



Merri-Loo Community Preschool

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Merri-Loo Community Preschool Handbook

Welcome!

Merri-Loo Community Preschool was incorporated in 1968 as a private, non-profit, cooperative Preschool serving the Goffstown area. All families are welcome, and Merri-Loo will never discriminate based on race, gender, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual preference, gender identity or income. The school is administered by a Board of Directors made up of Merri-Loo parents. Merri-Loo is licensed by the Bureau of Child Care Licensing.

Philosophy

Merri-Loo Community Preschool is a cooperative school inviting parents, a child's first teacher, to work with the classroom teacher to create a positive, safe, nurturing, and fun learning environment. The teachers use thematic units to provide developmentally appropriate, process-oriented activities. Merri-Loo combines teacher-directed learning centers with opportunities for free play, social interactions with peers, small and large group activities.

Registration

To be eligible for the Nursery class, children must be 3 before Dec. 1st. To be eligible for the Pre-K class, children must be 4 by Oct. 1st. All children must be toilet trained by the first day of school.

In-House registration for current students and siblings of current students usually begins around the second week of February each year. Open registration begins the following week. Announcements are made at the school, the Merri-Loo Facebook page and at www.merriloo.org. You can reach a staff person via email at merriloooschool@gmail.com or call the school at 497-3350. Please speak to the Director if you have any further questions or concerns.

There is a \$75 non-refundable registration fee. This fee, along with the one-page contract form will secure a child's slot. Additional forms will be handed out in a packet at Merri-Loo in your child's cubby or you will receive an email informing you of a Packet Pick-Up Night. The forms will be due, on a predetermined date, via email from the Registrar, along with your child's first tuition payment. The first payment is non-refundable, if you should change your mind before the start of the school year.

In late summer, there will be a mandatory Parent Orientation Meeting. The week before school starts, there will be an Open House during which children will have an opportunity to meet their teachers and classmates.

Tuition

Merri-Loo has two types of tuition rates; Co-op and Non Co-op. Selecting the co-op rate requires a commitment to a co-op job. Some are suitable for working families and some will work best for families with flexible schedules. A list of the jobs and their requirements can be found towards the end of the Parent Handbook. Should a family not meet their co-op responsibility, they will be charged the higher non co-op tuition rate. Members of the Board of Directors fulfill their co-op requirements and receive an additional savings on their child's tuition.

Pre-K: Co-op tuition: \$374 (9 payments)
 Non-Coop tuition: \$445 (9 payments)

Nursery: Co-op tuition: \$242 (9 payments)
 Non-Coop tuition: \$313 (9 payments)

Board Positions:

Pre-K: \$357 (9 payments)
Nursery: \$225 (9 payments)

There is a 10% sibling discount on tuition.

Tuition will be paid following a payment plan of nine (9) equal payments, the first of which is due with the registration packet. Dates for pick-up and drop-off will be sent to you via email. The remaining eight (8) payments are due on the 5th of the month from October through May. Parents can pay tuition via cash or check and drop it in the locked box in the front hall, or they can pay via Pay Pal (merrilooschool@gmail.com).

If for any reason a tuition payment will be late, please notify the treasurer. If needed, the treasurer can put in place a payment plan for your family. You will be responsible for any returned check fees imposed by the bank.

Please be aware that tuition, although paid in nine (9) installments, is budgeted as a yearly amount. The school's budget is based on receiving full payments from each family each month. Merri-Loo does not refund families for missed days due to illness, vacation days, snow days or any other event that would require the school to be closed for the day.

For those families that qualify for the child care tax credit, Merri-Loo's tax ID number is 020275201. Contact the treasurer for a statement regarding tuition paid for tax purposes.

The Board of Directors retains the right to increase tuition after due consideration of enrollment and monthly expenses.

Schedule

The Nursery class is held on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The Pre-K class is held on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Parents will receive a yearly calendar at the end of the school year. It will include any holidays, teacher workshop days and vacation weeks. For the most part, Merri-Loo follows the Goffstown, SAU 19 School District calendar, with the exception of Christmas break, the first and last days of school. There is an extra week of vacation in December.

Merri-Loo's school year usually begins the second week of September and ends at the end of May.

Arrival and Departure

Arrival: Nursery and Pre-K classes begin at 8:30 a.m.

The classroom door will remain closed until the start of class. Extended care is not offered. Please speak to the Director if you have further questions. The teachers use before school time to prepare and set up the classroom. In order to provide a coordinated program for the whole group and for children's peace of mind, parents are asked to be punctual. If you plan on arriving late, please inform the teachers. Parents are required to accompany their child into school and assist them with removal of outerwear. Parents must ensure that the teachers are aware of their child's arrival before they leave. Once all children arrive in the morning, the front door will be locked. Please ring the doorbell and a staff person will let you in.

Departure: The Nursery class ends at 12:30 p.m. and the Pre-K class ends at 1:30 p.m. Most small children have no firm concept of time and even a 5-minute delay in a parent's arrival can cause them to worry when their classmates have already been picked up. Merri-Loo asks that parents fill out the "Pick-up Sheet" on the front door if someone other than themselves is picking up their child. Children will only be allowed to leave with the people listed on their Registration form under emergency contact/alternate pick up people. Parents are able to add or subtract people from this list in person. People who the staff are unfamiliar with will need to present a photo ID. Any person who appears to be incapacitated, and unable of taking responsibility for a child, including a parent, will be prevented from picking the child up. An alternate parent or emergency contact person will be called.

There is a sign-in and sign-out sheet in the front hallway. The date and time of arrival and pick up needs to be filled in on a daily basis, along with your signature.

Field Trips

Parents will be notified in advance of any field trip. There will be a sign-up sheet on your classroom's bulletin board in the front hallway.

- Siblings are welcome to attend. If a fee is included, the same fee will apply.
- All students will receive a bright yellow Merri-Loo t-shirt at the beginning of the school year for children to wear on field trips.

Progress Reports

Parents will receive a mid-year (January) progress report and an end of the year (May) progress report on their child. Parents that wish to discuss some aspect of their child's school experience with his/her teacher, may do so immediately following the end of the school day. Parents are welcome to contact your child's teacher to set up a conference if there are questions or concerns.

Clothing

Children should wear play clothes to school. Sometimes, despite best efforts, clothing gets stained by paints or glues etc. Clothing should also be easy to take off and put back on for ease in using the toilet. Please dress children appropriately for the weather. In winter children will need boots, a hat, mittens, etc. If children wear snow boots to school, parents are asked to send them in with an extra dry pair of shoes to wear in the classroom. Children should have a backpack for lunch boxes, water bottles, artwork, and notices.

Families are asked to bring in a full change of clothes for your student to remain at school, in case of an accident. The school will provide small plastic containers for your child. Remember to send us a new set if we end up using it.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed in the school building, on the school grounds, or during field trips at any time.

Scholastic Books

Merri-Loo participates in the Scholastic Book Club each month. Book orders are sent home monthly. These are quality books offered at discount prices. Parents are asked to order through the Scholastic Book website at www.scholastic.com/bookclubs using the school code: H6DKM. Parents are under no obligation to purchase anything. The school accumulates credits from Scholastic orders, which are cashed in for free equipment or books to use in the classroom.

Newsletters

A newsletter will be sent home with students at the end of each week for the Nursery class. Pre-k will receive an email. This will serve to notify parents of upcoming events and items students may need, including a synopsis of the week and a look at the week ahead.

Snack and Lunch

SNACK: Parents bring in a snack for the whole class on a rotating basis and will receive a monthly calendar with the snack schedule. For a drink, Merri-Loo asks for only 100% juice. Water will also be provided for the children to drink. Parents will be informed if someone in the class suffers from a food allergy. Merri-Loo will often need to declare the school a peanut and tree nut free zone to accommodate those students with food allergies.

LUNCH: Parents will need to pack a lunch each day for their child. Please use containers that keep food warm or send in a cold lunch. Merri-Loo does not have enough time to warm up lunches.

BIRTHDAY: Birthdays are a big event in a child's life, and they enjoy celebrating with their friends. Children will be scheduled to bring in a snack on the day closest to their birthday. You are welcome to bring in a snack of your choice. If a child's birthday falls during the summer, a 1/2 birthday celebration will be scheduled.

Board Meetings

Board meetings are held once a month. Parents should feel free to attend any and all Board meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss any aspect of the school community. There is one mandatory meeting that Parents are required to attend, which is the Parent Orientation meeting held the week before school starts in August. Please contact the Director if you are unable to attend.

Weather Cancellations

Merri-Loo follows the Goffstown School District snow cancellation policy. If Goffstown schools are closed, Merri-Loo will be closed. If Goffstown has a 2-hour delay day, Pre-K will open at 10:30 a.m. and Nursery will not have school. Merri-Loo will post a notice on the school Facebook page if school is closed or delayed.

Charitable Activities

Part of the Merri-Loo program is teaching the children the concept of giving to people less fortunate than themselves. It is a tradition at the school to help out needy families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, by collecting food for the Goffstown food network.

Fundraising

Throughout the year, Merri-Loo Community Preschool will run several different Fundraising initiatives and events to raise money for the school. These events range from selling items such as Holiday wreaths & swags, Krispy Kreme Donuts, Van Otis Chocolates, Raffles, and a Late Summer/Early Fall Mums sale, which is our biggest fundraiser.

All fundraising events will take place during the year as decided by the Board of Directors and announcements can be found in children's cubbies, class Newsletters, email, the Merri-loo website at www.merriloo.org and the Merri-Loo Facebook page.

In addition, Merri-Loo may participate in Goffstown community events, in which, parents will be asked to volunteer their time.

The involvement of **ALL** families is vital to the success of Merri-Loo's fundraising Initiatives.

Merri-Loo collects **Box Tops for Education** throughout the school year. These are redeemed for checks twice a year. Download the Box Top App to scan and download the receipt.

All funds from these activities may be used for major purchases of school equipment, building improvements, or in emergencies. The extra income provided by the fundraisers is vital to Merri-Loo's financial future and allows Merri-Loo to keep tuition low. Donated cash and merchandise are tax-deductible to the extent of the law.

Behavior Management / Expulsion Prevention

Typical development for three and four-year-old children often includes challenging behaviors. When these behaviors occur at school, the teachers do their best to guide children in ways that acknowledge that the behavior is developmental in nature while also attempting to curb undesirable outcomes. The teacher(s) will first talk with the child or children involved to find out what the child is thinking or feeling and to explain what is expected of him/her in the classroom. If the behavior in question persists, other techniques might be used. Some of the techniques used include the following:

- Redirection: For example, a child who is exhibiting frustration or over excitement at one activity might be called over to another activity that is less challenging or more calming.
- Logical consequences: For example, if a child is throwing blocks, they will be instructed to leave the block center. If someone is ripping books, they won't be allowed in the library for the rest of free play or activity time. If someone is running into classmates intentionally on the playground, they won't be allowed to stay on the playground.
- Conflict resolution: For example, if two classmates are arguing over a toy or a situation, a teacher will help them each to express how they feel about the situation, what they want, and help them to come up with some possible solutions.

Occasionally, young children will exhibit atypical behaviors or typical behaviors occurring with atypical intensity or frequency. When these behaviors result in injuries to

classmates or staff, the destruction of property, or situations that put the child in harm's way, additional interventions and resources need to be implemented.

Staff and parents will brainstorm together to come up with possible interventions that may include:

- daily check-ins with parents regarding behavior
- recording of behavior on incident report forms
- change in classroom routine
- change in physical environment
- classroom observation by a clinical specialist
- referrals for appropriate services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, or mental health services

If the behaviors continue, additional steps might include:

- A reduction in the number of hours the child attends school, selecting times of the day that the child can be most successful.
- Creation of a protocol under which a child will be sent home if certain behaviors occur.
- As a last resort, withdrawal from the program.

It is always Merri-Loo's intent to do everything possible to make each child's experience a nurturing and enriching one. The school endeavors to help children gain the skills and maturity they need to be successful in Kindergarten and beyond.

In Sickness and Health

As part of the registration process, each child must have a Child Health Form including an immunization record filled out and signed by his/her pediatrician. The child must have had a physical within the last twelve months, and their immunizations must be up to date. A new Child Health form is required one year from the date of the child's last physical. This is a state law for all children in Early Childhood Programs.

* If parents need a waiver for health or religious reasons, please see the Director.

Parents must ensure to discuss any allergies or health concerns with the child's teacher.

If a child is sick, please keep them home. Children that have had a fever of 101 or higher, diarrhea, or vomiting, are not allowed to be at school until 24 hours after the last episode. Some conditions such as Strep throat require the child to be on an antibiotic for 24 hours before they can return to school. Other conditions such as head lice, conjunctivitis, ringworm etc. necessitate temporary exclusion from school until the child is no longer contagious.

Parents should contact their teacher via text or email if their student will not be in school. Merri-Loo is required to inform families about certain contagious illnesses that the class has been exposed to. If a child becomes ill while at school, the staff will call the child's parents to make arrangements to pick them up as soon as possible.

If a child is on medication, parents must do everything possible to give it to them before they arrive at school, or when they return home. Class days are short, so giving

medication at school should be a rare occurrence. If a child needs emergency rescue medication for severe allergies or asthma, parents must follow the following protocols:

- All medication must be delivered to school with a prescription label or in the original over the counter container.
- Medication must be handed directly to the child's teacher. They will check the label to be sure the child's name and date of birth are on it, and that it has not expired.
- Parents will be asked to fill out a medication permission form to provide the dose, and the way the medication is to be delivered. (mouth, nebulizer, inhaler, Epi-pen injection, etc.). These directions must match the prescription label, or the dosage directions for the child's age on the over the counter bottle.
- Teachers cannot deviate from the dosage on the over-the-counter bottle without a doctor's note.
- Rescue medications such as Epi-pens and inhalers must have a prescription label with the child's name, date of birth, the doctor's name, the dosage, and the expiration date. Medication that has expired will be returned to the parent to be replaced.
- These medications are given on an as needed basis and Merri-Loo will need a protocol signed by the child's doctor that dictates under what circumstances, conditions, or symptoms the child should be given the medication.
- Any time a child is given medication, it will be recorded by the person who gave the child the medication. It will include the child's name, the name of the medication, the time administered, the dose given, any complications, and the signature of the person giving the medication.

Emergency Procedures

Merri-Loo has an **Emergency Operations Plan** that provides us with protocols and guides the school through emergencies such as natural disasters, building emergencies or weather emergencies. The full plan is available at the school for any parent who wishes to read the entire document.

The plan includes procedures for:

- **Shelter in place:** In circumstances when it would be dangerous to leave the building such as: a sudden and violent storm; a police directive to stay in place during some sort of criminal activity and search for a wild animal in the area.
- **Evacuation:** In circumstances when we would need to leave the building immediately such as: a fire, an oil spill or gas leak in or near the building.
- **Reverse Evacuation:** In circumstances when we are outdoors or in the playground, we will need to quickly go indoors during situations such as: a bear sighting or a request from the police to shelter in place inside.

As part of the EOP plan, Merri-Loo's staff have a To-Go kit and a To-Go file that would come with us in case of evacuation. The kit includes food and water for a few days, a first aid kit including medication for children with EPI-pens or inhalers, flash lights, a radio etc. The To-Go File includes emergency phone numbers and contacts for students, permission forms giving us permission to transport children off site, and photos of the children with their parents for first responders to use for reunification purposes.

The School's primary place to evacuate to is the YMCA on Goffstown Back Road. The YMCA has agreed to house our students in case of emergency and have even offered to pick up children in one of the YMCA buses if necessary. The staff would remain there until parents can come get their children. The secondary evacuation site in case the route to the YMCA is blocked, is our Director, Heidi Bourque's home. She lives about 2 miles from the school and will house everyone until parents can get there to pick up their children. Each family will be asked to fill out the forms needed for the **To Go File** and to provide pictures of themselves with their children before the school year begins for identification purposes.

Once a month, during the school year, a fire drill using the smoke detector test button as the alarm will be conducted. Some months, it will be the Nursery class and some months it will be the Pre-K class. At least once a year, the Goffstown Fire Department will conduct a drill using the building's fire alarm system which rings at the fire station. Twice during the year, we will practice a Shelter in Place, an evacuation or a reverse evacuation.

Cooperative Jobs

Parents that have chosen to take advantage of a cooperative tuition rate must make a commitment to the school by sharing in its daily functions and operations in the form of a co-op job. This will be the family's cooperative responsibility for the year.

Families are given a Co-op Job preference form at registration and are asked to choose their first, second, and/or third choice(s). Co-op selections will be reviewed by the President, Vice President, Registrar, Director, and Teachers. While we will do our best to assign a co-op job to everyone who would like one, the co-op jobs are not guaranteed, and the selections are based on the needs of the school. Families will be notified in May of final co-op recipients.

It is very important that all families take their cooperative responsibilities seriously. The Merri-Loo Community depends upon each other to keep our children's school running smoothly. Below are brief descriptions of the jobs for which Merri-Loo needs volunteers.

Co-op Job Descriptions

Parent Helper

Contact person - Vice President

There are six (6) Pre-K Parent Helpers and four (4) Nursery Parent Helpers. Parent Helpers are present each day of school and typically work twice a month. While this job does not require any teaching experience or training, it does require a calm, responsible person who is capable of dealing positively with a group of energetic children. The teachers depend on the Parent Helpers to be present on their assigned days to provide an extra pair of hands and eyes. If a Parent Helper cannot work his/her shift on their assigned day, they are responsible for finding a replacement among the other Parent Helpers for that classroom. Parent Helpers are given a list of the names and contact information for the other Parent Helpers working in that class so that they can call and find someone who can switch days with them.

Parent Helpers:

- Arrive at 8:30 a.m. and may need to stay 15 minutes after class ends to complete vacuuming and general clean up.
- Will follow a checklist of duties that include preparing snacks, cleaning tables between activities, sweeping floor after snack and at the end of the day, washing dishes and supplies used during activity time, engaging with children at play, etc.
- The Vice President will be preparing the Parent Helper calendar each month. If parents have a day of the week or a specific day for an upcoming month that they are unable to work, they should contact the Vice President as soon as possible to avoid a scheduling conflict.
- Will attend all field trips that fall on their scheduled day.
- Must make up for any missed days.

Cleaners

Contact Person – Vice President

There are three (3) Wednesday cleaning positions and four (4) weekend cleaning positions. Cleaners play a vitally important role at Merri-Loo. When the environment is clean and tidy, the children can attend and engage more efficiently. In addition, when the classroom is clean, the children are less likely to pass on illnesses to one another.

Wednesday Night Cleaner

Parents will receive a calendar with the cleaning schedule from the Board Vice President. Wednesday cleaners can work on their assigned Wednesday after 2:00pm. This job should take approximately 1 hour to complete.

- There will be an orientation for cleaners right after the Parent Orientation to go over responsibilities and to be shown where the supplies are kept.
- If unable to clean one Wednesday, parents must reschedule their day for Thursday, or call the other Wednesday cleaners to switch days.

Weekend Cleaner

Parents will receive a calendar with the cleaning schedule from the Board Vice President. Weekend cleaners work approximately every fourth weekend. They can work anytime between 2:00 p.m. on Friday afternoon until Sunday night. This job should take 1 1/2 hours to complete.

- There will be an orientation for cleaners right after the Parent Orientation to go over responsibilities and to be shown where the supplies are kept.
- If unable to clean one weekend, parents must call the other weekend cleaners to switch days.

Board of Directors

Please note that a Board position fulfills a family's cooperative job requirement. Participation as a Board member entitles you to a larger co-op discount.

All Board members are expected to attend all Board meetings, schoolwide meetings and events such as fundraising events, graduation, orientation, etc. Please speak to the Director or President if you are unable to attend.

President

- Responsible for overseeing all aspects of running the Board of Directors.
- Supports the Director and assists in the management of school operations.
- Leads the board members and will regularly check in to offer support and assistance with their respective duties and assignments.
- Oversees all Board and Parent meetings, presides over them, as well as create and post their agendas.
- Acts as a liaison between the school's teachers and the board of directors. The priority of the President will always be the overall wellbeing of the school, the teachers, and the students.
- Is a dedicated member of the Board and Merri-Loo community and will always offer support where it's needed.

Vice President

- Contact person for Parent Helpers.
- Creates the calendar for the Parent Helper, Cleaner, and Snack schedules.
- In charge of all news media correspondence, including social media and advertising.
- Presides over Board meetings in the President's absence.

Treasurer

- Handles all financial matters including working with the accountant.
- Assists with the budget and tracks school spending.
- Pays bills, salaries, and maintains insurance.
- Communicates with our insurance agents and the bank.
- Collects and keeps records of tuition paid.
- Bookkeeping experience is preferred for this position but is not necessary.

Secretary

- Records, types and distributes Board meeting minutes in a timely manner.
- Oversees and trains all co-op cleaners.
- Maintains the cleaning supply inventory and orders supplies as needed.
- Arranges additional cleaning projects as needed.
- Updates/maintains the school website.

Registrar

- Handles all aspects of registering students.
- Revises and prints the school handbook.
- Collects and files health forms for the State and ensures they are up to date.
- Updates class lists and staff/Board contact lists.
- Will assist with follow-up phone calls, texts or emails on inquiries concerning registration.
- Creates or edits registration packets each year. Assist with packet pick-up and drop-off.
- Assists the Director with assigning co-op jobs for the school year.

Fundraising Coordinator

- Organizes, schedules and supervises all fundraisers and solicits donations as needed.
- Maintains fundraising records.
- Responsible for the Box Tops for Education program and Scholastic Book orders.
- Responsible for applying for any grants available.