



## **Sprouts Garden Preschool Parent Handbook Updated 2/5/2022**

### **About Sprouts Garden Preschool**

Sprouts Garden Preschool provides a high-quality nature preschool program that uses the natural world and plants as a focus for students' learning. Sprouts Garden Preschool's curriculum strives to foster students' cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and creative development, is inclusive and meets the needs of all students, and incorporates gardening and healthy habits into the curriculum.

Sprouts Garden Preschool has nature at the heart of the program, with teaching based on high-quality early childhood education and environmental education practices, laying a foundation for environmental literacy. Academic skills such as pattern recognition, letters, numbers, and colors emerge from outdoor learning experiences like counting birds on the pond, looking for matching colors of flowers and bugs, tracking animal prints in the snow, and journaling about nature observations. Positive social interaction and respect for others are heightened and reinforced by outdoor exploration and play. Student learning is grounded in the sensory experience of what is closest—the animals, plants, rocks, and weather that surround them every day.

### **At Sprouts Garden Preschool, students will:**

- play and learn in all types of weather
- learn to navigate appropriate risks and make decisions
- experience teamwork, conflict, and develop social skills
- hypothesize and experiment in nature
- climb, run, play, and learn on and off the trails within the Gardens
- use imagination to play and engage with nature
- participate in group and individual play and learning

### **Risks and Hazards**

At Sprouts Garden Preschool, students will be exposed to age-appropriate risk through lessons and free play. Learning how to take appropriate risks helps children gain independence, confidence, and decision-making skills. Age-appropriate risks students might take include walking along fallen logs, climbing small trees, and using natural items like sticks while playing.

While age-appropriate risks are good learning opportunities for students, hazards are situations in which students have no control, and hazards will be monitored and controlled by teachers at all times. Hazards include sharp branches at eye level, dangerous weather, or ice.

## **Clothing**

Remember: “There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing.”

Students will be spending at least 80% of each day outdoors, and more is better, so students should be dressed for the weather, messy play, and be wearing clothing that does not restrict movement or activities. Students should be prepared with layers that can be added and removed, not be wearing costumes, clothing special to them, or fancy clothing not designed for free outdoor play. See the recommended clothing lists below for the layers students may need each season.

Fall/Spring Clothing:

- Waterproof boots
- Closed-toed shoes to run and play in
- Sturdy socks
- Jacket or sweatshirt
- Rain pants and a rain jacket

Winter Clothing:

- Scarf or neck warmer
- Hat
- Knit mittens
- Waterproof mittens
- Insulated boots
- Snow pants
- Winter coat
- Wool socks

A complete change of clothes should be kept at school. You can include all items at the beginning of the year or change them out seasonally. The change of clothes should consist of socks, underwear, top, pants, sweatshirt, or jacket.

Students should have a water bottle daily. Students can leave their water bottle at school for the week but must take the bottle home at the end of the week to wash at home.

All pieces of your students' extra clothing and water bottle should be labeled with their full name.

## **What Not to Bring to School**

Students should not bring anything extra (toys, games, electronics) to school that their teacher

has not requested.

## **Family Expectations & Understandings**

To create the best possible learning environment and provide the best role models we can for our students, we ask that all families agree to the following outline of expectations and understandings.

- Respect the Gardens' rules when on the property
- Supervise children before signing in and after signing out
- Be respectful to all others you encounter on the property
- Be enthusiastic and encourage your child to be ready to be outdoors at school
- The preschool will include freedoms for your child, and they will be encouraged to explore, play, and evaluate their own abilities and risks
- Though we want children to be safe at all times, children may occasionally experience minor scrapes, bruises, and bumps
- Your child will be in new social situations and may experience conflict. Preschool teachers will guide your child through these essential learning moments, and these are important developmental moments for your child
- Read and respond (when appropriate) to all school and teacher communications, including handbooks, calendars, and emails
- Drop off and pick up on time
- Parents and caregivers should attend all parent-teacher conferences

## **Enrollment & Tuition**

To apply for enrollment, please submit the Enrollment Form along with a non-refundable \$30 application fee to Sprouts Garden Preschool by July 15th.

By applying for enrollment, you acknowledge the following:

1. I understand that the application fee (\$30) is non-refundable and must accompany my child's completed application.
2. I understand that I am responsible for the payment of contracted fees and that the first tuition payment will be due on August 15th.
3. I understand that Preschool tuition is non-refundable.
4. I understand that I do not receive refunds or adjustments in tuition for holidays, inclement weather closings, or days missed.
5. I understand that a \$35.00 charge is assessed for each Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) check received.
6. I understand that per Sprouts Garden Preschool's policies, my child must be fully toilet trained to attend the Preschool. By "fully toilet trained," we mean that your child must wear underpants (no pull-ups) and be able to urinate and have their bowel movement on the toilet as well as wipe themselves after. On August 15th, when the first tuition payment is due, if my child is not completely toilet trained, I will decide to a) put my child on a waitlist in the hopes that a spot will open after he/she is toilet trained or b) decide to hold off and wait until the next school year. In all cases, my child's \$30 deposit will be held

until they are ready to enroll.

7. I understand that I will be notified of my child's enrollment status by email by August 1st and that if a place has not been secured, my child will be placed on a wait-list.
8. I understand that, upon notification of my child's acceptance into class, I agree to pay a \$150 fee to hold my child's place within ten business days of notification. The \$150 will be applied to the first month's tuition, due August 15th, and is non-refundable.
9. I understand that, should my child be accepted, I agree to complete and return all enrollment forms (listed below) and first-month tuition to the Sprouts Garden Preschool by August 15th, and all following month's tuition is due on the 15th of the prior month.
10. I understand that direct withdrawal needs to be set up for tuition payments by September 7th, or alternate payment arrangements need to be made with the Education Manager.

Enrollment forms to be submitted by August 15th:

- Enrollment Form
- Health History & Emergency Care Plan
- Immunization Record
- General Permissions Form
- Online Learning Permissions
- ACH Direct Debit Form

## **Class Schedules & Payment Options**

The school year runs Sept-May.

**Fall Semester** September 7-January 14

**Spring Semester** January 17-May 27

**Tuition** is due on the 15th of each month

**Discounts:** 5% discount for semester payments, 10% discount for annual payment

<b>Class Name</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Monthly Tuition (rates effective Aug 2022)</b>
Sunflower Sprouts (3-4 year olds)	Mon, Wed, & Fri 8:30-11:30am	\$300
Alfalfa Sprouts (4-5 year olds)	Mon, Wed, & Fri 12:30-3:30pm	\$300
Clover Sprouts (3-4 year olds)	Tuesday & Thursday 8:30-11:30am	\$230
Brussels Sprouts (4-5 year olds)	Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-3:30pm	\$230

## **Scholarship Information**

Scholarships are available, please see our website (<https://www.monkgardens.org/sprouts>) for more information or contact the Education Manager at 715-261-6309 or [eschuler@monkgardens.org](mailto:eschuler@monkgardens.org).

## **Discharge & Withdrawal Policy**

Sprouts Garden Preschool reserves the right to cancel a student's enrollment for the following reasons.

- Failure of the parent to complete and return all required forms
- Physical or verbal abuse of children or staff by a parent
- Failure of the parent to observe the rules of the Preschool, including expectations outlined in the Parent Handbook
- Following reasonable efforts on the part of the Preschool staff and the child's parents, a child may be discharged if there are behavioral or developmental concerns beyond the scope of what the Preschool is able to manage

If parents decide to withdraw their child from Sprouts Garden Preschool, the parents must notify the Education Manager in writing. Tuition is non-refundable.

## **Daily Sign-in & Sign-out**

It is required that your child be signed in and out of preschool by a parent, guardian, or adult listed on your child's approved list. Your child must be walked into class to be dropped off and signed in, and you must walk into class to sign out and pick up your child.

If the adult picking up your child is not recognized, staff will ask for identification. If an adult not on the approved list will be picking up your child, please call the Education Manager or notify your child's teacher in writing at drop-off.

If an unauthorized adult arrives to pick up your child, staff will contact you, and your child will remain with preschool teachers or staff until you can pick up your child or authorization from you has been received for the new pick-up person.

## **Late Pickup Policy**

Sprouts Garden Preschool understands that issues may arise that cause you to be late picking up your child. If you know you will be late, please call the Education Manager so teachers and your child will be aware that you'll be late. Sprouts Garden Preschool reserves the right to issue a fee to families consistently late picking up their child.

## **Snow Days/School Closings**

Sprouts Garden Preschool follows the lead of Wausau School District when closing for weather-related emergencies and reserves the right to make our own closing determinations as needed.

Parents will be notified by email and through the Sprouts Preschool's communication app (ClassTag) of all closures.

## **Sprouts Cold Weather Policy (Last Updated 1.18.2022)**

**Cold weather decisions will always be made based on the real feel (accounting for wind chill) temperature, rather than the actual temperature.**

**As a general rule, we will follow the closures of the Wausau School District, but Sprouts will implement some additional routine changes to keep students safe on especially cold days.** The Wausau School District cancels classes when the real feel temperature is -40 or below.

### **When the real feel temperature is:**

- between 0 and -20 classes will spend small amounts of time outdoors, usually no more than 45 minutes.
- between -20 and -39 classes will spend the full class session in the yurt **OR** class will be canceled depending on what the best & safest decision is for an individual class or situation
- -40 or colder, classes will always be canceled.

***Teachers know their classes well and will always use their best judgment to decide the appropriate amount of time to spend outdoors for each class. In some cases classes may be canceled before temperatures reach -40 if that is the safest option for students.***

**Canceled Class Notifications:** Sprouts will notify families by both email and a message on ClassTag. If families need to be notified in another way, please let your teachers know so we can make those arrangements. We will do our best to notify you by the evening before and at the latest by 2hrs prior to your child's class' start time.

## **Emergency Procedures**

In case of all emergencies, parents will be called to notify them of the situation. All preschool staff are CPR, and First Aid trained and certified.

**Fire:** Teachers will lead the class out the front gate of the Gardens into the center of the grass field at the corner of 1st Ave and Campus Dr and gather to wait for further instruction based on the incident. Fire drills will be held monthly.

**Tornado:** Teachers will lead the full group of children along the fastest route to the tornado shelter on the north side of the pond. Tornado drills will be held monthly May-October.

**Accident or Injury:** All accidents or injuries will be documented in a medical logbook. Teachers will treat all minor injuries with first aid kits as needed, and in case of severe injury 911 will be called. A parent will be notified at pick-up or contacted immediately if the incident is severe.

**Illness:** If your child becomes ill at preschool or during camp, you will be contacted immediately. Your child will be removed from the group and made comfortable until you can pick them up.

### **First Aid**

First aid kits are with each teacher at all times, and additional first aid kits are kept under the kitchen sink in the potager, in the shed, and in the tornado shelter. Signs mark first aid kit locations.

### **Medical/Incident Log Book**

All injuries or accidents will be recorded in the medical logbook, and parents will be informed of minor injuries at pickup and more serious injuries at the time that they occur. A copy of the incident log will be available to parents by request.

### **Nutrition**

Parents are required to send a snack with their child to camp/preschool every day. The snack should be able to be stored at room temperature in the child's backpack until snack time.

Snacks will not be shared between children, and snacks will not be provided by the preschool.

Snack time will be held during the middle of the preschool day.

Additional snack restrictions may be implemented on a case-by-case basis depending on known allergies of children in each camp or class.

Children are required to bring a reusable water bottle to camp/class every day.

### **Holidays & Birthdays**

Birthdays and half-birthday celebration treats are welcome to be brought by families. Please check with your child's teacher regarding any food allergies in your child's class.

Holidays and significant seasonal events will be acknowledged through song, stories, snacks, or cooking. Families are welcome to share their cultural traditions with teachers and arrange ways to incorporate appropriate ways to share your family's traditions in class.

### **Child Guidance**

Student behavior will be guided by setting clear limits and rules. Expectations will be made clear for day-to-day routines as well as for each new activity and project. Those behavior expectations will be modeled by all teachers. Undesirable behavior will be redirected to another activity or children will be given choices of acceptable activities.

If a student is upset or distraught, teachers will get down on the student's level and talk to them to try to find the cause of the issue. Students will be encouraged to express in healthy ways their emotions and to talk through their feelings.

If a student chooses to remove themselves from an activity for a moment or to "take some space" teachers will respect that decision, allow the student to move away from the group (but still within sight), and check in with that student after 2-3 minutes if they have not chosen to rejoin the class.

If there is an unexpected incident with a student's behavior during class or if teachers notice a repeated behavior, teachers will discuss with that students' caregivers at pick-up or by phone/email.

### **Unexpected Absences**

Students are expected at school unless staff is otherwise notified by the students' parents.

If your child will be absent, you will need to let their teacher know the day before or call/text the Education Manager (715-869-4565) prior to the start of your child's class. The Education Manager will ensure that your child's teacher knows they will be absent. If by 15 minutes past the start of your child's class, your child is absent without notice and we have not heard from you, we will call you.

Absences should not be reported by email since staff may not be checking email at that time.

### **Confidentiality**

Staff having access to children's records will not discuss or disclose personal information regarding the children to others except to the parent(s), or other person authorized by the parent, or as authorized by law.

### **Photo Policy**



A photo release is one of the required forms for enrollment. This agreement allows the Gardens and Sprouts Garden Preschool to use images of your child for educational and marketing purposes, including on print publications, our website, and social media.

If photos of your child are used, they will never be identified by name or class.

On the photo release, you can accept or deny Sprouts Garden Preschool permission to take photos of your child.

## **Social Media Policy for Families & Sprouts Staff**

If you post photos of Sprouts classes on social media, please:

- Do not post photos of other children without permission from their parents.
- Recognize that all posts made within all social media platforms, no matter how strict the privacy settings, should be considered part of the public domain
- Be respectful of preschool staff, families, programs, etc.

Recognize that staff and parents may have different feelings regarding social media friendships while your child is enrolled in preschool. If friendships on social media are denied by preschool staff, this is due to a professional decision and should not be taken personally.

## **Health**

While we want to see your child at school as often as possible, there are times when your child should stay home.

If your child has one or more of the following, please keep them home from school/camp.

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher (Staff may check your child's temperature at arrival)
- A low-grade fever and acting ill
- An infectious disease
- Vomiting or upset stomach
- Diarrhea
- Constant runny nose
- Continuous coughing
- Lice
- Rash

Please make sure your child is fever-free and symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school/camp.

You will be notified if your child has been exposed to a contagious disease, and we request that you inform our staff if your child is exposed to or contracts any communicable disease.

***Until further notice, families are also required to read and adhere to COVID-19 policies. Our current Sick Student & COVID policy (updated 1/9/2022) is below.***

## **Sick Student & COVID Policy**

**COVID Close Contact/Exposure:** If a student has a COVID exposure or close contact, students should:

- complete a 7 day quarantine at home with a negative test on day 6 or 7 before returning to school
- OR**
- complete a full 10 day quarantine at home without a test before returning to school

**Symptomatic Student Protocol:** If students (or students' family members) have the symptoms listed below, we ask that students stay home, and the student should be COVID tested with a PCR test.

If the COVID test is **positive**, before returning to school the student must:

1. Wait 10 days after initial symptoms appear **AND**
2. Be fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, **AND**
3. All other symptoms should be improving

***OR***

1. If a student tests positive for COVID, but has no symptoms, the student can return to class 10 days after their positive COVID test if they remain asymptomatic.

If the student's COVID test is **negative**, the student should still stay home until symptoms improve.

**If a student shows symptoms at school:**

1. The student will be isolated from the class, and a parent will be called for pickup
2. The student will be required to be COVID tested before returning to school
3. If the student's test is positive, the student must follow the protocol above **AND** the student's class will be required to quarantine for 14 days to monitor for symptoms. If any additional students show symptoms, they must follow the above protocol as well before returning to school.
4. If the student's test is negative, the student can return to class when symptoms improve

**Additional Sprouts COVID policies & precautions:** As always, we will be doing our best to ensure good hand hygiene with students, and masks are required for anyone (ages 2 and up) in the yurt. If there is a positive COVID case within one of our classes or staff that has contact with your children, we will inform all families as soon as possible. As a reminder, we are unable to provide discounts or changes to tuition amounts due to absences.

**COVID Symptom list:**

- Fever, temperature 100.4 °F or higher, or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or stomachache

**Preventing the Spread of Illness**

To do our part in preventing the spread of communicable diseases, staff and children will participate in the following good hygiene practices.

Children will wash their hands:

- When arriving at school/camp
- Before and after eating
- After any contact with wild animals or insects
- After using the restroom
- After sneezing and/or blowing their nose
- When hands appear dirty
- When entering the classroom after being outdoors

Staff will wash their hands:

- When arriving at school/camp
- Before and after eating
- After any contact with wild animals or insects
- Before and after giving first aid
- Before and after administering medication
- After using the restroom
- After sneezing and/or blowing their nose
- When hands appear dirty

- When entering the classroom after being outdoors

Staff will wear gloves when giving first aid or when administering medication. Gloves are single-use and will be disposed of after each use.

## **Sunscreen & Bug Spray**

Staff will only apply sunscreen or bug spray to your child if we have been given permission on your child's health history form.

Please send your child to class prepared for the outdoors by applying sunscreen or bug spray to your child at home before coming to school or outside during drop-off.

Send students to school wearing appropriate clothing for the weather that also protects them from the sun. Sunglasses and long-sleeved shirts are encouraged. Students should always be sent to school with a hat if possible.

## **Plants & Insects**

Students will play off the trails within the Gardens' property. While playing and learning at the Gardens, children may encounter plants such as poison ivy, stinging nettles, other thorny plants, mosquitoes, bees, hornets, other stinging or biting insects, and different types of ticks.

All of these are a part of nature, and students will learn about them, and staff will guide students in identifying them as they're playing and learning. Appropriate dress is one way to help avoid uncomfortable encounters with hazardous plants and insects.

In the situation that your child comes into contact with any hazardous plants or insects, staff will contact you immediately if it is an emergency (bee sting) or will inform you at pick-up if it was a minor incident (ran through poison ivy with long pants on).

*Find Poison Ivy information here:*

- <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/poison-ivy/>

*Find tick information here:*

- [https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing\\_a\\_tick.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html)
- <https://wisconsin-ticks.russell.wisc.edu/tick-identification-for-public-health-and-medical-professionals/>

## **Animal Contact**

Students may come in contact with wild animals while at the Gardens, including turtles, frogs, toads, and snakes. Students may have the opportunity to catch frogs and toads, whereas turtles and snakes may be caught by staff and held while students can touch them safely.

Staff and students will wash their hands after touching any wild animal.

### **Waterfront Activities**

The Gardens' property includes a small pond, which the preschool will use.

When interacting with the water, children will only be to stand on the edge of the water while wearing proper footwear (ex: water shoes, sneakers, closed-toed sandals). Children may engage in frog catching using their hands or nets and collecting insects and plants to take to shore to look at more closely.

Two adults will always be present if children are interacting with the water.

### **Monk Botanical Gardens Memberships**

A family membership is included in your child's enrollment in Sprouts Garden Preschool. Your family can decide to increase your membership level to support Monk Botanical Gardens further.

Find Membership levels and benefits information here:

<https://www.monkgardens.org/page/become-a-member>

**Sprouts Garden Preschool may make edits to the parent handbook and Preschool policies as necessary. Updates will be added to the website and any enrolled families will be notified. Sprouts Preschool's full-length policies are available upon request.**