring etc.) as needs arise
- Update Co-ordinator's Binder with log of tasks/duties/events from the year and suggestions for the incoming Co-ordinator
- Provide orientation for incoming Co-ordinator.

Assistant Coordinator

- Attend monthly Board meetings and participate fully in assuming new tasks as required by the Board
- Assist Co-ordinator in performing administrative functions as required
- When school is not in session, monitor school telephone line and respond to calls or pass on messages
- Register with CIBC (on Ossington & Bloor) for signing authority
- Conduct phone campaigns to membership as required (i.e. to inform about upcoming events, deadlines, school closures etc.) with the assistance of the Administration Committees, Special Events Co-ordinator parent volunteer
- Coordinate grant and funding applications in consultation with E.C.E. Supervisor, Executive Members, and appropriate outside body (e.g. City of Toronto, TDSB)
- Arrange for substitute teacher as required
- Sit on hiring committee
- Coordinate assigning of family tasks
- Arrange permits for meetings and events to be held after school hours
- Update Assistant Co-ordinator's Binder with log of tasks/duties/events from the year, and suggestions for the incoming Assistant Co-ordinator; provide orientation for the incoming Assistant Co-ordinator
- Participate on ad hoc committees as required

Treasurer

- Attend monthly Board meetings and participate fully in assuming new tasks as required by the Board
- Manage all financial matters, specifically:
 - i. Create a budget. Monitor and report monthly on the status of the budget
 - ii. Collect fees for the school year from the Supervisor (membership, tuition, Criminal Reference Check fees)
 - iii. Bring unresolved disputes about fees to the Board
 - iv. Prepare yearly tax receipts for tuition fees and donations
 - v. Ensure timely payment of school invoices
 - vi. Manage all payroll functions (timesheets, pay cheques, T4s, payroll taxes)
 - vii. Reimburse approved expenditures on a timely basis
 - viii. Organize and maintain financial records
 - ix. Arrange and pay for school insurance (general liability, WSIB)

- x. Organize bank deposits
- Liaise with the Fundraising Co-ordinator; collaborate on 'seed money' for events, manage any and all funds raised
- Provide detailed financial statements to the Executive at monthly meetings
- Arrange for audited financial statements through a licensed third party accountant
- File annual Charitable Status Tax Return (prepared by accountant) with Revenue Canada within required deadline
- Update Treasurer's Binder with log of tasks/duties/events from the year and suggestions for the incoming Treasurer; provide orientation for the incoming Treasurer

Secretary

- Attend, record and distribute minutes of monthly Board meetings to all members within one week of the meeting
- File and maintain records of meeting minutes and bylaws in appropriate binders
- Make copies of all necessary forms
- Post notice of General Members meeting eight weeks in advance
- Attend all General Members' meetings and participate fully in assuming new tasks as required by the Board
- Send out email (correspondence /surveys) to the Membership on behalf of the Board
- Participate on the hiring committee as necessary
- Update Secretary's Binder with log of tasks/duties/events from the year and suggestions for the incoming Secretary; provide orientation for the incoming Secretary

Membership Coordinator

- Attend monthly Board meetings and participate fully in assuming new tasks as required by the Board
- Deal with issues pertaining to the current membership
- Act as a liaison between parents, teachers and the Board
- Create duty day roster according to guidelines and post at least one month in advance
- Arrange for coverage when duty parents or staff are sick
- Maintain a list of all enrolled families including names, addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses; distribute contact information sheet to all families
- Conduct evaluation of year's programme, compile results and provide feedback to E.C.E. Supervisor and Board
- Ensure that Dover Gardens is meeting the needs of its membership and community e.g. membership/ staff survey

- Update the Membership Co-ordinator's Binder with log of tasks/duties/events from the year and suggestions for the incoming Membership Co-ordinator
- Provide orientation for the incoming Membership Co-ordinator
- Participate on ad hoc committees as required

Registrar

- Attend monthly Board meetings and participate fully in assuming new tasks as required by the Board
- Deal with incoming families and potential new members
- Take on the responsibility of registration by monitoring email during the summer and update registration if needed
- Work with the Marketing Coordinator to place advertisements announcing beginning of registration in March of every year, and at other times as necessary
- Maintains a waiting list and contacts prospective members on waiting list for possible registration
- Assist E.C.E. Supervisor in responding to inquiries: meet with prospective new members, provide a tour, explain procedures, provide handbook and required documentation, and conduct follow-up calls
- Ensure copies of the handbook and required forms are available
- Update the Liaison Officer's Binder with log of tasks/duties/events from the year and suggestions for the incoming Liaison; provide orientation for the incoming Family Liaison Officer
- Participate on ad hoc committees as required

Fundraising Coordinator

- Attend monthly Board meetings and participate fully in assuming new tasks as required by the Board
- Raise money for the cooperative through membership participation required events (winter & spring theme) plus additional fundraisers such as Scholastic, Coffee, QSP
- Report plans, costs, and profits of any fundraising initiatives at Board Meetings
- Raise community profile of Dover Gardens Nursery with signage during fundraising events with cooperation of the Marketing Coordinator
- Actively solicit corporate donations from community vendors and businesses
- Maintain records of contacts and correspondence (requests, thank-you notes) with community donors and sponsors

- Update Fundraising Co-ordinator's Binder with log of tasks/duties/events from the year, and suggestions for the incoming Fundraising Co-ordinator; provide orientation for the incoming Fundraising Co-ordinator
- Participate on ad hoc committees as required

Marketing Coordinator

- Attend monthly Board meetings and participate fully in assuming new tasks as required by the Board
- Maintain Dover Gardens website (update current info, hosting, domain name payments)
- To sustain the visibility of Dover Gardens to the community through flyer postings, distribution of brochures, listings in community papers and electronic postings e.g. community newsgroups
- Ensure all print materials (i.e. brochures, business cards, handbook, registration forms) are up to date and that there are enough copies to post within the classroom and for distribution
- Contact local business for promotion, proposal of donations, events e.g. classroom trips to local business
- Participate on ad hoc committees as required

Past Coordinator

(This position is intended to give continuity to the management of the Nursery):

- Attend monthly Board meetings and participate fully in assuming new tasks as required by the Board
- Participate on ad hoc committees as required
- Liaise with Dover Garden's Executive Board on behalf of Dovercourt Junior Public School.

Member-at-Large

- Attend monthly Board meetings and participate fully in assuming new tasks as required by the Board
- Participate on ad hoc committees as required
- Can be any member from Dover Gardens' membership roster. Does not have to have a child currently enrolled in the programme

Principal (or designate) of Dovercourt Junior Public School:

- Attend monthly Board meetings and participate fully in assuming new tasks as required by the Board
- Participate on ad hoc committees as required
- Liaise with Dover Gardens' Executive Board on behalf of Dovercourt Junior Public School

Aside from the principal of Dovercourt Jr. P.S. the Past Co-ordinator and the Member at large, all positions are to be held by parents of children who will be enrolled in the programme in the same academic year. The remaining seven officers are elected to the Executive Board by the co-operative membership at the semi-annual general meeting held in April or May. Vacancies after this AGM will be filled and approved by the Board.

FAMILY TASKS

Shopper

- Get shopping list of snack foods and/or grocery items from E.C.E Supervisor and purchase items (to be brought back to nursery in a timely fashion)
- For reimbursement it is required that the shopper complete a “Cash Advance or Reimbursement Form” and submit to the Treasurer with receipts.
- Liaise with teacher regarding cleaning supply requirements and maintain an inventory list

Maintenance Committee

1. Supervisor

- Maintenance and upkeep of classroom computer and system.
- Set up and supervise the Family Toy Washing Party which will take place in December and June. The Supervisor in consultation with the maintenance committee will set the dates and post the sign-up sheet on the Parent Information board in the class. All participating families are to choose one of the two dates
- Respond to maintenance emergencies, such as an outbreak of head lice.

2. Housekeeping

- Take home and launder all towels and pillow covers (weekly)
- Take home and launder all paint smocks (weekly)
- Take home and launder dress-up clothes and puppets (as needed)
- Note if there is an outbreak of head lice the above items will need to be cleaned again and may need to be removed from the room for a period of 7-10 days.

3. Classroom Clean Up

- Clean out the refrigerator, discard expired food (check weekly)
- Clean garbage (weekly)
- Wipe down mailboxes (bi weekly)
- Clean all chairs, window sills bathroom stools and mirrors (weekly)
- Note if there is an outbreak of head lice some of the above items will need to be clean again.

Fundraising Committee Members

- Assume new tasks as required by the Fundraising Coordinator
- Help raise money for the co-operative through planned events, staggered throughout the year, such as the plant sale, participation at the Dovercourt Jr. P.S. “Spring Fling” etc.
- Help raise community profile of Dover Gardens Nursery during fundraising events

- Help create, maintain and update promotional material (brochures, signs, tickets, etc.) as needed to solicit new families and for general distribution or use at fundraising events
- Actively solicit corporate donations from community vendors and businesses
- Maintain records of contacts and correspondence (requests, thank-you notes) with community donors and sponsors

Marketing Committee Member

- Assume new tasks as required by the Marketing Coordinator
- To sustain the visibility of Dover Gardens to the community through flyer postings, distribution of brochures, listings in community papers and electronic postings e.g. community newsgroups
- Ensure all print materials are up to date and that there are enough copies to post within the classroom and for distribution
- Contact local business for promotion, proposal of donations, events e.g. classroom trips to local business.

Appendix C: 2011 – 2012 Fee Schedules

Toddler (18 to 30 months)

9:00 – 11:45

Member Status	2 sessions per week	3 sessions per week	4 sessions per week	5 sessions per week
Participating Member	\$ 213.00 per month	\$ 265.00 per month	\$ 307.00 per month	\$ 343.00 per month
Non-participating Member	\$ 318.00 per month	\$ 370.00 per month	\$ 412.00 per month	\$ 438.00 per month

Preschool (2 1/2 to 5 years)

9:00 – 11:45

Member Status	2 sessions per week	3 sessions per week	4 sessions per week	5 sessions per week
Participating Member	\$ 161.00 per month	\$ 234.00 per month	\$ 275.00 per month	\$ 312.00 per month
Non-participating Member	\$ 266.00 per month	\$ 349.00 per month	\$ 380.00 per month	\$ 407.00 per month

Preschool Extended (2 1/2 to 5 years)

9:00 – 12:30

Member Status	2 sessions per week	3 sessions per week	4 sessions per week	5 sessions per week
Participating Member	\$ 201.00 per month	\$ 294.00 per month	\$ 355.00 per month	\$ 412.00 per month
Non-participating Member	\$ 306.00 per month	\$ 409.00 per month	\$ 460.00 per month	\$ 507.00 per month

Please note that membership responsibilities do not change depending on the number of sessions that your child is enrolled per week.

Registration Fees

Participating Families pay a \$50.00, non-refundable, registration fee, which includes:

- \$15.00 Co-op Membership Fee (one time, non-refundable).
- \$15.00 Administrative Fee (one time, non-refundable) intended to offset the cost of processing each child's application. Children returning to the programme after the scheduled summer break are not charged the Administrative Fee again. Children withdrawn from the programme for more than two months will be charged the Administrative Fee upon re-enrolment. New/different children from past or current members will also be charged the Administrative Fee when enrolling.
- \$20.00 one Police Reference Check. Families that wish to have the flexibility of having more than one parent/caregiver able to volunteer in the classroom must pay an additional \$20.00 for each Police Reference Check submitted.

Non-participating Families pay a \$30.00, non-refundable, registration fee, which includes the Co-op Membership and the Administrative Fee as noted above. Non-participating Families are not required to volunteer in the playroom and as such do not need a Police Reference Check.

Appendix D: Staff Biographies

Maria Moniz is an ECE with 10 years experience including running her own home-based daycare. She ensures that our program provides a fun, stimulating environment and works with the parents to ensure the program is meeting everyone's needs.

Marissa O'Grady is a qualified E.C.E. instructor and brings 4 years of experience working with preschoolers in daycares and cooperative nursery schools. She also has experience working in community social services. Marisa provides a calm and secure environment for the children to flourish.

Appendix E: Criminal Reference Check Policy

A criminal reference check is a precautionary measure designed to ascertain whether employees or volunteers providing direct service to children have a criminal history which could potentially make them unsuitable for certain positions of trust. A positive response may or may not preclude employment or volunteering with Dover Gardens Nursery.

Dover Gardens Co-operative Nursery School requires that all staff: supervisors, teachers, assistants, parents, caregivers, and volunteers, who will have direct contact with the children, must have a Criminal Reference Check through the Toronto Police Service before beginning work or volunteer service.

Parents and/or Caregivers are required to submit their completed, signed Release of Personal Information Form along with their child's enrollment forms and registration fees. The form will be sent by the E.C.E. Supervisor to the Toronto Police Service on the parent's/caregiver's behalf. All responses from the Toronto Police Service are sent to the attention of the Supervisor for inclusion in the child's file at school. If there is a positive response on a criminal reference check, the E.C.E. Supervisor, in consultation with the Coordinator of Dover Gardens Nursery School will consider the nature and circumstances surrounding the charges and/or convictions. All information will be kept strictly confidential. Dover Gardens Co-operative Nursery School recognizes and abides by the Ontario Human Rights Code and will do everything needed to ensure non-bias with regard to this information.

Parents or caregivers with children attending in subsequent years must have a Criminal Reference Check at least once every two years unless they are elected or appointed to the Executive Board, when they will be required to have a Criminal Reference Check done once every year.

Please note: only Criminal Reference Checks submitted by Dover Gardens (on the Members' behalf), and returned to Dover Gardens (by the Toronto Police Service) will be valid. Criminal Reference Checks performed for another organization, regardless of purpose or timing will not be accepted.

Appendix F: Snack Preparation Procedures and Sample Snack Menus

Nursery School staff is responsible for planning the snack menu. Once the menu has been determined, a participating member family shops for the grocery items and brings them to the Nursery. Typically, the snack served will include three of the four food groups as listed in Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating.

Snack Preparation

With staff direction in regards to the menu plan, the Duty Parent prepares the daily snack. A list of children and their food restrictions is posted in the snack preparation area; please ask the Supervisor for assistance and/or clarification if you are uncertain.

The snack tables and the counter where the food is prepared must be washed before use and then used solely for that purpose. It is extremely important to make sure that you are using clean cutting boards and utensils. If there is a child in attendance that has a food restriction, it is imperative to use separate knives and cutting boards for fruit, dairy and grain items. This prevents "cross-contamination" of one food group to another. The food is cut into morsels that are appropriate for the age groups in attendance. Each food is placed in its own serving bowl/plate.

Sample Snack Menus

Fruits & Vegetables	Milk Products	Meat and alternatives	Grain Products
banana slices	skim milk	'no nuts' pea butter	whole grain crackers
red pepper slices	cream cheese		whole wheat bagels
grapes (cut in half)	yoghurt with fruit		muffins
orange sections		hummus	whole wheat pita
Apple slices	cheese		whole grain crackers

We restrict sugary snacks to special occasions: birthdays, holiday celebrations.

Due to food allergies and dietary restrictions, we do not permit nuts or nut products to be served at the Nursery School. This includes products that may contain nuts, e.g. granola bars. Serving allergens to an affected child(ren), or bringing nuts or nut products into the classroom will result in immediate forfeiture of your co-op membership.

Appendix G: Playground Safety Policy

It is understood that play involves challenging a child's co-ordination, control, strength and intellect. Safety factors are essential, but cannot provide for an infinite variety of events.

Dover Gardens Nursery School is located in Dovercourt Public School and is welcome to use the large grassy playing field to the West, as well as the small grassy field and sandbox in the North yard. With regards to the South yard playground equipment; including the small metal climber and slide, and the rope climbing structure, have been safely designed for children ages six and upwards. **Therefore the South yard playground equipment is not safe for preschool children and cannot be used by Dover Gardens Nursery.**

- When the children of Dover Gardens Nursery School use the approved playground areas, all staff and volunteers (Teacher/Supervisor, Teacher's Assistant, and Parents/Volunteers) are to accompany the children. A 'head-count' will be taken before the children leave the building, once again upon their arrival in the playground and then periodically while at play. The attendance record sheet will accompany Nursery School staff to the playground.
- The use of the playground (weather permitting) will be noted in the weekly programme plan, which is posted on the bulletin board. The Nursery also has the use of a small gymnasium within Dovercourt Public School. The Nursery owns a number of age appropriate toys for both environments.
- Prior to use by the children, the E.C.E. Supervisor and/or the Teacher's Assistant will inspect the outdoor play area(s). Debris will be raked and removed.
- A Playground Inspection Log will be kept and maintained by Dover Gardens Nursery School staff. Any problems found will be reported to Dovercourt Public School.
- The Supervisor will take the Nursery's First Aid Kit to the playground each and every time the children play in the schoolyard.
- A Playground Injury Report Log will be kept and maintained by Dover Gardens Nursery School staff. This log would not include any injuries that would be defined as a Serious Occurrence.
- Parents and/or caregivers are admitted to pick their children up from the outdoor play area, but are required to inform a Nursery School staff member before they do so.

Appendix H: Behaviour Management Policy

Behaviour management is effective only within the context of the entire curriculum. Ensuring that all curriculum components are of high quality can prevent behaviour problems. Being consistent in behaviour management techniques is also crucial to its effectiveness.

Teachers and parents must be familiar with both the goals of the curriculum and these behaviour management guidelines. All staff and co-op members are expected to read these guidelines carefully, implement them when working with the children and comply with the Behaviour Management Guidelines and Policy outlined below.

Prohibited Practices

Dover Gardens Nursery School does **not** permit the following practices in response to any child's behaviour:

- corporal punishment of a child
- deliberate, harsh or degrading measures to be used on a child that would humiliate or undermine a child's self respect
- deprivation of a child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding
- lock or permit to be locked for the purpose of confining a child, the exits of a day nursery operated by the operator or location where private-home day care is provided by the operator
- use a locked or lockable room or structure to confine a child who has been withdrawn from other children

Behaviour Management Monitoring

All parents and staff will be monitored for their compliance with the Behaviour Management Policy. A record of this monitoring will be made in the Behaviour Management Log twice a year, specifically during the month of December and April. Parents on the Executive Board are responsible for monitoring all paid staff, while the ECE Supervisor is responsible for monitoring the parents and classroom volunteers.

This monitoring process helps us all keep the behaviour management techniques at a conscious level and will encourage us to support each other in our work in the classroom.

Behaviour Management Guidelines

Rationale

Children have the right to quality care. This means that their environment must be safe and healthy, and the people caring for them must provide learning opportunities to promote growth and development.

To ensure a child's safety and well being, and to foster social and emotional development, it is necessary at times to impose limits or set standards of acceptable behaviour. In order to do this successfully adults need to be guided by knowledge and understanding of a child's growth and development as well as an understanding of the individual child.

For children to become happy, secure members of society, they must learn how to successfully deal with problems in interpersonal relationships. As well as learning self-discipline and inner control, they must also learn positive, constructive ways to interact with other people.

The role of the teacher and parent is to support a child's sense of being a worthwhile person while providing opportunities for the child to learn appropriate ways to interact with others.

Strategies for Preventing Behaviour Problems

There are strategies that can be used to prevent behaviour problems within the components of staff, environment, program, parent involvement, and evaluation. Some examples are outlined below:

Programme

- have a planned daily routine with limited transition times
- provide a variety of developmentally appropriate activities

Environment

- ensure that health and safety standards are met
- use space appropriately

Staff/Parents

- establish a positive relationship with the children
- have reasonable expectations of the children
- communicate these expectations clearly to the children

Parent Involvement

- hold on-going information sessions with parents
- ensure opportunities for parent meetings

Evaluation

- review these guidelines and policy regularly
- hold on-going discussions regarding specific situations as required

Intervention Strategies: A Problem-Solving Approach

Children need the opportunity to explore their environment and discover their capabilities. This involves testing limits and experimenting with social interactions. This experimentation often results in behaviour that adults find unacceptable. Given that these situations will occur, we must develop appropriate intervention strategies.

Children are by nature problem-solvers. Therefore, the intervention strategies we use must reflect a problem-solving approach. The goal of this approach is to guide a child to think out the problem rather than solving the problems for her/him.

The process of problem solving with children involves asking children to identify their problems, to think of alternatives, to predict consequences, and to make decisions. This process must of course be geared to the developmental level of the individual child. The development of problem solving skills can be encouraged even in very young children.

Part of the teacher’s role (and parents in the co-op model) in the problem-solving approach is to establish limits to behaviour to ensure children’s health and safety, and to follow through with logical consequences when these limits are not met.

There are some situations where physical intervention by the teacher is necessary. It is essential that acceptable and unacceptable strategies for physical intervention be clearly stated and understood.

Behaviour Management Techniques

DO	DON'T
Start with prevention . Reasonable expectations, a consistent daily routine, and a developmentally appropriate environment and program can prevent many behaviour problems.	Don't blame the child for behaviour that is the result of inappropriate expectations, daily routine, environment or programme.
Anticipate problems and intervene positively before they happen.	Don't wait for problems to occur.
Use positive language; redirect behaviour by focusing on what the child may, can or should do (i.e. shovels are for digging)	Don't limit directions to what the child cannot or must not do or give over generalised directions (i.e. share)
Encourage and praise desired behaviour.	Don't reinforce unacceptable behaviour by giving direct and indirect attention.
Allow the child choices when possible. If a choice is not possible, then state that clearly (i.e. "It's time to go outside.")	Don't give a choice when there is no choice available.
Forewarn the child of changes in routine or activities and explain expectations of behaviour.	Don't confuse or upset the child by abruptly changing routines or activities and not explaining what will happen next.
Use misbehaviour as an opportunity to teach the child problem-solving skills, to help the child identify problems and feelings, to think of alternative ways of behaving, to understand consequences, and to make decisions.	Don't view misbehaviour as an interpretation or as developmentally inappropriate (all normally developing children test limits).
Set clear, reasonable, and consistent limits .	Don't set unreasonable, excessive limits.
Act with caution, care and respect when enforcing limits:	Don't use unacceptable behaviour management techniques such as:

DO	DON'T
<p>if you must restrain the child, do it calmly and gently and only when the child is in danger of hurting her/himself, others, or property.</p> <p>if you must remove the child from a situation or activity, do it only as a last resort. Make sure the child has been warned and give her/him an alternative activity. Allow the child to return to restricted activity when the child feels she/he can behave in an acceptable manner.</p>	<p>corporal punishment (spanking, slapping, shaking, etc.)</p> <p>harsh or degrading measures that would eliminate or undermine a child's self-respect.</p> <p>deprivation of basic needs (food, clothing, shelter or bedding).</p> <p>isolating a child in a locked or even lockable room.</p> <p>lock (or permit to be locked) the exit of the nursery for the purposes of confining a child.</p>
<p>Discuss difficult situations with the Parent-teacher Liaison parent. Remember that the staff and the parent work in partnership, working together is in the best interest of the child.</p>	<p>Don't work in isolation</p>

Non-compliance by a parent

In the event that a parent fails to comply with the Behaviour Management Guidelines, the following action will be taken:

First consideration will be given to the following factors:

- seriousness of the offence
- potential risk of harm to a child
- past and present performance
- frequency of the occurrence
- previous action taken

Initially a review of the policy will take place between the teacher and parent. The teacher will advise the parent and provide guidance, working with the parent to help them implement a more positive strategy.

If the initial incident involved the use of a prohibited practice, as outlined on page 26 of the appendices to the Parent Handbook, the parent-teacher liaison and the executive committee will also attend the initial review.

A written record of the incident will be made in the monitoring log for behaviour management.

Follow up reports of the parent's ability to comply with the behaviour management guidelines will be noted in the log on a monthly basis for three months following the incident.

After three incidents of non-compliance the parent, teacher, parent-teacher liaison and the Executive Board will meet to devise a course of action to help the parent comply with the behaviour guidelines of the nursery school.

Further incidents involving an unacceptable behaviour management technique will result in forfeiture of membership; or in the case of a staff member, dismissal.

Non-compliance by the teacher

If the teacher is non-compliant with the Behaviour Management Guidelines the Executive Board of the nursery school will act in the role of the teacher for the procedures listed above. The initial report in this case will be written in the log by a co-op parent who observed the incident(s).

All staff/parent members will review these guidelines and sign their agreement to comply with them, on a yearly basis, and prior to any interaction with the children.

Appendix I: Child Abuse Policy and Procedures

Purpose of the Policy and Procedures

Dover Gardens Co-operative Nursery School is committed to taking a pro-active position regarding the prevention of child abuse through:

- on going observation of the children in our care
- professional education with respect to early identification, effective response and adherence to legal obligations, including reporting
- keeping abreast of developments in legislation and relevant issues
- communication with, and support of the child and family
- working with other community service providers

The policy and procedures are designed to make staff, parents and any volunteers aware of their responsibilities for the recognition, reporting and documentation of suspicions of child abuse. The entire policy is available in the school and will be reviewed annually at the Orientation Meeting.

Legal Requirements

The Child and Family Services Act (Section 72)
Day Nurseries Act

Duty to Report

In accordance with the Child and Family Services Act it is the responsibility of every person in Ontario including a person who performs professional or official duties with respect to children, to immediately report to a Children's Aid Society if s/he suspects that child abuse has occurred or if a child is at risk of abuse. This includes any operator, employee, or volunteer of a day nursery. An individual's responsibility to report cannot be delegated to anyone else. A child is defined as a person from birth until his/her 16th birthday.

Failure to Report

It is an offence under the Child and Family Services Act for a professional to contravene one's reporting responsibilities. The penalty imposed (a fine of up to \$1000) emphasizes that a child's safety must take precedence over all other concerns.

Confidentiality

The duty to report suspicions of child abuse overrides the provisions of confidentiality in any other statute, specifically those provisions that would otherwise prohibit disclosure by a professional or official. The only exception to this is solicitor/client privilege.

Protection from Liability

All persons making a report of suspected child abuse are protected against civil action, unless that person is proven to have acted "...maliciously or without reasonable grounds for the belief or suspicion..."

The Day Nurseries Act

The Day Nurseries Act requires behaviour management policies and procedures to be in place, which can be found in the Appendices of the Dover Gardens Nursery School Handbook. It is also a requirement under the legislation that if a staff person is suspected of abusing a child, the Ministry of Community and Social Services be notified within 24 hours and a Serious Occurrence Report submitted. The specifics regarding Serious Occurrences can also be found in the Nursery School's Handbook.

The complete procedure for making a report of suspected child abuse is on file in the classroom and with the Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator. This procedure will be reviewed at the Orientation meeting. This procedure **MUST** be followed when abuse or neglect is suspected.

Appendix J: Health and Safety Policy

Health Issues

Immunization Policy

- No child may attend the school without providing up to date immunization records or submitting a completed 'Exemption from Immunization' form;
- All teachers and caregivers who are to perform duty days must also, in addition to providing up to date immunization records, provide proof that they do not have TB (chest x-ray or skin test conducted by your doctor).
- All immunization and health records are kept in child's file, which is maintained by the E.C.E. Supervisor.

Medications

- Any required medication should be administered by a parent prior to dropping off their child in the programme. Teachers are not permitted to give your child any medication or drug.
- The only exception to this rule is for emergency administration of drugs (e.g. asthma inhalers or allergy-related epi-pen). In this case, parents must fill out the required forms authorizing teachers to administer such treatments. Teachers will record the administration of the drug/treatment in a logbook kept with the first aid kit.

Allergies

Allergen Awareness

The Nursery School supplies the snack food that is served during the program. There is an Allergies and Food Restriction list on the back of the shopping list which is provided to the parent shopper. This list is also posted in the classroom in the food preparation area.

Parents must consult with the teachers before supplying food or craft materials to the class.

Anaphylactic Policy

It is the responsibility of the anaphylactic/potentially anaphylactic child's parent to inform the Supervisor of the child's allergy. The Supervisor will ensure that an Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan is completed for each child. This plan is to include a recent photograph of the child and parental signature. All staff and volunteers need to be aware and review the policy before interacting with the children.

Location of the EpiPens

EpiPens are to be stored in the Field Trip bags which accompanies the children at all time (outside, gym, fieldtrips etc). A copy of the Anaphylactic Plan for each child will also be in the bag.

Children who no longer require an EpiPen must present a signed letter of explanation from their allergist.

Treatment Protocol

- i. One person stays with the injured child at all times(E.C.E)
- ii. One person goes for help(Duty Parent)
- iii. E.C.E removes other children from the area (if needed).
- iv. E.C.E with the child is to administer epinephrine at the first sign of reaction however slight (e.g. itching or swelling of the lips)

Note time of Administration

- v. Call 911 and contact the child's parents. E.C.E must remain with the child until parent arrives. If ambulance arrives before parent, E.C.E will accompany the child to the hospital.

Training

Staff, duty parents and volunteer will complete an awareness session including a demonstration on the use of the EpiPen. This procedure will be reviewed each time a new child with an EpiPen is enrolled in the Nursery.

Injury/Accident Reports

In the unlikely event of injury, the teachers will provide first aid then contact the child's parents. Where the child requires treatment beyond first aid, the incident is to be treated as a Serious Occurrence and the procedures in Serious Occurrence Policy (Appendix K) followed.

Outbreak Contingency Plan

Dover Gardens must also report any possible or confirm case of communicable diseases listed in the Toronto Public Health's Guidelines (posted in the class). Public Health must be notified with the first possible case of a communicable disease. An outbreak is when two or more cases of an infectious disease are reported in a 30-day period. In such a situation, the school follows the procedure below:

- Notify the Co-ordinator
- Contact the parents of the symptomatic children and advise them to seek medical attention
- The Supervisor contacts Toronto Public Health (TPH) to obtain relevant information regarding the outbreak (e.g. possible preventative measures, treatments, need to seek medical attention)
- A notice is posted on the front door for parents to advise them of the situation and provide any information recommended by Toronto Public Health

Animals

Animals are not to be brought into the classroom, unless all staff, parents and volunteers agree and appropriate precautions are taken.

Smoke-Free-Nursery – Smoke-Free Ontario Act

Dover Gardens Nursery School is a **Smoke Free** School.

No staff/parent/student is permitted to smoke in the class, washroom, playground or on any trips.

Non-Compliance

In the event that a staff/parent/student fails to comply with the Smoke –Free School Policy, the following action will be taken.

Initially review of the policy will take place between the teacher and the parent/student.

There will be a note placed in the person's file as a verbally warning.

Second non-compliant, is a written warning.

Third non-compliant will result in forfeiture of membership or in the case of staff member, dismissal.

Non-compliance by the teacher

If the teacher is non-compliant with the Smoke-free Policy, the Executive Board of the nursery school will act in the role of the teacher for the procedures listed above.

Management of infectious & communicable diseases

- If a child should begin to show signs of illness, he/ she will be removed promptly to behind the supervisors' desk area; a cot will be provided so that the child can rest.
- All toys/ puzzles the child was playing with will be removed for disinfecting.
- Signs of illness may include: fever/ vomiting/ diarrhea/ coughing/ wheezing/ rash/ spots, etc.
- The parent/ guardian will be called immediately and arrangements will be made to have the child picked up.
- Children who become ill during class will be removed to behind the supervisors' desk.
- Staff who become ill during class will be sent home immediately.

Reporting Of Designated Diseases to Public Health

As posted on the list of reportable infectious & communicable diseases, the supervisor will be responsible for reporting cases to Toronto Public Health (Communicable Disease Reporting phone number 416-392-7411)

Safety

Leaving the classroom with children/missing children

- Children must always be accompanied by a teacher, assistant or duty parent when leaving the classroom or the group when playing outside or in the gym
- The supervisor will periodically conduct a head count of the children while in and outside of the classroom
- In the event that a child is missing:
 - The Missing Child Procedures, found in Appendix M will be implemented immediately
 - This is a serious occurrence, which must be reported according to the Serious Occurrence Policy in Appendix K

First Aid Kit

The First Aid Kit, including latex gloves, etc. is kept in the right hand side of the marked filing cabinet. This cabinet will be unlocked everyday prior to the arrival of children. The First Aid Kit is taken to the gym and/or outside with the children.

Fire Safety

- Parents will be advised of the fire drill procedure at the orientation
- Fire drills will be conducted monthly
- In case of a fire emergency, the children shall be taken to the Dovercourt Boys and Girls Club, located at 180 Westmoreland Avenue (North-west corner of Dovercourt Park).

Flushing for Lead –Safe Drinking Water Act

All plumbing is to be flushed at the beginning of each week, before the children enter the program.

All toilets are to be flushed every week before the children enter the program.

Procedure

Each of the taps and each of the sinks are run weekly. The water is to run for at least five minutes. Flushing is to be recorded (time date, and signature of the person flushing the system) every time. These records are to be kept for six years.

Annually between May 1st and October 31st, the water will be tested by an independent water laboratory. If a notice of lead exceedance is received, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Environment (Action Spills Center) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services will be contacted within 24 hours.

All directions of Public Health would be followed.

Appendix K: Serious Occurrence Policy

All Dover Gardens Nursery School staff, parents and volunteers are to be aware of what constitutes a “Serious Occurrence”, and what is the reporting procedure. Staff, parents and volunteers shall follow the procedures below in the event of a serious occurrence.

In addition, Enhanced Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures are to be followed when emergency services (i.e. police, fire and/or ambulance) are used in response to a **serious** incident involving a client of the Ministry of Community and Social Services or the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, **and/or** the incident is likely to result in **significant public or media attention**. Dover Gardens’ Enhanced Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedure can be found in Appendix L.

Definitions

A **serious occurrence** is defined as the following:

1. The **death** of a child while participating at the centre.
2. Any **serious injury** to a child while participating at the centre.
 - a. ‘Serious injury’ is defined as any injury in which medical attention (doctor, x-ray, dentist, hospital emergency room, etc.) is judged to be necessary.
 - i. any injury or other occurrence that requires additional medical treatment after the provision of first aid
 - ii. any occurrence where there is any risk to the child’s health and safety
 - iii. possibility of concussion resulting from a fall
 - iv. possibility of stitches resulting from a gaping cut and/or persistent bleeding
 - v. possibility of fractures or broken bones
 - vi. convulsions, high fever, shortness of breath, or difficulty in breathing and severe allergic reactions
 - vii. bite (human or animal) resulting in breaking of skin and bleeding
 - viii. puncture wound caused from rusted nail, etc. where tetanus shot may be required
 - b. Serious Injury includes:
 - i. Any injury to a child caused by staff, students or parent volunteers of the centre.

- ii. A serious accidental injury received while in attendance at the center and/or while receiving care from staff, students or parent volunteers at the centre.
 - iii. Any injury to a child which is non-accidental including self-inflicted, or unexplained, and which requires treatment by a medical practitioner, including a nurse or dentist.
- 3. Any alleged **abuse** or mistreatment of a child, which occurs while at the centre. This includes all allegations of abuse or mistreatment of a child against staff, students or parent volunteers at the centre.
- 4. Any situation where the child is **missing**, even if the child is missing within the centre; regardless of the amount of time the child has been missing.
- 5. Fire or other **disaster** occurring on the premises.
- 6. Any **complaint** made by or about a child, or any other serious occurrence concerning a child that is considered to be of a serious nature.
- 7. Any complaint concerning operational, physical or safety **standards of service** that is considered by the centre to be of a serious nature.

Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures

Supervisory staff is responsible for determining whether an incident fits the definition of a Serious Occurrence. They are also responsible for the reporting procedure.

If Supervisory staff is unavailable, senior E.C.E. staff will initiate the process and alert the Nursery's Co-ordinator and Supervisory staff as soon as possible.

- If the occurrence involves the abuse of a child; refer to Dover Gardens Child Abuse Policy and Procedures (Appendix I) and reporting procedures below.
- If the occurrence involves injury of a child; refer to First Aid Procedure and reporting procedures below.
- If the occurrence involves the physical centre; refer to Dover Gardens' Emergency Evacuation Procedures (Appendix N) and the reporting procedure below.

Reporting

The following procedures will be followed in the case of a serious occurrence:

1. Any first aid that can be administered on site must be done so immediately.

2. The Supervisor contacts the appropriate agencies, as required (police, fire department, paramedics, Children's Aid Services, and/or coroner). If an ambulance is required the Supervisor accompanies the child to the hospital.
3. Anyone who witnesses a serious occurrence must report it at once to the Supervisor.
4. The duty parent ensures that any persons having knowledge of the occurrence remains present until excused by the Supervisor.
5. The Supervisor contacts the parents or guardians of the child, Principal of Dovercourt Public School, and Dover Gardens Nursery School's Co-ordinator.
6. The Supervisor contacts the City of Toronto Serious Occurrence Line **416-397-7359** within 24 hours, ideally on the same day. (If the City staff are not available, leave a message to return the call. If the call is not returned, call again and document the time of calls. If the City is closed for the day, the report can be made the following day, but only if not extremely serious.)
7. To report an extremely serious occurrence after hours e.g. the death of a child, a consultant can be paged at **416-772-4574**.
8. Once the telephone report has been made, the Supervisor and any witnesses write a Serious Occurrence Inquiry Report. The report must be submitted to the City of Toronto, Children's Services within seven (7) working days, even if it is incomplete. A copy must also be submitted to the Executive Board of Dover Gardens Nursery School. (According to FIPPA, only the first name and first initial of the last name of all people involved are required on the report.)

Serious Occurrence Inquiry Reports

Serious Occurrence Inquiry Reports must include:

1. a detailed description of occurrence
2. any allegations if applicable
3. date, time, and place where it occurred
4. reporting time
5. reason for the occurrence (if known)
6. people involved
7. any action taken
8. current status
9. parties involved (Police, Children's Aid Services, etc.)
10. further action recommended; both specific to occurrence and/or related to underlying factors

Additional serious occurrence reports can be obtained by calling the Programme Consultant at the City of Toronto, Children's Services Division.

Annual Reporting

A semi-annual report must be completed and kept on file by each Nursery/Childcare Centre even if there has not been a serious occurrence report during the reporting period.

New Policy Requirement

Effective November 1, 2011 Dover Gardens will be required to complete the following:

- Post a high-level Serious Occurrence Notification Form at the nursery when a serious occurrence has happened.

New Serious Occurrence Notification Form:

The Serious Occurrence Notification Form will be posted on the bulletin board near the entrance door. Following submission of the serious occurrence Initial Notification Report (INR) to the ministry and within 24 hours of becoming aware of an occurrence.

OR

When the Supervisor deems the occurrence to be serious as set out under the MCSS/MCYS 2009 Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures, the supervisor will complete a Serious Occurrence Notification Form to communicate information to parents about serious occurrences that have occurred in the centre.

The exception is in the case of allegations of abuse or unverified complaints, which will be posted at the completion of follow-up/investigation.

- The Serious Occurrence Notification Form is updated as the Supervisor takes additional actions or investigations are completed.
- The Serious Occurrence Notification Form is posted for a minimum of 10 business days.
- If the form is updated with additional information such as additional action taken by the Supervisor, the form remains posted for 10 days from the date of the update.
- The Supervisor shall retain the Serious Occurrence form for at least 2 years from the date of the occurrence and make the forms available for current and prospective parents, licensing and municipal children's services staff upon request.

Directions Pertaining to Posting Allegations of Abuse and Complaints:

Serious Occurrence Notification Forms pertaining to allegations of abuse are posted when the following have been concluded:

- The Children's Aid Society has concluded its investigation and the allegation is either verified or not verified
- OR
- Children's Aid Society has determined that an investigation will not be conducted
- AND
- The ministry has investigated any associated licensing non-compliances.

Protection of Personal Information and Privacy:

The Supervisor must ensure the information posted in the Serious Occurrence Notification Form protects personal information and privacy.

To help support the protection of privacy and personal information, no child or staff names, initials and age or birth date are to be used on the Serious Occurrence Notification Form.

No age group identifiers are to be used. eg. Preschool room, toddler room.

Appendix L: Enhanced Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures

The Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Children's and Youth Services often times are called upon to speak publicly where matters of client well-being or public safety become a concern. The Ministries must be prepared to respond in a timely manner to maintain public confidence in the delivery of services to Ontario's vulnerable children and adults.

The Enhanced Serious Occurrence Reporting Policy and Procedure is made to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. It is a provincially mandated requirement.

All Serious Occurrences will continue to be reported to the City of Toronto in accordance with the current Serious Occurrence Reporting Policy and Procedures **FOUND IN APPENDIX K.**

The Enhanced Serious Occurrence Reporting Policy and Procedures will be followed and implemented when **EMERGENCY SERVICES (Police, Fire, and /or Ambulance)** are used in response to a **SIGNIFICANT** incident involving a client of the Ministry of Community and Social Services or the Ministry of Children and Youth Services AND /OR the incident is likely to result in **SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC OR MEDIA ATTENTION.**

Designated Authority

1. Dover Gardens' E.C.E Supervisor is the Designated Authority responsible for ascertaining whether a serious situation/occurrence should be handled with Enhanced Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures, or with Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures. In the E.C.E Supervisor's absence, the role of Designated Authority falls to the most senior staff member on duty that day. A parent volunteer is NOT authorized to make the determination between a Serious Occurrence and an Enhanced Serious Occurrence.
2. Once Dover Gardens' staff have made a determination that the situation warrants Enhanced Serious Occurrence Reporting, the E.C.E Supervisor, (or in his/her absence the most senior staff person), will ensure that the Ministry's early alert system is notified **within 3 hours** of becoming aware of the incident.

Procedure to be followed for Reporting

1. The following reporting will be followed around the clock on weekdays, weekends and Government Holidays.
2. Once the Enhanced Serious Reporting Procedures have been completed, Dover Gardens' staff will then follow normal Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedures and report to the City of Toronto. (The City of Toronto will then follow-up with Dover Gardens to ensure proper issues management occurs, as appropriate.) See Appendix K for detailed Serious Occurrence Reporting Policy and Procedures.
3. The Supervisor (or most senior staff person) will notify the Ministry by Facsimile. If facsimile is not available, the notification shall be made by telephone. The facsimile and telephone numbers to be used are listed below.

WEEKDAYS/EVENINGS/OVERNIGHT

From Sunday 9:00 p.m. to Friday 5:00p.m.

Fax (416) 327-0044

Phone (416) 325-0575

WEEKENDS AND GOVERNMENT HOLIDAYS

From Friday 5:00 p.m. to Sunday 9:00 p.m.

Fax 1-866-262-8881

Phone 1-877-444-0424

4. The Serious Occurrence Initial Notification Report will be used when first filing a report. It is kept in the Nursery School's filing cabinet.
5. When providing a report by telephone, Dover Gardens Designated Authority (the Supervisor or Senior Staff) will either speak to a Ministry Official or will know that the report has been left on the appropriate voice mail based on the voice message introduction (which clearly states that it is the message center for the early alert system).
6. When a Serious Occurrence Initial Notification is faxed, Dover Gardens Designated Authority (The Supervisor or Senior Staff) will also telephone the early alert system and leave a voice message including the following information:
 - State that a Serious Occurrence Initial Notification Report was faxed
 - State the time and date of the fax.
 - State the name and telephone number of the designated authority who completed the serious occurrence initial notification report.

If the Ministry's early alert system cannot find the fax, Dover Gardens' Designated Authority will be contacted by telephone and asked to re-send the report.

Appendix M: Missing Child Procedure

A CHILD WHO IS UNACCOUNTED FOR, IN ANY INSTANCE, IS TO BE PRESUMED "MISSING" AND THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURE MUST BE PUT INTO PLACE IMMEDIATELY.

Child Missing From the Premises

1. Staff will alert the Nursery School supervisor immediately. In the Supervisor's absence, the most senior staff member will assume the Supervisor's role.
2. The Supervisor shall approach all staff and parent volunteers on duty to see whether the child is with them.
3. If the child is still not found; Dovercourt Public School's office will be notified. All available adults in the nursery (including staff if ratio allows) shall search the entire school building including washrooms, storage rooms, upper levels, basement, etc.
4. At this time, children and staff should return to the nursery playroom if they are in the gym or outside in the playground.
5. The search will also include the playgrounds and outdoor sheds.
6. If the child is not located within 10 minutes, '911' is to be called followed by the child's parents and the Board Coordinator.
7. All available adults are expected to continue searching the building while awaiting '911' assistance. The search area is to be widened to include Dovercourt Park and surrounding streets. One staff member or parent volunteer is to remain in the nursery to receive any incoming calls with regards to the missing child, and supply '911' personnel with relevant information.
8. Upon arrival of '911' personnel, all staff shall follow their instructions.
9. A Serious Occurrence Report must be completed and the Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedure must be followed. See Appendix K.

Child Missing on a Field Trip

Staff must ensure that the following items are within their possession before going on a walk or field trip:

- Cell phone
- First Aid kit
- Child Description Sheet
- Emergency Contact names and numbers

If a child is presumed missing on a field trip staff will initiate the following actions:

1. Staff will separate into two groups: One group will supervise the children to sit down in a separate area from the general public and the other group will do a quick check of the immediate area.
2. If the child cannot be found, the appropriate security facility on location shall be notified immediately and staff will follow their directions. If a security facility is not on location, staff will conduct a further search themselves.
3. If the missing child is not found within 10 minutes of conducting a search, '911' is to be called. The Programme Coordinator is then to be contacted. The Co-ordinator or his/her designate will then contact the parents.
4. Staff that are not supervising the children are expected to continue searching the area while waiting for '911' assistance. The search area is to be expanded to include as much of the facility/location as possible. One staff member or parent volunteer is to keep possession of the cell phone to receive any incoming calls with regards to the missing child, and to await the arrival of the '911' personnel and supplying them with relevant information.
5. Upon arrival of '911' personnel, all staff shall follow their instructions.
6. A Serious Occurrence Report must be completed and the Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedure must be followed. See Appendix K.

Appendix N: Emergency Evacuation Procedures

In the case of an emergency situation that makes the Nursery unsafe, the children will be evacuated from Dovercourt Public School to Dover Gardens' pre-arranged alternative location.

Before evacuating the Nursery, the following steps are to be taken:

1. The Supervisor will contact the Principal's office and/or the Caretaking staff to discuss the situation.
2. The Supervisor will report her findings to the other Staff and/or Duty Parent(s).
3. The Supervisor will decide whether to evacuate or if it is appropriate to remain in the Nursery.
4. If the decision is to evacuate, the Supervisor will gather the attendance clipboard, emergency contact information box, and the first aid box.
5. At that time, Staff and/or the Duty Parent(s) will assist the children in getting ready to evacuate the building.
6. Staff to follow the route to the alternative site that is posted in the classroom.
7. Once the children are settled at the alternative site, the Supervisor and/or Staff will call parents/caregivers to arrange to pick-up their children.

In the event of an evacuation of the Nursery School, a Serious Occurrence Report must be completed. Do so by following the Serious Occurrence Reporting Procedure found in Appendix K.

Appendix O: Dress Code Policy

Dover Gardens is a place of business where you will be working with young children and dealing with members of the community. We ask that all members of the co-operative and staff dress accordingly.

Apparel

- Any type of cut-off clothing including those with ragged edges or with holes
- Short shorts , micro mini skirts and sweat suits are not acceptable
- Any type of provocative, tight-fitting, revealing, sheer or see through clothing (unless accompanied with clothing underneath)

Footwear

- Please wear practical footwear

First and foremost, we want you to be comfortable when you are performing your job. Please keep in mind the active nature of the cooperative.

Appendix P: Conflict Resolution Policy

The following guidelines have been prepared by the Board in order to clarify a process by which problems, concerns or disputes arising within Dover Gardens can be resolved.

- The Complainant must write a letter that clearly records the facts of the situation and must register this letter with the Membership Coordinator (or a valid alternative Board Member if the Membership Coordinator is not available or is involved) who will act as a 3rd party in the conflict resolution process.
- The Membership Coordinator will initiate the problem solving process with the parties involved and will formally respond with a course of action to the complainant in writing within 48 hours.
- If this does not resolve the problem, the letter will be sent to the Board. The Board will discuss the complaint and make a joint decision. Response to the Complainant will be in writing within 48 hours.
- If the problem is still unresolved the next step in the grievance process will be a joint meeting with the Board, the Complainant and the Membership. The Parties involved will be asked to give their grievance and may be asked to leave so the Membership can discuss the matter at hand. A final resolution will be sought.
- If a final resolution cannot be agreed to by all then the decision of the Board is final.

Appendix Q: Celebration of the Parental Role

Dover Gardens Nursery School has recently changed how Mother's and Father's Days are approached. This change was made to have a more inclusive celebration of parents/caregivers in parental roles (in a different way from Family Day which is celebrated in February) and hence the school will celebrate all parent(s)/grandparent(s)/guardian(s) in parental roles who are the primary caregivers at home.

Why?

- Celebrating traditional Mother's / Father's day makes the assumption that having one mother and one father is the norm and, by extension, the most acceptable family structure.
- This excludes families such as: same-sex parents, single parents, blended families, adoption, foster families, families where a parent has died or moved away.
- Typical Mother's/Father's day classroom activities tend to reinforce stereotypical gender roles (i.e. all moms prefer flowers and do the cooking while all dads wear ties or go fishing).

In previous years at Dover Garden's Nursery School, children made presents for Mother's and Father's Days and were told that if they didn't have a mother or father they could give their gift to a "special person" in their life (i.e. an aunt or uncle). Although well-intentioned, this approach serves to highlight a lack or deficiency in the student's family. To quote Sudie Hofmann in *Framing the Family Tree*:

"...this approach has the potential to **increase** feelings of alienation and discomfort, not minimize them. Telling a student to select someone else in his or her life who is a close approximation to the person that the majority of students in the class will choose, does not ameliorate the situation."

Dover Gardens already has a Bias-Free Policy that states:

"Dover Gardens Co-operative Nursery School is a non-discriminatory, non-profit, non-political, and non-denominational organization.

Dover Gardens' Bias Free Policy recognizes the dignity and worth of every person and ensures equal rights for all, without discrimination on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed or religious beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, handicap, age, family status, marital status or class."

The Board of Directors at Dover Gardens wanted to ensure that our celebration of parenting/caregiving is a natural extension of these existing policies.

The New Approach

After consulting with Karleen Pendleton Jimenez who researches Queer Issues in Education at Trent University, the Board at Dover Gardens agreed to make the following changes:

- In the classroom, we will have an event (or series of events/activities) that recognize parenting or caregiving instead of Mother's / Father's Days. These might include: books with diverse families, crafts, stories, etc.
- We will do this at a time in between Mother's Day in May and Father's Day in June
- This will create teachable moments that all families are different and equally good; as well as allowing for people who want to recognize this important day within their families.
- This will also avoid gender stereotyping (which Mother's/Father's days usually do), such as that all moms prefer flowers while all dads prefer working with tools or sports.