



## PARENT HANDBOOK 2022-2023 School Year

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## ABOUT SOL SHINE NATURE PRESCHOOL

### **Who we are**

Sol Shine Nature Preschool offers a Forest Kindergarten program for children ages three to six. We utilize the rich diversity of the Yakima Area Arboretum as our classroom.

The Arboretum provides the ideal environment for our students to develop critical early childhood skills alongside a deep connection with the natural world.

### **Mission**

The mission of Sol Shine Nature Preschool is to provide a natural setting for children to attend an exceptional preschool where they will learn and grow while at the same time inspiring them to love nature. With a Forest Kindergarten program, our students are encouraged to play and learn based on their interests. Teachers act as guides who provide naturalist information, ask probing questions, and inspire students to be curious in a safe and nurturing environment.

### **Philosophy**

We believe that the ideal classroom for preschool age children is outside in nature. Nature plays an important role in the cognitive, creative, physical, emotional, and social development of young children. Children who spend time in nature are healthier, can think more clearly, have an easier time paying attention, and have the ability to cope more effectively with stress.

We believe in the inherent value of play. Children learn best through direct hands-on experiences. At Sol Shine, our students fill their days with authentic play experiences led by their own interests. These experiences help our children to grow and refine their skills in problem-solving, persistence, invention, and initiative.

We believe that children need time to just be themselves. Not only do they need to time to play, but they need time to work on social skills with other children in a safe and nurturing environment. We help our students become socially competent and have self-confidence which gives them a solid foundation for future success.

We believe that an inquiry-based teaching style is best. Asking probing questions gets children thinking at higher levels and promotes curiosity.

We believe in regular reflection with our students about their experiences at Sol Shine. We set aside time for our students to discuss, ask questions and document things that have happened and what we've observed.

### **What is a Forest Kindergarten?**

Sol Shine operates as a true Forest Kindergarten (or Waldkindergarten) program. By definition, a Forest Kindergarten is a type of preschool that is held almost exclusively outdoors. Our students spend their time outside, rain or shine. We educate parents and students on appropriate dress so every day is a success regardless of the weather. Sol Shine's founder and director, Colleen Smith

was trained and certified by the United States first Forest Kindergarten founder, the late Erin Kenny of Cedarsong Nature School. Following "The Cedarsong Way", the key principles of our Forest Kindergarten include:

Total Nature Immersion (unstructured free time in nature)

Interest-led Flow Learning\*

Emergent Curriculum\*

Place-Based Education

Inquiry-Based Teaching Style

Positive Reinforcement Approach

Emphasis on Individual Empowerment and Group Bonding

Respect for others, self and the living earth

Small class sizes

Low student : teacher ratio

\*see Program Information for details

## **Program Information**

### Forest Kindergarten Curriculum

Nature immersion is defined as unstructured free time in nature resulting in an intimate, deep and personal connection to the nature world. At Sol Shine, our students experience nature immersion every day.

Interest-led flow learning gives our children the chance to take the lead. As they move through nature, something typically piques their interest. While the child is interacting with the subject, teachers must step back and let the child explore. Teachers are in a position to give naturalist information, ask questions or simply observe. Sol Shine teachers honor this opportunity for children to learn about what they find interesting. This process leads to emergent curriculum for our students. It is emergent because there is no set plan for the day, so what the students choose to do spend their time learning about is what our curriculum will be. Also, it leads to a unique experience for each child.

Sol Shine is modeled after the gold-standard of Forest Kindergartens, Cedarsong Nature School. From Erin Kenny's book *The Cedarsong Way*, "The learning that arises through children's authentic and organic play ensures that their own interests are guiding their education. In my experience, it is obvious that the more children are interested in something, the more information about that thing they will retain. Children have an enormous capacity for taking in and cataloging information; however they have to be interested first in order for that learning to be meaningful. I have also discovered that children learn more and retain information better if they are having fun while the information is being dispensed."

## **Facilities**

Sol Shine is located within the 47-acre grounds of the Yakima Area Arboretum. It is an ideal site for our students to truly connect with nature as the majority of our time is spent within the natural parts of the arboretum (not landscaped). Additionally, Sol Shine students and families have access to:

Jones Center - Daily drop off/pick up location, student cubby area inside, inside used to warm up and have lunch on extreme weather days.

Restrooms - Sol Shine students and staff use the restroom facility located next to the Jones Center to the south.

## **Contact Information**

### Website

www.solshinenp.com

### Physical Location

Sol Shine Nature Preschool

1401 Arboretum Drive

Yakima, WA 98901

### Mailing Address

Sol Shine Nature Preschool

PO Box 924

Yakima, WA 98907

Colleen Smith, Sol Shine Director

phone: 509-833-7474

email: colleen@solshinenp.com

## **Parent/Teacher Communication**

We believe that good communication between parents and teachers is essential for the success of our students and our preschool. Good parent/teacher communication will ensure that we are able to identify and meet the needs of our students and the expectations of their parents.

In addition to the ongoing dialogue between parents and teachers regarding daily school happenings, we will also utilize various other forms of communication to keep parents informed about individual, class, and school news. The following are some of the ways in which we will communicate events, progress, and general news about our students and our preschool:

- a. Monthly eNewsletters: These will keep parents informed about what their child has been learning, special events, and other important information.
- b. Email: Preschool staff will use email to relay information to parents about issues such as school closings and other important information. Parents may email the director at any time with questions or concerns.
- c. Telephone: Our director Colleen Smith is available to speak with parents by telephone when needed. Parents will be provided with all relevant preschool phone numbers.
- d. Conferences: Parents may sign up for one-on-one conferences with their child's teachers to discuss developmental progress twice a year (fall and spring).
- e. Meetings: Parents may also schedule a meeting with their child's teachers and/or the preschool director at any time during the school year.
- f. Parent Questions, Suggestions, and Concerns: We encourage parents to discuss any questions or concerns they may have with their child's teachers and the preschool director. We do ask parents to reserve discussion of more detailed matters for after preschool hours, so that the teachers may

ensure the safety of the children during school time and offer their full attention to parent concerns. We encourage parents to share any relevant information concerning their child that will help teachers to better meet that child's needs, such as major changes in a family situation or recent changes in the child's health, behavior, or disposition. We welcome parents to check on their child at any time during the preschool day.

## **Schedule**

The following program options are available:

Monday/Wednesday 9:00am - 12:30 pm

Tuesday/Thursday 9:00am - 12:30 pm

Sol Shine's hours of operation are Monday through Thursday from 9:00am-12:30pm. Our preschool year runs from early September through mid June. We follow the Yakima School District calendar for holidays, school breaks, and weather-related closings.

A typical day at Sol Shine begins at 9:00am when the children arrive for preschool. This is the time when parents drop off their child at the Jones Center. A teacher will be there to greet you and your child. Goodbyes are supported by the teachers as necessary. We understand that the separation of parent and child can be difficult for both, and we are ready to provide whatever support may be needed. Over the years, we've observed that the most successful goodbyes between parent and child are direct and quick.

Daily Schedule is as follows:

9:00 - 9:10 am	Student drop off
9:00 - 11:00 am	Students engage in nature immersion under supervision of teachers.
11:00 - 11:20 am	Snack time, guided reflection about learning experiences while students eat.
11:20 - 12:30 pm	Students continue nature immersion, return to pick up area at Jones Center shortly before 12:30pm to gather belongings and add a "Nature Notes" journal entry.
12:30 -12:40 pm	Student pick up

### **Holidays and School Closings**

Sol Shine follows the Yakima Public Schools schedule for holidays, school breaks, and weather-related closings (see below for our Inclement Weather Policy).

### **Inclement Weather/Air Quality Policy**

Information about weather-related school closures will be communicated to preschool families via email as early in the day as possible.

If weather creates unsafe driving conditions or road closures that affect entry to the Arboretum, school will likely be cancelled.

In the event of high winds preschool may be cancelled or parents may be contacted for an early pick-up.

If the air quality index (AQI) for Yakima (specifically the sensor at the Arboretum or closest sensor) is reading UNHEALTHY FOR SENSITIVE GROUPS (AQI = 101 or higher) at 8:00 am the school day will be cancelled. You may check the reading online at [www.purpleair.com](http://www.purpleair.com)

Any regularly scheduled day that is cancelled due to inclement weather or poor air quality will either be refunded or the day made up at a later date.

If you are still unsure as to whether or not preschool will be in session on any given day, you may get in touch with us directly as follows:

- Call or text our director, Colleen Smith on her personal cell phone - 509-833-7474
- Email - [Colleen@solshinenp.com](mailto:Colleen@solshinenp.com)

## 2021-2022 Preschool Year Calendar

Please make note of these important dates:

September 7	Popsicle social for M/W Class (4:30pm-6:00pm)
September 8	Popsicle social for T/Th Class (4:30pm-6:00pm)
September 12	First day of school for M/W Program
September 13	First day of school for T/Th Program
October 27	Halloween Costume Dress Up Day (T/TH Program)
October 31	Halloween Costume Dress Up Day (M/W Program)
Oct 31 - Nov 3	Fall Parent/Teacher Conferences (scheduled for after school and evenings)
November 21-24	Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 19 - Jan 3	Holiday Break
January 4	School resumes
January 16	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - No School
February 21	Presidents Day Holiday - No School
February 20 - 23	Mid-Winter Break - No School
March 27 - 30	Spring Parent/Teacher Conferences
April 3 - 6	Spring Break
May 29	Memorial Day - No School
June 13	Last day of school for T/Th Program
June 14	Last day of school for M/W Program

## PARENT INFORMATION

### 1. What to Send to Preschool With Your Child

- Bag - A regular size backpack or canvas tote that is large enough to hold student's lunch, water bottle, extra layers. This bag simply goes from drop off vehicle to our wagons, students do not need to be able to carry it (small backpacks don't work well). We also ask that you have a wet/dry bag that rides around in this larger bag. This is to send home any wet or soiled clothes from school. The kind of bag that is used for diapers works well (or any other dry bag that you may already have).
- A lunch for your child. Due to the growing incidence of food allergies and sensitivities, we ask each family to send a lunch for their individual child every day they attend preschool. While we certainly

encourage healthy foods, but what is most important is a lunch that your child will eat. Please ensure that your child can access/open all lunch items and the bags or containers they are in. It's so helpful for teachers if mandarins are peeled, fruit snack bags have been opened, etc.

- A water bottle that your child can open and close on their own. We request that families send their child to preschool with WATER ONLY. Please do not send juice, soda, chocolate milk, sports drinks, or any other sugary drinks to school with your child.
- Appropriate weather-related clothing (see below for further details).
- IMPORTANT NOTE: Please label all gear with your child's name that you send to school. There are lots of companies that make tags for kids but a Sharpie will also do the trick.

Other: We ask that our students do not bring toys to preschool because they can detract from our learning environment.

## **2. What to Wear to Preschool**

"There is no such thing as bad weather – just bad clothes."

As an outdoor preschool, our students are outside every day, regardless of the weather. The only exceptions are during thunder and lightning storms, extreme winds, and/or extreme temperature conditions, when we will cancel school or take a break inside the Jones Center. Please be aware that even on cold, snowy days, the children will be outside.

We expect our preschoolers to get dirty as a natural part of their day. Your child should wear durable, washable, seasonally appropriate play clothes at all times. Please do not send your child to preschool in clothing that is for special occasions. Play is important, and we would not want your child to worry if they happen to get dirty or wet.

Below are some guidelines to help you ensure that your child comes to preschool appropriately dressed for outdoor fun.

### **Jacket:**

During the colder months, please send your child to preschool every day with either a warm, waterproof winter jacket with a hood, or with layers (such as a warm fleece jacket or down vest as an inner layer and a waterproof rain jacket with a hood as an outer layer). In our experience, layers work best because they allow children to self-regulate their temperature by taking off one of their jackets if they get overheated from playing hard, or else putting on an extra layer if they get cold. A few of the brands we have found for reliable waterproof children's jackets are REI, Columbia, Oaki, and LL Bean. During the warmer months, children should bring appropriate outerwear for the temperature range, such as a light jacket or hooded sweatshirt. A waterproof rain jacket with a hood is a MUST on rainy days so that your child stays dry and comfortable.

### **Hat:**

During the colder months, please pack a warm winter hat in your child's backpack every day that they attend preschool. Even on sunny mornings, it can be very cold outside and young children are extremely uncomfortable when their head and ears are chilled. Make sure the hat fits comfortably and does not feel "itchy" to your child while they are wearing it. During the warmer months, a sun hat or baseball cap can help protect children's eyes and skin when the weather is hot and sunny.

### **Mittens:**

Cold hands are the number-one complaint we hear from children during our colder months. Therefore, your child should have mittens in their backpack every day that they attend preschool and may need them. No gloves, please, as they are too difficult for young children to put on by themselves. On cold, wet days, the types of mittens that work best are the waterproof kind -- with fleece on the inside and nylon on the outside -- that have a zipper for easy on and off. We recommend either the Head brand "Kids' Ski Mittens" (available on Amazon and also at most Costco stores in the fall) and the Dakine "Brat Mitt" (available on [dakine.com](http://dakine.com)) On cold, dry days, thick fleece mittens tend to work best for young children. (Please note that fleece mittens by themselves are not waterproof on wet days).

#### Footwear:

During the winter months, snow boots are **required**. Daily outdoor adventures at preschool take us to muddy, wet, and sometimes snowy places. Our top recommendation for snow boots are BOGS. During the fall and spring, rain boots work well. Even on dry days, students seem to find puddles and mud. On warm, dry days your child can wear well-fitting sneakers or other closed shoes to preschool. Please note that we do not recommend sandals or the "Crocs" type of slip-on shoes with holes, since children become very uncomfortable when they get wood pieces or rocks under their feet.

#### Socks:

During winter months, we recommend long, wool socks under children's boots. Short socks tend to come off in boots, leaving students uncomfortable and cold.

#### Rain Bibs and Snow Pants:

Rain bibs or snow pants are required for our cold/wet weather days. These pants worn on top of base layers keep children warm and comfortable on wet days. Most days are muddy days at Sol Shine. Many students wear rain bibs all fall and spring while switching to snow bibs in the winter. Others stick with one pair of waterproof pants through the year and simply increase layers underneath the rain pants in the winter. Our top recommendation for brand of rain bibs is Oaki. You can find them here - <https://oaki.com/collections/rain-bibs>

Note: We do not recommend full rain suits as we've found most children are uncomfortable in them and have difficulty taking them off. Students are most successful in bibs with a rain coat on wet days.

#### Change of clothes:

Accidents happen and we want your child to be able to continue their day as seamlessly as possible. Inside the Jones Center your child will have a cubby to store a complete change of clothes. Please bring this change of clothes in a gallon ziplock bag on the first day of school including a shirt, pants, underpants or long underwear, and socks. We ask that parents restock the clothes as they are used and sent home and as well as adjusting for the season. Teachers check cubbies weekly to ensure students are ready for a change if needed and will communicate any needs with parents. Any wet or soiled clothes are sent home in the dry bag kept in student backpacks.

## 4. Birthdays

Birthdays are an exciting and special time for children. When we celebrate birthdays in preschool, we honor each child by giving them a birthday nature crown created together as a class and guide the students through a ceremony where the birthday boy or girl goes around "the sun" and are sung to. For children whose birthdays are during the summer, they will be celebrated toward the end of the



school year. Because of allergies and parent food preferences for their children, we ask that you save birthday treats for celebrations at home rather than sending them to preschool.

## ENROLLMENT

### 1. General Information

Sol Shine Nature Preschool is designed for children whose parents are looking for an exceptional and unique outdoor preschool for their child. Children should be prepared for being outdoors for 3.5 hours at a time. Except during extreme weather conditions, our students will go outside every day to experience exploration and play in a natural setting.

### 2. Enrollment Requirements

Sol Shine Nature Preschool offers two programs, a Monday/Wednesday and a Tuesday/Thursday option. The following requirements are for both programs.

- a. Children must be at least 3 years old by September 1 on their first year of enrollment.
- b. Children must be toilet-trained and self-sufficient. Please contact our preschool director with questions.
- c. State law requires that all children be up-to-date with their immunizations upon enrollment.

A Certificate of Immunization Status must be on file by your child's first day of preschool. If your child is not vaccinated due to personal or religious reasons, we must have a Certificate of Exemption on file when preschool begins. Information is available in the enrollment form packet. Parents will be notified in the event of an outbreak of illness and asked to keep their child at home until the outbreak has been eradicated.

### 3. Enrollment Procedures

- a. Complete an online application at [www.solshinenp.com](http://www.solshinenp.com)
- b. Schedule a tour of the classroom site.

Upon receiving your child's application, we will contact you to schedule a tour. The purpose of the tour is not only to familiarize your family with the classroom, but to ensure that we are a great match for your unique child. A Sol Shine teacher will be there to answer any questions that come up. Tours last approximately 15-20 minutes.

- c. Fill out enrollment documents.

You will be given a packet which includes our parent handbook and enrollment forms to fill out (i.e. health history, emergency contacts, etc.). These forms must be completed and returned by May 1 of the upcoming school year.

New student enrollment is processed on a first come, first served basis with priority given to returning students. A waitlist is maintained by the director.

### 4. Tuition Payments

- a. Tuition will be automatically paid via Autopay (or ACH) on the first business day of each month of the school year.
- b. Tuition is based on a ten-month commitment (September - June) and is divided into ten equal monthly payments. The number of days in a month that school is in session does not affect the monthly payment rate, and there are no adjustments in tuition for holidays or days missed. As long as

your child is officially enrolled in preschool, tuition is due in full each month, regardless of illness, vacation, school holidays, scheduled breaks, or school closures during the 10-month academic year.

## 8. Withdrawal Policy

- a. If you choose to withdraw your child from Sol Shine Nature Preschool during the school year, please contact the program director.
- b. Notification of withdrawal must be made at least 30 days in advance of your child's intended withdrawal. Because Sol Shine depends on tuition to operate, tuition payments will continue to be withdrawn until the end of the school year or your child's spot is filled (whichever comes first).

## ATTENDANCE

### 1. Absences

The following guidelines are designed to facilitate communication between parents/guardians and teachers about children's preschool attendance:

- a. If your child is ill or unable to attend class, please email, text, or call our preschool director, Colleen Smith, as soon as possible on the morning of your child's absence.
- b. If your child will be late for preschool, please call the lead teacher so that we can make arrangements to accommodate your child's late arrival.
- c. You may also inform us by phone, email, or in person if you know in advance of an upcoming absence or vacation for your child.

### 2. Drop-off Procedures

- a. **Arrival Time: 9:00am-9:10am** Please drive very slow as you come into the Arboretum's grounds as children may be at play or walking to their car.
- b. Parents and caregivers will drive to the Jones Center where a teacher will greet you. Please follow the one-way traffic flow in the parking lot forming a line of cars.
- c. Parents will need to assist their child in getting out of the car and collecting their belongings needed for the day when they are at the front of the car line. A teacher will meet each parent and walk students in to the rest of the class.

Sol Shine teachers and students stay near the Jones Center until at least 9:10am. Please respect the drop-off period by arriving at preschool on time. Student drop-off before 9:00am prevent teachers from preparing properly for the day and arrivals after 9:10am may disrupt the class from moving on. If you do arrive early, this is a great time to take your child to the restroom and help them put on their hat, mittens, or any other gear for the day.

### 3. Pick-Up Procedures

#### a. Pick-Up Time: 12:30pm

Your child looks forward to your return; therefore, we ask that you pick up your child on time. Please let us know if you will need to pick up your child early or will be running late.

- b. Parents and caregivers will drive to the Jones Center for pick up. Please follow the one-way traffic flow in the parking lot forming a line of cars the same way drop-off is done.
- c. A teacher will walk students to their parent's car when the parent is next in line. Teachers will communicate any important information about the student's day at this time.

### 4. Late Pick-Up

a. Pickup time is 12:30pm. Due to after-class staff responsibilities and scheduling requirements, a late pick-up fee of \$5.00 will be incurred for every 10 minutes that a child is picked up past program closing time.

b. If you are running late, please call or text our preschool director or the lead teacher.

c. If a child has not been picked up within 15 minutes of the preschool's designated closing time, the following procedure will be implemented:

-A staff person will call the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) at the work, cell, and home phone numbers listed on the Health History and Emergency Care Plan.

-If the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) cannot be reached, the staff person will call the emergency and/or alternate contacts listed on the Health History and Emergency Care Plan and the Child Release Form.

## 5. Release of Children

a. A child will be released only to those adults authorized by the parent or guardian on the Child Release Form and "Emergency Contacts" section of the Health History and Emergency Care Plan. These forms must be filled out, signed, and turned in to the director prior to your child's first day of preschool attendance. All forms must be updated as necessary.

b. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone other than those adults listed on the Child Release Form or "Emergency Contacts" section of the Health History and Emergency Care Plan without prior written approval from the child's parent or guardian.

c. Should the pick-up person be different than the drop-off person, a valid picture ID (i.e. driver's license) must be shown for the child to be released. This will be cross-referenced with the information on the Child Release Form and/or "Emergency Contacts" section of the Health History and Emergency Care plan in order to ensure that this person is authorized to pick up your child.

d. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained in writing before all authorized pick-ups.

## 6. Child Custody Situations

In the event that a non-custodial parent (a parent without custody) arrives to pick up a child, Sol Shine Nature Preschool must follow all legal guidelines for child custody situations. Unless a copy of a court order is on file granting permission for the child to be released to their care, it is our policy to NOT release the child to the non-custodial parent. If a non-custodial parent arrives to pick up a child without advanced clearance and written notification from the custodial parent, release of the child will be denied, even if a court order is on file with the preschool.

## SAFETY AND SUPERVISION PROCEDURES

### 1. Insurance

Sol Shine Nature Preschool maintains major liability insurance covering all scheduled staff-supervised activities. Children are covered by this insurance when they are participating in activities conducted through Sol Shine Nature Preschool. After class periods have ended, while the Yakima Area Arboretum maintains property liability, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure their child's safety if staying at the facility beyond regularly-scheduled preschool hours.

### 2. General Safety and Supervision Procedures

The following safety and supervision procedures will be implemented at all times during normal operating hours for Sol Shine Nature Preschool:

a. Sol Shine students will be supervised at all times by responsible adults while at the Yakima Area Arboretum during normal preschool hours (9am-12:30pm).

- b. All Sol Shine Nature Preschool teachers, staff, volunteers, and other adults working directly with children are required to pass a background check.
- c. For optimal supervision, adult-to-child ratios will be no more than 1:5.
- d. Children will never be left alone or allowed to separate from the group without an adult for any reason.
- e. Sol Shine Nature Preschool teachers and/or staff will carry cell phones with them at all times during normal preschool hours.
- f. Sol Shine Nature Preschool teachers and/or staff accompanying students will have emergency contact information with them at all times during normal preschool hours, including children's and parents' names, telephone numbers, local emergency telephone numbers, and emergency contact information for children, parents, teachers and staff.
- g. A designated preschool teacher and/or staff person will have the responsibility of carrying a first aid kit and other needed supplies at all times including emergency medications, any medications required by individual preschool students, and a list of potential outdoor allergy concerns for each student.
- h. Sol Shine Nature Preschool will have fully-stocked first aid kits and other emergency supplies, at the Jones Center. First aid kits will be restocked following each incident, and contents will be reviewed and updated regularly.
- i. All Sol Shine Nature Preschool teachers and staff will stay current with First Aid and CPR training and certification.
- j. Enough staff, including backup personnel, will be in place so that a teacher can accompany a child to the hospital and remain with the child until the parent or guardian arrives.

### 3. Restroom Breaks

All individual and group restroom breaks will be supervised by a preschool teacher.

The teacher and other students will wait outside the restroom until the student has finished unless a child needs help. In the case of a female student needing help, only female teachers will assist. To ensure proper hygiene each child will be asked if they have washed their hands and redirected if they have not.

## HEALTH POLICY AND ILLNESS PROCEDURES

### 1. Health Policy

In any preschool setting, disease and illness can be easily spread due to the large numbers of children, the age of the children, and the number of hours they spend together on a daily basis. Even with adequate hygiene that is practiced regularly, both at home and at school, the personal contact and close interactions between young children and adults are such that germs will be shared on a regular basis.

In order to ensure, as best we can, that illnesses do not spread, we ask that all parents/guardians keep their child at home when he or she is ill. A sick child who is allowed to come to preschool will be more vulnerable to infection and may not feel well enough to actively participate in our preschool program.

We are concerned with the well-being of all children in our care, and we ask everyone to take appropriate precautions in order to prevent the spread of germs and contagious illnesses.

In order to help minimize exposure and prevent the spread of illness, we have developed the following "Illness Procedures and Guidelines" for staff and parents/guardians of Sol Shine Nature Preschool. We have also developed a list of "Specific Illness Procedures" that will help guide parents and guardians in making an informed decision about whether or when to keep their child home from

school. It is to everyone's advantage if our health policy and illness procedures be respected and adhered to at all time. This will ensure a much healthier environment for the students, families, and staff of Sol Shine Nature Preschool.

## 2. Illness Procedures and Guidelines for Preschool Staff

a. Should a child become ill at preschool, we will notify the parent, guardian, or authorized emergency contact and request that necessary arrangements are made for the child to be picked up from preschool.

b. Parents/guardians will be contacted by the preschool and asked to pick up their child immediately if the child exhibits any of the following conditions:

- Fever (100.3 degrees Fahrenheit or higher)
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Head lice
- Skin rashes/lesions
- Constant and/or profuse nasal drainage
- Severe or prolonged coughing
- Any communicable or childhood disease
- Conditions requiring one-on-one care

c. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately if their child has been exposed to an infectious or communicable disease.

d. For the welfare of the other children and staff at Sol Shine Nature Preschool, we reserve the right to send a child home upon arrival if they appear to be ill.

e. Sol Shine Nature Preschool reserves the right to determine when a child who has been sick may return to preschool.

## 3. Illness Procedures and Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

a. Parents/guardians are asked to inform preschool staff if their child has been exposed to an illness or disease. This will allow us to prepare for and be alerted to the specific symptoms of that illness or disease.

b. Parents/guardians are also asked to inform preschool staff within 24 hours if their child has been diagnosed with any communicable or childhood diseases (see "Communicable Diseases" below). This will allow us to inform other preschool families of possible symptoms to be aware of in their children.

c. Parents/guardians are asked NOT to send their child to preschool when symptoms of illness or disease are present. While we understand that it is neither practical nor realistic to expect that a child be kept at home every time they have a runny nose, it is also impossible for preschool staff to provide one-on-one care for ill children without compromising the care of the other children. Therefore, we have carefully outlined the "Specific Illness Procedures" below to help parents decide whether or not to send their ill child to school.

## 4. Specific Illness Procedures

a. Fever: A child with a fever will be sent home. The child's temperature must return to normal (98.6° F) for at least 24 hours before coming back to preschool.

b. Vomiting and Diarrhea: Vomiting and diarrhea illnesses are often quite contagious and should be managed at home. Any child who has vomiting and/or diarrhea while in our care will be sent home from preschool for the remainder of that day and the following day until they have gone 24 hours without any further occurrences.

c. Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye): Any child having eye drainage or pink and itchy eyes will be immediately sent home. Conjunctivitis is highly contagious. Children must be seen by a physician and treated for 24 hours prior to returning to preschool.

d. Head Lice: Any children suspected or diagnosed with head lice will be excluded from our program until treatment is completed and all nits have been removed. We will also require parents to wash all the child's personal belongings (blankets, coats, hats, stuffed animals, etc.) prior to returning to our program.

e. Constant and/or Profuse Nasal Drainage: Any child having symptoms of an upper respiratory infection (yellow/green mucus, watery eyes, nasal congestion, etc.) will be excluded from our program at our discretion. If the child is diagnosed with an illness that requires antibiotics, the child must be treated for 24 hours before returning to preschool (Strep throat is an exception that requires 48 hours of treatment before returning to preschool).

f. Severe or Prolonged Coughing: Any child with severe or prolonged coughing will be excluded from attending our program at our discretion. A child who has difficult or rapid breathing, severe coughing with vomiting, or a high-pitched croupy or "whooping" cough will be sent home immediately.

g. Skin Rash/Lesions: Any child having an undiagnosed or contagious skin rash, a lesion that is bleeding or oozing, or persistent itching or scratching of the body or scalp, will be excluded from our program until the problem is diagnosed and/or treated as necessary.

#### 5. Communicable Diseases

Any child having symptoms of a known communicable/childhood disease will be excluded from program participation immediately. These children should be kept at home until a doctor has determined that a) the child does not have a communicable disease or, b) the child is no longer contagious. Sol Shine Nature Preschool may request a doctor's note indicating that the child is no longer contagious and can return to preschool. Please report any communicable or contagious diseases to our staff right away so that we may inform the other families.

Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to:

- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Diphtheria
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Strep Throat
- Scarlet Fever
- Bacterial Meningitis
- Hepatitis
- Pneumonia
- Chicken Pox
- Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

#### MEDICATION PLAN

Medication will only be given with prior written consent of the child's parent or legal guardian. Any time medication needs to be administered, we will require parents or guardians to fill out a Medication Authorization Form.

##### 1. Nonprescription (Over-the-Counter) Medications

Non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications may be given with written permission from the child's parent or guardian through the Medication Authorization Form. Over-the-counter medication must be in its original container, with the expiration date on the bottle, and have your child's name written on it. Medication will be administered in accordance with the instructions on the manufacturer's label,

unless alternate written instructions for its use are provided by a licensed physician. Any expired or unused portion of the medication will be returned to the child's parents or destroyed.

The following classifications of non-prescription medication can be given with written parent consent, but only at the dose, duration, and method of administration specified on the manufacturer's label:

- Sunscreen
- Non-aspirin fever reducers/pain relievers
- Insect repellent
- Anti-itching ointments/lotions
- Antihistamines

A physician's written consent is required for any non-prescription medication not listed above, or if the medication is to be taken differently than specified on the label.

## 2. Prescription Medications

No child will be given prescription medications without a physician's written permission. A Medication Authorization Form must be on file that is signed by both the child's parent and physician.

Prescription medication must be in its original container and be properly labeled with the child's name, name of the prescribing physician, date the prescription was filled, dosage, duration (start and stop dates), and expiration date of the medicine. Any expired or unused portion of the medication will be returned to the child's parents or destroyed.

## 3. Emergency Medications

Emergency medications such as Benadryl, "Epi-Pens", and inhalers will also be administered as needed. Emergency medications must be given to the teachers in advance, with a completed Medication Authorization Form that is signed by the child's parent and physician. Each parent will be asked to fill out a Health History and Emergency Care Plan for their child, in which they should indicate any known or suspected allergies that may necessitate the use of these emergency medications. If a child has been diagnosed with a life-threatening allergy, parents will also be required to fill out an Emergency Plan for Allergic Reactions form that must be signed by the child's physician. Any expired or unused portion of the medication will be returned to the child's parents.

## PLANS AND PROCEDURES FOR EMERGENCIES, INJURIES, AND ILLNESSES

### 1. Emergency Preparedness

Natural event:

Sol Shine Nature Preschool will have the following procedures in place at all times in order to prepare for an emergency:

- a. All preschool staff will stay current with First Aid and CPR training and certification.
- b. Enough staff, including backup personnel, will be in place so that a teacher can accompany a child to the hospital and remain with the child until the parent or guardian arrives.
- c. The preschool will have fully-stocked first aid kits and other emergency supplies, inside of the Jones Center. First aid kits will be restocked following each incident, and contents will be reviewed and updated regularly.
- d. Preschool staff will have information on the closest emergency medical/dental care facilities, including location, hours, and two routes to the facility (in case one is not accessible).
- e. Preschool staff will have emergency information and supplies with them at all times, including emergency contacts for children and staff, medication, first aid supplies, and cell phones.

### 2. Emergency Procedures

The following are Sol Shine Nature Preschool's emergency procedures:

- a. Sol Shine Nature Preschool requires that all paperwork be on file on or before a child's first day of preschool attendance. In the event of an emergency, these forms will provide the preschool with important data such as parent contact information, emergency contacts, authorization for the release of a child to other adults, and health and medical histories. In addition, these forms will give Sol Shine Nature Preschool permission to seek emergency medical care should the child require such treatment.
- b. In the event of an emergency, staff members will assess the situation and, if warranted, call 9-1-1. Staff will respond as necessary until emergency help arrives.
- c. Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and apprised of the situation.
- d. In the event that we are unable to reach the child's parent or guardian, we will contact the individual(s) designated as emergency contacts for the child.
- e. If the situation requires professional care, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and remain with the child at all times until family members or authorized emergency contacts have arrived.
- f. If parents have a family emergency that will require their child to be picked up early from preschool, they may call the preschool director or lead teacher at any time during the school day to arrange for pick-up.
- g. In the event of a fire, earthquake, or other natural disaster, Sol Shine Nature Preschool will first get children and teachers out of any buildings they may be inside and then call 9-1-1. One teacher will contact the parents/guardians with their cell phone, while the other teacher(s) will be responsible for providing supervision and comfort to the children.

### 3. Injury Procedures

Due to the active nature of our program, minor injuries, bumps, and bruises will undoubtedly occur. All preschool staff are trained in Basic First Aid and CPR. The staff will carry cell phones to aid in communication in the event of an emergency.

#### a. Minor Injury

In the event of a minor injury, the child will be treated with first aid by the preschool staff. The incident will be reported to the parent or guardian at the end of the day, either verbally or by way of an Accident/Injury Report Form. The severity of the injury or incident will dictate whether or not the parent/guardian will receive an immediate phone call.

#### b. Serious Injury/Accident

1) In the event of a serious injury or accident, staff members will assess the situation and, if warranted, call 9-1-1. Staff will respond as necessary until emergency help arrives.

2) Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately and apprised of the situation.

3) In the event that we are unable to reach the child's parent or guardian, we will contact the individual(s) designated as emergency contacts for the child.

4) If the situation requires professional care, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and remain with the child at all times until family members or authorized emergency contacts have arrived.

## BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

### 1. General Approach to Preschool Behavior Management

A very important part of the preschool experience is helping children learn how to get along in the world, enjoy being with other children, become successful members of our community, and follow the direction of an adult other than their parent. Sol Shine Nature Preschool takes a caring and positive approach to behavior management and discipline, keeping in mind that the ultimate goal of discipline



is to help children develop self- control and to teach them that each person is responsible for his or her own actions. Our teachers focus on the positive behaviors of the children and reinforce those behaviors as often as possible. We find that we can prevent many behavioral problems in preschool by providing direct supervision and guidance, age-appropriate communication, clear boundaries, and caring interactions between teachers and students.

The primary goal of Sol Shine Nature Preschool's behavior management policy is to help our students learn to be considerate and respectful toward others and toward their outdoor environment learning environment. Clear and consistent age-appropriate limits are set, and within these limits each child can learn what is appropriate behavior. Under the guidance of our teachers, children are encouraged to solve as many of their own problems as possible by using words to handle their differences. When a teacher must intervene, age-appropriate and constructive methods of discipline are used. Physical or emotional danger will be grounds for a teacher to intervene immediately. The parents are included in this discipline process so children can see that both parents and teachers reinforce limit setting.

## 2. Inappropriate and Disruptive Behaviors

Sol Shine Nature Preschool must ensure that the play and learning environment for all children is safe, respectful, and provides a positive model of behavior to all of the children within our care. We must also ensure that inappropriate and disruptive behavior is addressed in a timely, consistent, and fair manner for the well-being of each individual child, as well as the group as a whole. Inappropriate and disruptive behavior jeopardizes the safety and well being of our students and detracts from the full benefit of our preschool program. Examples include:

- Infliction of physical or emotional harm on other children, adults, or self.
- Disrespect toward people and materials provided in the program.
- Consistent disobedience of the rules of the classroom/outdoor areas.
- Consistent refusal to comply with a teacher's instruction or request.
- Verbal or physical threats toward other students and/or staff.
- Verbal or physical activity that diverts attention away from the group of children.
- Behavior requiring constant attention from the staff.
- Use of profane or abusive language.

## 3. Procedures for Addressing Inappropriate and Disruptive Behavior

We understand that many preschoolers may use misguided behavior because they have not yet learned what is acceptable in a preschool setting. However, at times a child's behavior may become problematic for others or be disruptive of our classroom environment. We want to assure parents that we will address such behavior immediately by following these guidelines:

1. Teachers will use age-appropriate and constructive methods of discipline, starting with a verbal intervention (which may include modeling of appropriate words and/or actions), possible redirection to a more constructive activity, and/or removing a child from the situation if necessary. If a child exhibits behavior that is violent, dangerous, or abusive toward others, the parent/caregiver will be called and asked to pick up their child immediately.
2. Behavioral issues and concerns are communicated to parents by way of a brief meeting at dismissal time, or via email if parents are not present for pick-up, on the day the behavior occurred. Touching base in this manner will allow the child to be a part of the discussion and solution. Parents are asked to further address the issue with their child at home.
3. If the disruptive behavior persists, or if there seems to be a consistent problem area that needs to be addressed, the school director or lead teacher will request a meeting with parents in order to form a plan to resolve the disruptive behavior.

4. If the behavioral issues are significant, parents may be asked to either: a) not send their child to preschool, or b) have an adult caregiver or aide stay with their child during preschool hours in order to assist the child with behavior regulation.

5. Every effort will be made to work with the child and their family in resolving problematic behaviors. However, in the rare instances that these problematic behaviors continue even after all possible corrective measures have been implemented, it may be determined that Sol Shine Nature Preschool is not a good fit for that child. For the best interests of the child, the preschool program, and the other students, parents may be asked to remove their child from the program.

#### 4. Termination of Enrollment

Termination of a child's enrollment may become necessary if any of the following conditions exist:

- The program cannot meet the child's needs and/or is not a good fit for the child.
- Frequently disruptive behavior by the child requires the teachers' attention for a disproportionate amount of time, thereby jeopardizing the care of other students in the program.
- The child's behavior is adversely affecting the classroom setting.
- The child's behavior endangers the well being of other students, preschool staff, and/or the child engaging in the behavior.
- Parents/guardians do not cooperate with the program's efforts to resolve differences and/or to meet the child's needs through parent-teacher meetings or conferences.
- Parents/guardians are not able or willing to follow through on the corrective action agreed upon at any meeting or conference, within the timeframe provided by the preschool staff.

Termination of enrollment is determined by the preschool director and teachers and can be made effective immediately. Sol Shine Nature Preschool reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment at any time if any of the above factors are present.

#### MANDATED REPORTING

Sol Shine Nature Preschool is obligated by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation to Child Protective Services or to a local law enforcement agency immediately.

(WAC-388-150-480: "When any licensed or certified childcare provider or their employees has reasonable cause to believe that a child [...] has suffered abuse or neglect, he or she shall report such incident or cause a report to be made, to the proper law enforcement agency or to the department as provided in RCW 26.44.040.")

#### SOL SHINE NATURE PRESCHOOL STAFF

The goal of Sol Shine Nature Preschool's teachers and staff is to create a warm, nurturing learning environment that offers young children daily opportunities to explore nature and provides them with a unique, hands-on learning program designed to build a solid foundation for future school experiences. Our teachers are all trained in Forest Kindergarten methods and have experience working with children, are certified in First Aid and CPR and have passed a Washington State Patrol background check. Our favorable student/teacher ratios create an environment that allows for individualized attention and provides fun, safe adventures for all of our students.

Please consult our website for a current listing of our teaching staff.

Thank you for taking the time to read through our Parent Handbook. We hope that the information provided has been helpful in answering your questions and familiarizing you more with our program, philosophy, and policies. If you are the parent/guardian of a prospective student, we hope this

information will prove helpful in determining whether our program will provide you with what you are looking for in a preschool. If you have any further questions or would like to schedule a tour, please call us or email us.