

Maywood Cooperative Nursery School, Inc.

Member Handbook



MAYWOOD COOPERATIVE
NURSERY SCHOOL
INSPIRING YOUNG MINDS

Established 1971

Certified by the State of New Jersey

To All Co-Op Families,

Welcome, and thank you for choosing the Maywood Cooperative Nursery School. We look forward to meeting the educational needs of your preschooler.

This handbook was originally written in 1971 when the Co-Op was established. Over the years, the Staff and Executive Board have adapted the By-Laws and Constitution to meet the needs of the families attending. Some of these changes are reflected in the handbook.

Our handbook is an informative manual designed to give you an overview of our program.

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask our Director or Executive Board member. They would be happy to assist you.

Cooperatively Yours,

The Co-Op Director and Executive Board

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Mission Statement

To provide a nurturing, play-based early childhood education that supports the social, emotional, and academic growth of young children while fostering a strong sense of community among families and educators.

Our Philosophy

The Maywood Cooperative Nursery School is an educational organization certified by the State of New Jersey. It operates as a non-profit, non-sectarian, and inclusive institution, owned and administered by the parents of the children it serves.

History

The concept for the Maywood Cooperative Nursery School was born in the early spring of 1970. Shortly afterward, a planning committee was established, and the idea began taking shape. In accordance with New Jersey Department of Education guidelines, the necessary rules and regulations for operating a nursery school were reviewed, and a suitable location was sought. After many months of dedicated effort, the vestry of St. Martin's Church approved the school's use of its space—and we had our first “home.”

With a location secured, plans progressed quickly. A zoning variance was granted, an executive board was formed, by-laws were written, incorporation papers were filed, and a staff of two teachers was hired. In September 1971, the school opened its doors to its first classes: one for three-year-olds and one for four-year-olds. The following year, increased enrollment allowed for an additional four-year-old class. Now, more than 50 years later, the Maywood Cooperative Nursery School continues to provide quality nursery programs for children ages 2.5 to 4.

A written history can never fully capture the perseverance, long hours, and steadfast commitment that accompanied the school's development. These efforts are as integral to our story as the dates and milestones themselves. The school now rests in the hands of its members, and its past serves as both a foundation and a guide for its continued growth and future endeavors.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME AND PURPOSE

Section 1:

The name by which this corporation shall be known is the Maywood Cooperative Nursery School.

Section 2:

The purpose of this corporation is to organize, promote, and operate a day nursery school that provides an educational program for preschool children under the supervision of specially trained personnel, with active participation by parents in both the program and the administration of the corporation. The school is operated as a cooperative on a non-profit, non-sectarian, and inclusive basis.

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1:

Participating members are those parents or guardians who have signed an agreement with the Maywood Cooperative Nursery School and have enrolled a child and/or children in the school. Each participating family is entitled to one vote to elect a representative board.

Section 2:

Classroom participation, regular attendance at meetings, and involvement in fundraising events are considered part of membership and are performed on a voluntary, unpaid basis.

ARTICLE III - WITHDRAWALS

Section 1:

No release from contact or form of obligation of Participating Membership is permitted except the majority vote of the Executive Board under the circumstances set forth in the By-Laws.

ARTICLE IV - TUITION AND FEES

Section 1:

Tuition and fees are payable as indicated in the By-Laws. The amount is determined by the Executive Board based on the adopted annual budget.

ARTICLE V - THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1:

The Executive Board shall consist of seven (7) members elected by the general membership at the annual meeting. The Director shall serve as the eighth member of the Board.

Section 2:

Regular meetings of the Executive Board shall be held once a month. Special meetings may be called by the President at the request of any four (4) Board members if, in their judgment, such a meeting is necessary. Two-thirds of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum, and a majority vote of those members present is required to pass any resolution.

Section 3:

The Executive Board has the authority to act in all matters pertinent to the operation of the school and is responsible for the hiring and dismissal of the professional staff, under the recommendation of the Director.

Section 4:

The Executive Board shall have control and general management of the affairs and business of the Corporation, provided such actions are not inconsistent with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Corporation or with the laws of the State of New Jersey.

ARTICLE VI - ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Section 1:

Upon the opening of a Board position, the members of the Executive Board shall be elected by a majority of the total participating families of this Corporation at the annual meeting. Board members can only retain their role on the Board provided they have a child or children enrolled in the Co-Op.

The Executive Board of the Corporation shall consist of the following offices:

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Deputy Members (3)
Director

The members of the Executive Board shall determine among themselves the office that each one shall hold.

President: Serves as the primary leader and representative of the cooperative nursery school's Board of Directors. This role includes overseeing board operations, supporting school leadership, and ensuring alignment with the school's mission, values, and policies.

Key Responsibilities:

- Preside over board and general meetings; collaborate with the Director of School on agenda planning and ensure organized, effective decision-making.
- Ensure adherence to bylaws, regulations, and best governance practices; maintain records of responsibilities and a school activity calendar to support leadership transitions.
- Provide strategic direction, guide long-term planning, and lead board evaluations and recruitment.
- Act as the primary liaison between the board, Director, parent community, and external partners.
- Support the Director in key initiatives, including performance evaluations and school operations as needed.

Vice President: Supports the President in carrying out board responsibilities and serves as acting President when needed. May assist with board recruitment, policy enforcement, onboarding, and training of new board members.

Key Responsibilities:

- Assist in leadership duties and preside over meetings in the President's absence.
- Help plan and oversee school events, fundraisers, and parent volunteer activities.
- Act as an additional point of contact between the board, staff, and families.
- Prepare to transition into the President role as part of a leadership pipeline.

Secretary: Responsible for maintaining the Cooperative's official records. Key duties include recording and distributing meeting minutes, managing the policy manual, and ensuring compliance with reporting and record-keeping requirements.

Key Responsibilities:

- Record and distribute meeting minutes for board and general meetings in a timely manner.
- Maintain official records, including bylaws, policies, and board member contact information.
- Assist with official school communications, such as meeting notices, agendas, and announcements.
- Track attendance, votes, and important board decisions for historical and legal reference.
- Provide administrative support to the President and other board members as needed.

Treasurer: Responsible for managing the financial health of the cooperative nursery school. This role includes overseeing accounting practices, financial reporting, and compliance, while working closely with the board to ensure transparency and sound financial planning.

Key Responsibilities:

- Maintain accurate financial records, monitor income and expenses, and ensure alignment with the approved budget.
- Prepare and present financial reports to the board, including profit and loss statements and balance sheets.
- Lead the development of the annual budget and support long-term financial planning in collaboration with the board.
- Ensure timely filing of tax documents, regulatory reports, and adherence to financial policies and procedures.
- Oversee payments, deposits, bank account management, and account reconciliations; may co-sign checks.
- Liaise with the school's auditor, finance team, and any external accountants; assist in tracking fundraising income and expenditures.

Deputy Members: Support board operations by assisting designated board officers and stepping in when needed. Helping to ensure continuity, strengthen volunteer participation, and provide leadership development opportunities within the cooperative.

Key Responsibilities:

- Assist assigned board members with tasks, planning, and fundraising/event coordination.
- Attend meetings or fulfill responsibilities in place of a board member when that person is unavailable.
- Engage in board discussions, planning sessions, and school activities.

- Learn board procedures and responsibilities to prepare for future leadership roles.
- Help organize and communicate with parent volunteers/class parents for school events and activities.

Section 2:

Any participating member shall be eligible for the election to the executive board.

Section 3:

No member may hold more than one (1) office at a time. If no member is able to fill the responsibility, the director is to perform required duties.

Section 4:

In the event of a vacancy, the Board shall appoint a replacement, subject to approval by a majority of its members at the next scheduled meeting.

Section 5:

A member of the Executive Board may be removed from their position at any time for just cause by a majority vote of the Board. Written specification of the reasons for the proposed removal must be provided to the member. Such notice may be delivered in person or sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the member's last known address as recorded in the Corporation's records.

ARTICLE VII - MEETING OF THE PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Section 1:

Scheduled meetings of this Corporation shall be held as indicated at the beginning of the school year in the school calendar.

Section 2:

Special meetings will be called by the President when deemed necessary.

Section 3:

There will be three meetings held throughout the year - orientation, back to school, and the end of year meeting. The end of year meeting will be for the purpose of electing the Executive Board for the following year, if needed.

ARTICLE VIII - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1:

The rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised* shall govern this Corporation in all cases in which they are applicable and not inconsistent with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Corporation.

ARTICLE IX - FISCAL YEAR

Section 1:

The fiscal year of the corporation shall run from August 1st to July 31st.

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Section 1:

The Constitution and By-Laws of this Corporation may be amended at any meeting upon a majority vote of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE XI - DISSOLUTION OF CORPORATIONS AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS

Section 1:

This Corporation may be dissolved by a two-thirds majority vote of the participating families at a special meeting called by the President, following a two-thirds vote of the Executive Board authorizing the meeting for this specific purpose. Written notice of such a meeting must be provided to all members of the Corporation at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting.

Section 2:

In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, all funds, assets, and property (after payment of dissolution expenses) will be distributed to one (1) or more non-profit organizations having like purposes and objectives with those of this corporation and which are exempt from tax under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

By-Laws Established 1971

Section I – ADMISSIONS

Paragraph A

The Executive Board and the Director shall review the list of qualified applicants and determine which children will be invited to attend. Invitations shall be issued in the following order of priority:

1. Applications from current participating members.
2. Applications from current associate members.
3. Applications from prospective members, in the order in which applications are received.

Paragraph B

Application will be considered as follows:

1. The eligibility will be determined by the rule of age of the Maywood School System.

Paragraph C

An application shall be considered upon payment of a registration fee. Said fee shall be determined by the Executive Board. Where applications are made for more than one (1) child in a single family at a given time, a discount of the application fee must be paid for each second child. This fee shall be refunded if the child is not invited to attend.

Paragraph D

Upon acceptance for enrollment, this Corporation required those persons responsible for the care of the child, the parents jointly, to sign an agreement covering the duration for the school session in question and to pay all fees required.

Paragraph E

No application for admission will be accepted on a part-time or short-term basis

Paragraph F

To meet New Jersey regulations, each child must have a properly completed health certificate.

Section II – WITHDRAWALS

Paragraph A

The first four (4) weeks after admission are considered an adjustment period, during which the Executive Board may approve the withdrawal of a child and termination of the agreement if:

1. The Director so recommends, or
2. The child's parent, after consulting with the Director, submits a written request.

Paragraph B

After four (4) weeks, withdrawal from participation membership and termination of the agreement may be approved by majority vote of the Executive Board at any time if:

1. The Director recommends the child's withdrawal from the school.
2. Due to transfer or other unforeseen circumstances, the parents submit a written request to the Executive Board.

Paragraph C

If a child is withdrawn after the four-week adjustment period, no refund will be issued for any fees paid to the school.

Section III – TUITION AND FEES

Paragraph A

Tuition shall be paid on an annual basis of ten (10) monthly installments, as indicated in the registration agreement.

Paragraph B

Upon signing an agreement after the start of the school year, credit will be given on a pro-rata basis for the months and weeks that have elapsed prior to the signing of the agreement. An appropriate tuition payment, bringing the participating family into accord with the payment schedule set forth in the registration agreement, shall be due immediately.

Paragraph C

In the event of withdrawal prior to the end of the four (4) week adjustment period, an appropriate pro-rated refund will be issued. If withdrawal occurs after the four (4) week adjustment period, a penalty equal to

one (1) month's tuition will be assessed—unless waived by the Executive Board—and a refund of the remaining appropriate amount will be made.

Paragraph D

Tuition is due on the first of each month. If a tuition installment is not paid within fifteen (15) business days, a \$15.00 late fee will be charged. If payment is still not received after the penalty is applied, the parents will be notified that the child may not attend school until all outstanding tuition and fees have been paid. Such action shall not constitute a waiver of any provisions of the agreement.

Paragraph E

At the request of a family, the Executive Board may approve special temporary tuition arrangements.

Section IV - WAIVER OF TUITION REFUND

Paragraph A

In the event that the school facilities are destroyed by fire or other causes, all tuition refunds shall be deemed waived.

Section V – THE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Paragraph A

The school sessions will be as follows: the days and hours that classes meet shall be determined by the Director and the Executive Board and may be adjusted as deemed necessary by them.

Paragraph B

The school calendar will follow that of the Maywood Public School System as far as holidays and closing due to inclement weather. Parents will be notified of the closing of school for all reasons.

Paragraph C

The curriculum shall be determined by the School Director and Staff.

Paragraph D

The Director shall be directly responsible to the Executive Board and shall be employed by the Board on an annual basis, with salary and working conditions established in the agreement with the Corporation.

Paragraph E

All records shall be kept confidential. They must be shared with a child's parents upon request, and no records shall be released to outside parties without parental consent.

Paragraph F

In the event of an emergency requiring immediate medical attention, and when, in the opinion of the Professional Staff, there is not sufficient time to contact the child's parents for guidance or direction, or if the parents cannot be reached immediately at home or elsewhere, the local police will be contacted. The parents will be notified as soon as possible thereafter and will be responsible for any medical expenses not covered by their own or the school's insurance policies.

Section VI – PARTICIPATION

Paragraph A

Attendance of at least one (1) member of each participating family is recommended at all regular and special meetings of the Corporation. Failure to attend regular meetings may result in the family not being informed of important information.

Paragraph C

Each member is asked to volunteer on at least one (1) school committee/event.

GENERAL RULES

1. No gum, candy, weapons or tiny treasures that could get lost.
2. No running in the halls and classrooms.
3. No child may be left unattended anywhere in or outside the school. If needed, morning and aftercare is available.
4. Outside – No running on grassy slopes, use stairs.
5. When your child is dismissed, they are in your care. Please see liability notice in your family packet.
6. Please keep younger siblings in your care at all times.
7. Park legally be mindful of neighbors' driveways.
8. **Birthdays** – Please see individual teachers to make arrangements.
9. **Field Trips** – You will always be notified at least one week ahead. You must provide your own transportation. Siblings can attend some of these field trips at an additional cost to the parent.
10. **Reminders** – will be sent to you via Brightwheel
11. **Dismissal** - Your child will only be dismissed to legal guardians and those you have authorized to pick up from school. We will not release your child otherwise.
12. **Emergency Cards** - Please notify us of any change of address, phone number or emergency person so the card on file is up to date if a medical emergency arises.
13. **Tuition** - Please make tuition payments on time. There is a 15-day grace period. Afterwards, there is a late penalty. Any fees for returned checks will be the responsibility of the parent. Tuition will be billed on the Brightwheel app.
14. **Health** – The school does not permit staff members or children with untreated communicable diseases at the school until they are no longer contagious. Please see the illness handout.
15. **Medication** – No medication will be administered without a written order from your child's physician, as well as an Individual Permission for Medication Form.
16. **Pull-ups** – The school accepts 2 ½ year old children in pull-ups with Velcro sides. NO DIAPERS. Three-year-olds are encouraged to be toilet trained. Exceptions may be made on an individual basis. Four-year-olds must be toilet trained.

17. Drop-Off, Pick-Up, and Aftercare Hours:

The main entrance door will open at 8:30 A.M. for regular drop-off. All parents are required to drop off their children at this entrance.

The daily schedule shall be as follows:

1. Doors open for drop-off from 8:30 A.M. to 8:45 A.M.;
2. Dismissal occurs at 2:30 P.M.
3. Morning Care begins at 7:30 A.M.
4. Aftercare is provided until 5:00 P.M., by which time all children must be picked up.

18. Absence: Please call the school at (201) 843-2644 or send a message through Brightwheel to report your child's absence. It is important to include the reason for the absence.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline is defined as the process by which an adult responsible for a group of young children guides them in learning self-control. In supporting children as they develop these skills, the following principles must be observed: No form of physical punishment is permitted within the school. The primary role of staff in matters of discipline is to ensure the protection and well-being of all children.

No child shall be denied food as a form of punishment. The provision of snacks, lunch, or any other nourishment is never to be linked to a child's behavior. Under no circumstances may staff use abusive language, shaming, humiliation, labeling, threats, frightening treatment, or removal from an area without supervision. No child shall be punished for soiling or wetting.

Our goal is to help children establish appropriate limits for their behavior and to support them in expressing negative feelings through acceptable outlets. We work to include children in the process of creating class rules and provide individual attention when needed. For example, if a child hits another child, staff will discuss the feelings of all children involved and suggest alternative activities and acceptable ways to express anger or frustration. We acknowledge children's feelings but do not permit hurtful behavior.

We may redirect a child's behavior by guiding their focus toward a more appropriate activity. We also help children understand the consequences of their actions. For example: "Tommy, if you throw the blocks, I will have to ask you to leave the block area. Blocks are for building."

A brief "time out" may be used when necessary—removing a child from the area or activity so they may calm down and regain self-control. The child is reminded that they may return when they are ready. Staff address the behavior, not the child.

We emphasize positive statements and positive discipline. Instead of saying "don't," staff are encouraged to reinforce positive behavior through praise, approval, and encouragement.

**see Behavior Section of Classroom Policies handed out at Orientation*

OUR SCHEDULE

8:30 AM - Drop-off

Centers

Morning Circle/Lesson

Group Activity

Snack Time

Exercise/Outside Play (Weather Permitting)

Storytime

Group Activity

Centers

Lunch

Bathroom/Clean Up

Quiet Time/Rest (*Only 2.5's and 3's class nap*)

Afternoon Circle

2:30 PM - Dismissal