

Summer, 2018

Dear Bishop John A. Marshall School Pre-Kindergarten Families,

Welcome to the pre-kindergarten program! I am excited and honored to be your child's teacher this year and I look forward to getting to know your child and your family. I want to share a little about me and my background. I live in Waterbury with my husband, Bob, and our four children, Liam, Kate, Cole and Patrick, who range in age from 9-19. We also have two Labrador Retrievers, a gecko and a hedgehog. I love spending time with my family, hiking in the woods and dancing. This is my third year teaching pre-kindergarten at BJAMS and I love it! I have been working with and teaching children for the last thirteen years and in addition to my work as a classroom teacher, I have also worked as an educational consultant teaching the creative movement-based learning curriculum that I co-authored, AB2 (Active Body – Active Brain); and I am an instructor for Vermont Northern Lights Early Childhood Career Development Center. I am a passionate educator and believe that each child is a unique learner that needs to be nurtured and inspired. Pre-kindergarten is a very exciting time in a child's early education, yet it is also a time of transition. I will work hard to help your child feel comfortable, supported and enthusiastic about coming to school; and I will help to prepare your child for kindergarten.

In preparation for the year ahead, I would like to provide you with a few details to ensure a smooth introduction to pre-kindergarten.

- Please mark your calendars for our **pre-kindergarten social on Monday, August 13th from 4:00- 5:00pm**. We will meet on the playground in the back of the school and light refreshments for the students will be provided. Please note that the school will be closed for cleaning during that time so if the weather is inclement, we will have to cancel. I will post something on the Pre-K Blog Site in the event this happens (go to BJAMS website under "current families" tab to find the blog site). This will be a nice opportunity for us all to meet each other prior to the first day of school. However, I realize summer is busy so if you are not able to make it, I understand. Also, just a note that there will be a **free-of-charge uniform swap that day from 3-4 p.m.** You do not have to contribute any items to be able to take them!
- Below is what you need to bring on your child's first day of school:
  - **Healthy morning snack** (please send this each day). Pre-k students do not buy snack at school because they are not allowed to walk to the cafeteria alone. Also, please send in a large box of goldfish crackers and a box of graham crackers (afternoon snack). When our afternoon snack supply has run out, I will let everyone know so that it can be replenished.
  - **Packed lunch or money** to purchase lunch in our cafeteria. Children put their lunch choice up during their morning routine. Please note that milk comes with a hot lunch. If your child has brought a packed lunch and wants milk, he/she can indicate that on our lunch board. Also, just a note that we do have a microwave in the cafeteria to heat up food and I have an apple slicer in the classroom. To add money to your child's lunch account, please stop by the cafeteria and place labeled cash or a check in the box near the cafeteria window. The lunch menu is posted on our website (go to the "Current Families" tab) and is also included in the Friday Notes. I also post it in the classroom.
  - **Water bottle** (spill proof), labeled with your child's name.
  - **Full change of clothes** to keep in the bottom section of your child's cubby. Please send a shirt, pants, underwear and socks. Also, please label all your children's clothing and belongings.
  - **Fitted rest mat sheet** (not a crib sheet) and a small blanket for rest time. Dimensions of rest mats are 20" x 44". So a 24 x 48" size sheet or something close to that works best. Children may also bring in a stuffed animal or other rest-time comfort if they want. Children are not required to sleep during rest-time but they need to rest quietly. I provide books for them to look at if they want and play a story for them to listen to.

- **Backpack with a labeled folder** in it for school correspondence, art work, etc.
- **Sneakers** for P.E. class and/or recess. Please send your child with sneakers in his/her backpack each day if they are not worn to school. You are also welcome to leave a pair of sneakers in your child's cubby. Also, on wet/muddy/snow weather days, please be sure your child has boots and proper outdoor attire. And on sunny days, feel free to send in a hat or sunglasses. It is also helpful for us to have a sunscreen here for your child (this must be labeled and you will need to sign our sunscreen permission form). And if your child burns easily, please also apply sunscreen on your child in the morning before school.

Our school day starts at 8:00am. Students may begin arriving at 7:30am in our classroom. Dismissal is at 3:00pm. Pre-k students must be picked up in the classroom. If you arrive before dismissal, please wait in the hallway until I open the door, so your child can be a part of our closing circle. However, if you need to pick up your child early, just let me know. The only people who can pick up your child are people that you have listed on the "authorized pick up list." You may add people as needed by notifying Maryellen Kohl in the front office.

During the first few weeks of school, we will be establishing routines and I will be helping the children learn how to be more independent. Your child will have a morning routine to follow each morning and I ask parents to help with this for the first week or two of school. Once your child is familiar with the routine, I would like him/her follow the routine independently. I realize that this may be your child's first experience leaving you for an extended period of time. Please know that I understand the emotional impact that this separation can cause, not only for your child, but also for you. We will work together to ease your child through this transition. During the first week of school, I encourage you to have a plan that you communicate to your child to make the transition a little easier. For example, you might tell your child, "I will walk in with you, help you with your morning routine, give you a hug, and then I must leave."

Occasionally, our younger students have bathroom accidents. It is not always possible to provide the necessary cleanup because teachers are not able to provide care in the bathrooms. If a teacher feels that an issue has occurred beyond a student's ability to maintain proper hygiene, the student must be picked up from school. We are very sensitive to the health and well-being of all of our students.

A note about communication...I believe that good communication is the key to all successful relationships. I am always available to answer any of your questions or to discuss concerns, and conversely, I will contact you if I have any questions or concerns. I also want you to feel involved in your child's education here at BJAMS. I will be emailing you a link during the first week of school to our Shutterfly Pre-K website. This is a closed site that only parents can view. However, if you have a grandparent or someone else that you want invited to our site, email me with that person's contact info and I can add him/her. I post pictures and a journal entry each week. I also include questions that you can ask your child. This is a great way for you to reinforce learning at home and also it is a fun way to engage in conversation with your child. I have also included a questionnaire for you to fill out. Please return this to me at the school before school starts (BJAMS, 680 Laporte Road, Morrisville, VT, 05661).

Finally, if you have any questions or need clarification on any of the information in this letter, please feel free to ask me questions at our social or email me at [LFlaherty@bjams.org](mailto:LFlaherty@bjams.org). Additional information is also available in the Parent/Student Handbook, which will be uploaded to our school's web site in mid-August. The handbook contains information that will be useful as you and your child navigate the pre-kindergarten year.

Enjoy the rest of summer!

Kindest regards,

Laurie Flaherty, Pre-Kindergarten Teacher