

THE YELLOW SCHOOL at MEMORIAL DRIVE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
11612 MEMORIAL DRIVE
HOUSTON, TEXAS
(Phone) 713-784-0820 (Fax) 713-787-5238

PARENT HANDBOOK

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE and PHILOSOPHY

The Yellow School at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church is an extension of the Christian Education ministry of the church. Knowing that the early years of life are the most important for laying the foundations of faith and for social, emotional, and cognitive development, the school

- provides each child with acceptance, respect, and love in a Christian environment by caring adults
- provides a place where children can learn about their uniqueness as children of God, develop new relationships and learn about their expanding world
- provides an environment in which each child is free to explore, experiment, make decisions and learn to problem solve
- provides curricula to enable the children to learn the skills needed for future school success (literacy, language, math, science, and social studies)

Within this framework, the children develop a positive self-image, a sense of self worth, and the ability to self-regulate as we provide them with many opportunities for successful accomplishments. We encourage their curiosity and independence. We believe the love of God binds us together. In that love, we welcome and respect all faiths and provide a welcoming and loving community in which the children learn to work and play with others, to respect property and the rights of others and to learn of God's love for us all.

We believe that each child is unique and must be allowed to grow and develop at his/her own pace. We plan a balance of child-directed and teacher-directed activities designed to help the child grow physically, socially, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually. Our staff serves as positive role models for the children and provides an environment in which each child develops a good self-image and sense of self-worth.

In order to be prepared for kindergarten, children need to know many upper and lower-case letters and their sounds, be able to tell a simple story, recognize the title of a book, follow simple instructions, hold a pencil properly, sort and classify, count at least 10 objects, recognize and create patterns, understand directional and positional words, identify shapes and colors, and have appropriate fine and gross motor skills. Additionally, and very importantly, they must be comfortable in a school setting and able to transition easily. Beginning with the youngest children, all our activities are designed to promote these skills and more.

Founded in 1974, the Yellow School is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and uses the Minimum Standards for Day Care Centers as a basic guideline for setting policies and procedures. This document is available in the school office or you may access it online at www.dfps.state.tx.us Also available is the most recent licensing inspection report. We also use the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines and the TEKS for Kindergarten, available on the TEA website, as the basis of our curricula.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children defines a high quality early childhood program as "one that meets the needs of and promotes the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of the children and adults – parents, staff and administrators – who are involved in the program. Each day of a child's life is viewed as leading toward the growth and development of a healthy, intelligent and contributing member of society."

CLASSES OFFERED

ALL CLASSES HAVE ONE BUILT-IN EXTENDED DAY

CLASSES FOR 3 YEAR OLDS – children must be 3 by September 1st and toilet trained.

2 Day – Monday (8:45 – 11:45), Tuesday (8:45 to 2:30)

3 Day – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (Mon. and Wed. 8:45 to 11:45, Tues. 8:45 to 2:30).

3 Day – Wednesday, Thursday, Friday (Wed. and Fri. 8:45-11:45, Thurs. 8:45 to 2:30).

PRE-K CLASSES – children must be 4 by September 1st.

3 Day – Wednesday, Thursday, Friday (Wed. and Fri. 8:45 to 11:45, Thurs. 8:45 to 2:30)

5 Day – Monday through Friday (8:45 to 11:45 M, T, W, F, Thurs. 8:45 to 2:30).

PM CLASS – This class may be a pre-k class and/or a pre-k/bridge (bridge for children not quite developmentally ready for kindergarten) class and/or a multi-age class with older threes, depending on need. Please call the director for more information.

5 Day Pre-k– Monday through Friday (12:30 to 3:30 M, T, W, F, Thurs. 8:45 – 3:30) Children may also have a 3 or 4 day option in this class. Ask in the office for more details.

KINDERGARTEN – Children must be 5 by September 1st.

5 Day – Monday through Friday (8:45 – 1:00 M, T, W, F, Thurs. 8:45 – 2:30)

EXTENDED DAY

For an additional fee, optional EXTENDED DAYS are offered daily from 11:45 to 2:30 (a 3:30 extended day pick-up time is also available) to children in the morning classes including Kindergarten (1:00 – 2:30 or 3.30). Optional EXTENDED MORNINGS for children in the afternoon class (8:45 – 12:30) are offered on Tuesdays and Fridays. Mondays may be offered if there is enough demand. The optional EXTENDED morning includes activities and supervised play, lunch (brought from home) and a short quiet time.

Children are enrolled in EXTENDED DAY at the beginning of each semester for that semester only. Your child may stay only on days that she/he is attending school. Some “drop in” days (days for which you have not pre-paid) may be available.

Except for children in the 5-day morning pre-k class and the PM class, at least one of your child’s regular classroom teachers will be in his/her lunch bunch session each day. Three year olds stay in their own classrooms and the 5 day pre-ks are divided among the other classrooms, depending on the day. The PM class has its own designated teachers.

STAFF

To accomplish the stated purpose of the school, the teachers at the Yellow School have been carefully chosen based on their educational background and experience, their personalities and for the warmth, love and concern they exhibit towards children. Staff members are well educated in child development, have an understanding and appreciation of young children and value, respect, and care for them as unique individuals.

All lead teachers have at least a Bachelor’s degree, as do many of our assistants, and all staff members are fully qualified. All our staff participates in a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education each year, which includes attending workshops, lab schools, seminars, staff meetings and reading professional publications. Some of our teachers teach (or have taught) workshops in Houston and other cities.

ADMISSION

The Yellow School is open to children in the church and community without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin or ancestry.

The Yellow School only accepts online applications. **Families with children currently enrolled at the Yellow School** will apply for all their eligible children online beginning **January 26, 2017** for the 2017-2018 school year. **All priorities end on Sunday, January 29, 2017 at midnight.** After that date, applications will still be accepted, but on a first come, first served basis.

Class placement will be made in the order in which the applications were received. **Currently enrolled children and their siblings will be placed in classes in the following order:**

- children of MDPC members, YS staff and Little School staff
- children of non-MDPC members

Families who do not currently have a child at Yellow School may apply online for the 2017-2018 school year beginning **September 22, 2016.** Once placement for currently enrolled children and their siblings has been completed, class placement for new families will be made, in the order in which they were received, in the following order of priority:

- children of MDPC members
- children enrolled at Little School
- children who have had siblings at the school, but not currently
- children whose parents attended the Yellow School
- children who are new to the Yellow School

When placement is completed and classes are filled, remaining applications are placed on a waiting list in the same priority as listed above. Families will be notified if a space becomes available. **Any and all applications received after January 29, 2017 will be handled on a first come, first served basis without regard to priorities.**

Admission and class placement are in the sole and absolute discretion of the Director, applying the policies approved by the Yellow School Advisory Committee.

KINDERGARTEN - Prospective kindergarten children who have not previously attended Yellow School must schedule a morning visit to the kindergarten before placement is made.

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

A child with special needs will be evaluated by parents, consultants, and staff to see if the school can be beneficial to him/her. The Director will recommend to the Yellow School Advisory Committee action to be taken on each request for the enrollment of a special needs child, if necessary. We will make any modifications necessary for each child with special needs who is enrolled in the school.

FEE POLICIES

The Yellow School is a non-profit program and fees and tuition charged are based on actual operating costs. Amounts are set each year by the Yellow School Advisory Committee and approved by the session of the church.

The online application form must be completed each year for each child to be enrolled in the school. A registration fee must accompany the form. The registration fee may be refunded, **IF**

REQUESTED IN WRITING, BEFORE a child has been accepted into a class. No refunds will be issued once a place has been offered. **Any eligible refunds must be requested by November 1. There will be a \$25.00 processing fee for all refunds.**

Prior to starting school, the following fees must be paid:

- A RESERVATION FEE equaling one month's tuition. This **non-refundable** fee becomes the tuition payment for May and is due upon the child's acceptance into the program.
- A PROGRAM FEE for all children is also due upon acceptance. This fee is **non-refundable**.

An online application form must be completed each year for each child to be enrolled in our SUMMER SESSION. A **non-refundable** registration fee for this program is also required upon receipt of the application. Tuition for the summer session is due on or before the first day of classes. The amount paid as the registration fee will be deducted from the total tuition. Summer school fees and tuition are **non-refundable**.

An optional EXTENDED DAY program is offered to children in all classes. Parents wishing to enroll their children in EXTENDED DAY must complete an application and return it with a check for the **non-refundable** amount due at the beginning of EACH semester (prior to the beginning of school in the fall and in December for the second semester).

NOTE: ONCE YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN ACCEPTED FOR THE REGULAR SCHOOL YEAR, THE FOLLOWING FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE AND NON-TRANSFERABLE:

- All registration fees
- The Reservation Fee
- Extended Day tuition
- Program Fee

Tuition is for the SCHOOL YEAR and is payable in 8 equal installments, September – April, without regard to the number of school days in a month or the number of days your child may be absent. May tuition is pre-paid as the reservation fee; therefore, no May tuition is due. Tuition payments are due the first of each month. **Any tuition payment made after the 10th of the month will be considered late and a \$20.00 late fee will be assessed.** Please speak with the director regarding any special payment needs. A **3%** discount is available for prepayment of tuition for the **entire school year**. A **10%** discount is available for families who have 2 or more children in the Yellow School. If you have a child in the Yellow School and another in CDI, you may take a **5%** discount in each program. **Discounts do not apply to extended day, registration, reservation and/or testing/supply fees.** No more than a 10% discount may be taken per family. **You are responsible for letting the school know of your eligibility for a discount. No refunds can be given for discounts not requested at the beginning of the school year.**

No make-up days, credit and/or refunds will be given for absences, vacations, illness, weather, emergency closings, or anything outside of the school's/church's control.

Checks must be made payable to **MDPC** and may be dropped off at school, or mailed to:

The Yellow School at MDPC
11612 Memorial Drive
Houston, TX 77024

Please write what the check is for on the memo line, including the letters "YS". For example, "YS tuition" or "YS extended day".

LATE FEES

A parent who has not picked up her/his child (or carpool) by the close of that child's session will be charged an administrative late fee of \$5.00 for each 5 minutes past the scheduled pickup time. Please call the school if you are going to be late so that we may reassure your child. Leave a message if we are unable to answer the phone. You will still be responsible for any fees incurred.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Some funds are available for families needing financial assistance. MDPC asks that these funds be reserved for families with an annual income of \$50,000 or less, unless special circumstances apply. Tax records may be requested. Please contact the director of the Yellow School for more information.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

The required forms which must be completed may be found on our webpage (www.ys.mdpc.org) for your convenience. Some of the forms may be completed online and sent back to us electronically. Others, those which need signatures, must be printed and a hard copy returned to school. Included are immunization and health information which **must be signed by your physician (see highlighted statement)**, a confidential information form about your child, emergency information, photo permission forms and more.

During the school year, should any of your personal information change, please let us know immediately.

ORIENTATION

In August, your child's teacher will call to arrange a **home visit**. This is an excellent opportunity for your child to meet and visit with the teacher in her/his own comfortable surroundings. Children will remember this visit and talk about it at various times all through the year. Following the home visit, there will be two identical **parent orientation** meetings, held just prior to the beginning of school. These meetings are very important to new as well as returning parents. They provide a forum for obtaining information, asking questions, and discussing your expectations of the school and the school's expectations of you. The day classes begin, a **coffee** is held at the school. Hosted by members of the school advisory committee, this is a wonderful opportunity for parents to meet one another while their children are enjoying the first day of school.

SCHOOL YEAR – BEGINNING, ENDING & HOLIDAYS

Please see the school calendar for specific information. With a few exceptions (mostly beginning and ending dates), we follow the school calendar of Spring Branch ISD.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Teachers or room mothers will call, text, and/or email you to notify you of school closings due to severe weather (i.e. hurricane, tornado, high winds, flooding, etc.) or a school emergency (i.e. no electricity, severe plumbing problems, etc.) **We will cancel school if Spring Branch ISD cancels its classes. No refunds are given for school closings.**

CAR POOLS and CAR POOL LINE

The Yellow School does not provide transportation. You will receive a copy of all the class lists as soon as we have complete information from all our families – usually the first week of school.

- Classes begin at 9:00 am and doors open at 8:45 (or 12:30 pm for the afternoon class). It is important that the children be in their class to participate in the opening group time. It is very difficult for some children to come in comfortably after class has started. Being on time is one of the essential components of teaching children that school is important.
- **CARPOOL LINE:** Please pull your car up to the Y.S. sign AND REMAIN IN YOUR CAR. The teachers will go to the cars, greet the children, and escort them into the school. **FOR SAFETY,**

CHILDREN MUST EXIT THE CAR ON THE SIDEWALK SIDE OF THE CAR. If this is not possible for you, please park and walk your child in to the school.

- If you cannot wait in the car pool line, please park your car away from the line of traffic and bring your child in. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CAR UNATTENDED IN THE CARPOOL LINE.**
- If you bring your child into the school, please make sure that a teacher greets he/she before you leave. Be careful walking across the parking lot. We are concerned about the safety of children and adults.
- To keep the car pool line moving, please pull **away from the line** to fasten seat belts. Also, remember that the line is **not** a good place to have lengthy talks with the teachers. If you'd like to talk with a teacher, please call her or the school to arrange a conference.
- **If you bring your child in late or pick her/him up early, you must come in the main entrance and sign in or out. This is a state requirement.**
- **If you walk your child to his/her classroom and class has begun, please be very quiet so that the class is not interrupted. It is best if you allow one of the staff members to take your child to her/his classroom.**
- Only parents or other authorized persons may pick up a child. In accordance with state law, if someone other than the child's parent is picking up a child, that person may be asked to show proper identification. Also, when another person is to pick up a child, the school **must be notified, in advance, in writing. If you must call to let us know someone else will be picking up your child, please send a note the next day, so we have the information in writing. No child may be picked up by anyone under the age of 18.**

For your protection, if a parent calls to authorize the emergency release of a child, we will verify that the caller is actually the parent by asking information that is relevant to your child. If there is still some doubt, we will ask to call you back and continue to ask you pertinent information. We are legally unable to refuse visitation, or the privilege of picking up a child, to a parent **UNLESS WE HAVE A CERTIFICATE OF CUSTODY** from the legal parent or guardian who has physical custody. **It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to furnish any necessary documents including a current certified copy of the court divorce decree.** The document(s) must be specific as to who has legal custody, visitation rights, care for the child(ren) during holidays and any information as to specific arrangements made for payment of tuition and fees.

CELL PHONES – CELL PHONE FREE ZONE

When in the carpool line or when walking your child in or out of school, please **DO NOT** talk or text on your cell phone. Your child needs and deserves your full attention as you are saying "hello" and "goodbye". When you are in your car, talking/texting on a cell phone becomes a safety issue. **Therefore, for the physical and emotional health of all, just as in city school zones, the Yellow School is a CELL PHONE FREE ZONE.** Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

HEALTH, SAFETY, and EMERGENCY INFORMATION

An online form listing medical information, insurance information, emergency information and a permission statement must be printed, completed, and returned to school **BEFORE** school begins. The medical portion **MUST** be signed by your doctor. The **EMERGENCY INFORMATION/PERMISSION FORM** portion must be completed by you and notarized. **THE SCHOOL DIRECTOR CAN NOTARIZE YOUR FORM.** **During the school year, please inform the school if any changes occur in the information on these forms (telephone numbers, addresses, immunizations, etc.).**

The medical report must be in our files prior to your child's first day of school. Effective September 2016, all children enrolled in The Yellow School must have all immunizations required by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Should you have any concerns or questions about this policy, please contact the Director.

If a child becomes ill or is injured in such a way that he/she needs medical attention, staff at the Yellow School will

1. assess the nature of the illness or injury and care for the child apart from the other children.
2. attempt to contact the child's parents (unless otherwise instructed). If neither parent is available, we will contact an authorized alternate. Therefore, when choosing persons to be contacted in case of emergency, please be sure they are local people who will most likely be available.
3. contact the child's physician, if requested and if necessary.
4. administer first-aid and CPR when needed. Our teachers are all certified in CPR and First Aid.

If we are unable to contact parents immediately and feel we must take a child to an emergency room for a minor emergency, someone from the school staff will take him/her to the nearest Emergency Center. Parents will be notified as soon as possible and asked to meet us there. The child's parents will be responsible for any charges incurred.

In an emergency that will need a call to 911, the child's parents will be notified immediately and asked to meet the staff member at the Emergency Room. Again, parents will be responsible for any charges incurred.

ILLNESS

The health and well being of your child is important to us. Please keep your child home if there is any evidence of illness such as:

- fever, without medication
- persistent cough and/or sore throat
- heavy non-clear nasal discharge
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- skin rash
- symptoms of a possible communicable disease including conjunctivitis.

No child may return to school for **at least 24 hours after his/her temperature has returned to normal without medication and/or after vomiting and/or diarrhea has ceased**. Please report any communicable diseases to the school, so that we may inform other families.

Please notify the school if your child will be absent.

HEAD LICE

A lice infestation can happen to anyone. Socioeconomic background or lack of cleanliness has nothing to do with determining who gets head lice. Between 8 and 12 million children get lice each year. Lice do not jump or fly. They crawl. Thus, **the most common means of lice transmission is through head to head contact**. Indirect transmission is uncommon, but may occur via shared combs, brushes, hats, and hair ornaments that have been in contact with an infested person. Teach your child not to share hair accessories. For further information see www.headlice.org.

If you see signs of head lice, you must notify the school immediately. Being able to inform other parents prevents the spread of lice. Children may return to school after they have been treated, but must have a second treatment 7 to 10 days after the first. The school must be notified that the treatments have taken place before the child may attend class.

ADMINISTERING MEDICINES

We prefer **not** to administer medication, but should it be necessary for us to do so, the following State of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services rules **must** be followed.

- **All medications brought to school must be in the original container.**
- Medications must be labeled with the child's name.
- Prescription medicines must be labeled with the date.
- Medications must include directions to administer.
- Prescription medicines must include the name of the doctor prescribing the medication.

The Yellow School will keep a record (for at least three months) of all medications administered, which will include:

- the name of the child to whom the medicine was given.
- the name of the medicine.
- the date, time and amount of medicine given.
- the name of the person who administered the medicine.

Any medicines, ointments, etc. brought to school MUST be handed directly to a staff member.

Please do not put any medications in your child's bag, lunch box, etc. We will keep all medicines out of the reach of children and refrigerated, if necessary. If you ask us to give your child medicine, we will ask you to complete a form giving us permission to do so.

WE CAN ONLY GIVE YOUR CHILD MEDICINE THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN US IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AFOREMENTIONED INSTRUCTIONS. This includes Tylenol, Motrin, Benadryl, EPI-PENS, etc.

Help your child by seeing that he/she gets the proper amount of rest (11 to 12 hours is recommended), especially the night before coming to school. A good breakfast gives the children energy for their day. Withholding medical and/or behavioral information is NOT acting in your child's best interest. Working together, we can provide the best school environment for your child.

ANIMALS AT SCHOOL

Some of our classes may have class pets. The children are required to follow good hygiene and hand washing procedures after handling the animals and/or items used by those pets (cages, bowls, etc.). Animals may be available for weekend and vacation visits to your homes.

****RECOMMENDED AND REQUIRED VACCINES FOR TEACHERS****

Required for all teachers:

- Flu vaccine **every fall.**
- Td/Tdap – once every 10 years

Recommended for teachers over 60

- Pneumococcal vaccine
- Shingles – Zoster

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

The Yellow School has developed an emergency plan in coordination with the church. This plan is designed to protect the children should a disaster of any kind occur. A copy of that detailed plan is available upon request.

SCHOOL CLOTHING, EQUIPMENT, ETC. – WHAT TO BRING

CLOTHING

Children should be dressed in washable play clothes. Although we provide aprons for potentially messy activities, when children are enjoying paint, glue, etc. their clothing may become soiled. Party or dressy clothes are not appropriate. **Closed shoes** with rubber soles are **required** for the playground. "Jellies", sandals, "croc", cowboy boots and slick leather soles are potentially dangerous when running and climbing. If your child must wear those great new boots or pretty new party shoes, please send sneakers (the best and safest choice) for the playground.

Drawstrings on jackets are a choking hazard. They can get caught on climbing equipment, etc. Please remove them. Children may not wear necklaces for they too, can get caught on furniture and equipment and are potentially dangerous to your child.

Unless the weather is very rainy, we will have time outdoors each day. Please send appropriate clothing, remembering that the playground can be quite chilly early in the morning. **Please mark ALL clothing with your child's name.**

Since all children enrolled should be toilet trained and since we do not have diaper changing areas as required by licensing (necessary only for those programs which serve infants and toddlers), please do NOT send your child to school in diapers or "pull-ups". We are happy to change clothes in case of accidents.

Many parents are concerned about their children (especially three year olds) having potty accidents. This is common and the teachers will help the child when this happens. Again, please DO NOT send your child to school in pull-ups. This sends the message to the child that it is OK not to use the potty. We are happy to work with you on potty training issues, but we can only be successful in this if you are consistent about putting "grown-up" underwear on your child.

All children should have an extra change of clothing in their school bags. We do keep some extra clothing on hand in case of accidents. If your child arrives home in school clothing, please wash it and return it as soon as possible.

Each child will be given a school t-shirt. Backpacks are available for purchase. All pre-k, PM and kindergarten children **must** wear school shirts on field trips. (The 3-year-old classes do not take field trips.)

PLEASE DO NOT SEND HAND SANITIZER TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD.

SCHOOL BAGS

All children must bring a **large** bag to school each day. The bag should be roomy enough to hold the children's belongings (work done at school, items they might have brought from home, lunch boxes, etc.) The bag also is used as a "traveling bulletin board". We will attach a smaller bag to the outside of your child's bag. This small bag must be kept on the child's bag always and is to be used by you to send us notes, checks and the like. This enables the teachers to easily see that you have sent something to us. The small bag will also be used by us to send you notes, newsletters, lesson plans and other items that are important for you to read. **PLEASE DO NOT USE BAGS WITH WHEELS.** They damage the cubbies. The **school backpacks or a large backpack with a large opening are the best choices.**

THE YELLOW SCHOOL IS A PEANUT FREE FACILITY

SNACKS

A mid-morning (or afternoon, for the p.m. class) snack is served to the children each day. Special cooking projects are often part of the curriculum and become the snack of the day. Snack foods include such things as fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese, toast, biscuits, pizza, tortillas, pita bread, crackers, cowboy stew, applesauce, jello, juice popsicles, trail mix and fruit juice or water. We often serve organic foods. No juice drinks or meals are served. We will not serve peanut butter or snacks that contain peanut butter or peanut products. If you and your child would like to bring a snack for the class, please notify the teacher in advance so that conflicts with birthday celebrations and cooking activities do not occur. Also, please check with your child's teacher regarding any allergies.

LUNCH

If your child is staying for Lunch Bunch, please send a lunch and drink. According to the *Minimum Standards and Guidelines*, the following amounts constitute one serving for a growing child, ages 2 to 6:

- 4 oz. of milk, 1/2 oz. of cheese, or 4 oz. of yogurt (need 4 servings per day)
- ½ to 1 oz. of cooked lean meat, fish or poultry or ½ to 1 egg or ¼ c. cooked beans (need 3 servings per day)
- 2 to 3 tablespoons of cooked or ½ cup raw, leafy vegetables
- 2 to 3 tablespoons of canned fruit, 1/8 cup of dried fruit, 1 small piece of fresh fruit, or ¼ cup juice (need 4 + servings of veggies and fruit per day)
- ½ slice of bread or ¼ cup cooked cereal, ¼ cup rice or noodles or 1 or 2 crackers (need 4 servings per day)

Sending a combination of the foods listed above will meet your child's nutritional needs for one meal.

Read labels when purchasing prepared foods. Many **Lunchables** are very high in fat, sodium and calories and children often throw most of them away. **Fruit Rollups** are **not** fruit. **Please do not send peanut butter, items made with peanut butter, and/or any foods that contain peanuts (trail mix, etc.) Foods that do not contain peanuts, but are manufactured in a facility that handles peanuts are allowed, unless otherwise notified.** Please send food that the children can open themselves, or with a minimum of assistance. We try to teach the children to be self-sufficient, but some packaging is quite difficult to manage.

Your child expends a lot of energy while at school; please include healthy foods in her/his lunch box. **Please do not send candy and send only one dessert.** Since we are unable to provide refrigeration for the children's lunches, please put an ice pack in your child's lunch box to keep perishable foods cold.

RESTING MATS

Children staying for Lunch Bunch have a short quiet time before going out to play. A resting mat or child-size sleeping bag is required for each child. Please make sure that mats have a cover – a large pillowcase works well. Mats will be sent home each week to be washed.

DISCIPLINE

Teachers support children's social and emotional development, assisting them to be comfortable, happy and involved in play and other activities. The staff helps children deal with anger and frustration by comforting them, encouraging them to identify and verbalize the problem, helping them find words when necessary and helping them use various strategies to problem solve.

By setting clear, consistent, and reasonable limits, the children gain a sense of security; they know what is expected. Within these limits, children are encouraged to make choices and decisions. Mistakes become learning opportunities and the child's sense of self-esteem grows as he/she experiences success in a variety of situations.

Yellow School teachers plan ahead to avoid conflicts and redirect unacceptable behavior. They model, reinforce, and nurture positive actions.

Occasionally, a child will lose control of his/her actions and emotions and removal from the group becomes necessary in order for that child to regain control and to safeguard the feelings and security of the other children. This is not a punishment; rather it is an opportunity for the child to calm down and to plan, with the teacher, what he/she would like to do upon rejoining the group. Separation from the group does not exceed one minute per year of child's age.

BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS

Sometimes a child exhibits behaviors which are of concern to others. Usually these behaviors (such as biting) are infrequent and result from frustration, especially in children whose language skills are not sufficient for good communication. Whenever a staff member observes a changing pattern in the child's behavior, the parents are contacted and, together, they try to find reasons for the behavior and solutions to it.

However, should these behavior problems become frequent and/or severe, further steps may have to be taken, such as outside intervention with a professional who may offer additional recommendations to the school and the family. ***The school reserves the right to and will request that a family withdraw their child if it is determined that the parent cannot abide by the school's policies, or if we cannot adequately meet the needs of the child/family due to classroom size, budgetary limitations, or the inability to preserve the safety of the other children.***

Our goal is a secure, happy, self-confident child who can work and play with others. We want to work with our families to help with toileting, feeding and other self-regulating skills and with any other concerns that might arise.

CURRICULUM

Following the guidelines set forth by the Texas State Department of Education for essential knowledge and skills in preschool and kindergarten, the theories of Piaget, Erickson and Vygotsky and the findings from the latest brain research, curricula at the Yellow School is written to address the needs of each individual and the class as a whole. Teachers use many methods of assessing each child's needs and progress. These include information from parents, observations, anecdotal records, developmental scales, and screening instruments.

Because young children learn best through active involvement, the teachers set up many opportunities, based on the children's interests, designed for learning the foundational skills the children will need in order to be successful throughout their school years.

- When children learn to use one thing to represent another, they are better able to understand that letters represent sounds and numbers represent quantities.
- When children engage in pretend play and role playing, they develop their language skills and their ability to understand and tell stories.
- As children play with sand, blocks, water, and clay they learn about cause and effect, counting, sorting, classifying, ordering, and problem solving.

Studies show that successful children are those who are curious and motivated. Being able to engage in activities they have chosen makes learning enjoyable and promotes a love of learning.

Daily plans include learning activities appropriate to the developmental levels and various learning styles of the children. These activities are designed to facilitate the development of skills in:

- reading and language arts
- mathematics
- science
- social studies
- art
- music
- fine and gross motor endeavors
- faith development

READING AND LANGUAGE ARTS

In order to be able to read, children must be able to express themselves and listen effectively. Activities develop these skills such as listening to stories, dramatizing stories, following oral directions, rhyming words in poems, stories, and songs, listening to and identifying sounds in the environment, writing class books, keeping journals, relating personal experiences for the "Daily News", participating in "Show and Tell" and learning to use picture clues. Using games, puzzles, charts, and labeling, children learn to

identify letters and frequently used words. Through games, poetry and songs, children learn the sounds of letters and language. Doing puzzles, playing with play dough and clay, painting and drawing using many kinds of instruments, building, woodworking, etc. all help develop the fine motor skills necessary for writing.

MATHEMATICS

Activities to develop understanding of mathematical concepts include such things as sorting and classifying, arranging objects according to size and shape, counting objects and classmates, measuring, block building, playing with balancing scales and working with puzzles, games, toys and other activities that are designed to facilitate learning of numerals, one-to-one correspondence and the meaning of numbers. Kindergarten children learn numerals to 100 and higher; they count by 2s, 5s and 10s; they solve math sentences and much more.

SCIENCE

Outdoor activities such as walks, gardening, observing, and collecting bugs, pulling flowers and weeds, and discovering the parts of plants, classroom pets, working with magnets, magnifying glasses, experiments with water and air; these are just a few of the kinds of things your child will encounter which are designed to build an understanding of scientific principles. In music, we experiment with sound; in the block corner, the children learn about balance and inclined planes. Items are put in plastic bags; the bags are twisted and spun. The children learn about stored energy. While doing an art project using an eyedropper to drop colored water on a coffee filter, the children learn about air pressure and absorption. When preparing applesauce for snack, the children learn how heat changes the properties of an apple.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Being part of a group in a school environment is the beginning of an understanding of social studies. The children learn decision-making and problem-solving skills. They learn of the need to have rules. As they work in groups, they develop respect and understanding for others. Firefighters and police officers visit and the children learn about community helpers. Field trips, books and discussions broaden and enhance the children's understanding of community and their role in it. Kindergarten children take a pretend trip around the world, learning about the continents in a variety of engaging ways.

ART AND MUSIC

As previously noted, both art and music activities play an important role in helping to develop skills necessary for school success and they are fun! They encourage creative expression, independent thinking and help build self-esteem. Art activities develop visual discrimination, coordination, and a heightened awareness of the world. In music, the children learn to find their "singing voices" as opposed to their "speaking", "whispering" and "shouting" voices. They learn about pitch and rhythm, steady beat, opposites such as loud/soft, fast/slow, and high/low. They experience a variety of music - classical, folk and jazz – and learn about instruments of the orchestra and instruments from other lands.

FINE AND GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITIES

In the classroom, on the playground, in music and art activities, the children are developing and refining the skills necessary for reading, writing, and understanding the various social and scientific principles that make up the world. Puzzles, legos and other building equipment, pencils, chalk, paintbrushes, and the like develop fine motor muscles, so necessary for writing. Climbing, twirling, balancing, ball playing and other gross motor activities help develop eye/hand coordination and the ability to cross the midline (necessary for reading). Social development, teamwork, physical strength, coordination, dexterity, and alertness are among the skills developed by these activities.

COMPUTER

A computer teacher comes once a week to provide computer instruction to the kindergarten children.

RELIGION AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Faith development is an important part of the curriculum of the Yellow School. Chapel is held twice a month. During chapel and incorporated in our daily activities, we explore ways we know God; we interpret Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter from a Christian perspective; we pray daily; we model unconditional love so that the children might develop an understanding of God's love for us. Putting into practice the lessons of the New Testament which teach us to share with people in need (Romans 12:13) and to love with actions and in truth (1 John 3:17-18), the school has many outreach opportunities throughout the year.

FIELD TRIPS

During the year, there will be several field trips for pre-k and kindergarten children. These trips provide an opportunity for the children to explore their world and deepen their understanding of it. Field trips help broaden their base of experience, upon which all learning is based. **Children must wear school t-shirts on field trips.** We generally use the church buses to transport children on field trips.



Developmentally appropriate materials are available and reflect diverse racial, gender and age attributes. A variety of materials are provided to engage children in active and meaningful learning. The children choose some activities; some are teacher directed. Routine tasks are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering the children's learning, self-help, and social skills.

CELEBRATIONS

When sending food and/or drink for the class, please make sure it does not contain artificial sweetener or nuts. Please do not bring cupcakes or cake.

BIRTHDAYS

Each child's birthday is celebrated at snack time by singing "Happy Birthday" and with the wearing of a special birthday crown. Your child's teacher will contact you about scheduling a time to celebrate her/his birthday. Special cookies (perhaps a numeral cookie representing the age of the birthday child) or a giant cookie decorated or not, make excellent birthday treats. **Please do NOT bring cupcakes or cake.** Although the children sometimes request them, they are seldom eaten. **Also, please do NOT bring party favors, balloons, or the like. We are unable to hold birthday parties at the school. PLEASE DO NOT SEND BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS TO SCHOOL TO BE DISTRIBUTED.**

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

At the beginning of the year, room moms should distribute sign up sheets to class parents. These signups are for bringing items for a holiday celebration: Halloween, Thanksgiving (for the 3 year olds), Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. Parents volunteer to bring a special snack (see birthday suggestions), holiday plates, napkins or 100% juice. All parents should have the opportunity to volunteer at one of these celebrations, if they wish. We do try to keep all holiday celebrations low key so that the children do not get too overwhelmed. Therefore, as with birthdays, we ask that there be no party favors, balloons, etc. **We often have children with food allergies. Therefore, before bringing any snack to school, please check with your child's teacher for any pertinent allergy information. Remember, nothing with nuts in it.**

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Communication between school and home is very important. Your child's educational and emotional well-being is our highest priority. We encourage you to visit the school and to be as involved in the activities as you wish. Please do not wait for an invitation to participate. Schedule a time with the teachers. Each year we will send home a parent questionnaire for you to complete. Your answers and suggestions enable us to determine how well we are meeting the needs of the children and their families and to act upon any suggestions that you might make. Should you ever have a concern, please speak to your child's teacher and/or the director. We cannot help if we are not aware of your concern. Every effort will be made to address the issue. If any conflicts or concerns remain unresolved, we suggest that you speak to the Director of Children's Ministries. Please be assured that we will do all we can, within the program's philosophy and licensing and accreditation standards, to come to a satisfactory solution.

The Confidential Information Form that you complete helps us know your child and we welcome any ideas and suggestions for working with your child throughout the year. If the teachers have any concerns about your child's behavior and/or development, they will contact you so that you and they can work together in determining what is best for your child.

If it were ever necessary to make a change that would affect a child, the parents would be notified/consulted first. The teachers and director also make suggestions to help you in determining the best placement for your child as she/he moves on from year to year.

The following detail some of our means of communication:

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The school calendar, sent in your summer packet, should be kept handy. In it you will find the schedule of the school year including dates of school photos, and other activities. **Since the calendar is published early in the summer, there are apt to be changes during the year.** Notes and emails will be sent home as reminders and/or informing you of any additions and/or changes which may occur. Also, check the board on the outside walkway for information.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year, once in the fall and again in January and/or February. Additional conferences can be and are held throughout the year at the request of either the parents or the teacher. The teachers' primary responsibilities during school hours and car pool times are for the children. If you wish to speak with your child's teacher, please call her or call the school to arrange a convenient time.

LESSON PLANS

The teachers plan developmentally appropriate activities designed to teach the skills the children need to further their education and based on the needs of the children in each class. An overview of the activities planned, as well as snacks that will be served will be sent home.

NEWSLETTERS

Approximately once a month, you will receive a newsletter with reminders and updates about activities at the school and parenting tips. Newsletters are posted on the YS webpage– www.ys.mdpq.org.

NOTES AND E-MAILS

Check your child's backpack each day for notes about your child's day, contagious diseases, reminders of events, "ouch" reports (sent home if your child has gotten hurt), etc. Teachers will write periodic notes regarding your child; you will not receive a daily report. Many of our notes to parents regarding class or all school activities or other information will be sent in email form as well as on paper. We will also email reminders and announcements. If we ever have a concern about your child, we will contact you right away. We encourage you to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

E-MAIL

It is the policy of Yellow School that all email messages between parents and Yellow School staff be sent through the school. Teachers' email addresses can be found at the top of each page on the class lists that you will receive right after school begins. **No emails concerning Yellow School may be sent to personal email addresses.**

SHARING PHOTOS

Technology, though it can be very wonderful, can also create some issues. You all are asked to sign permission forms to allow, or disallow, your children's pictures to be published in various venues. Just as you may not want us to post your child's picture on a website (or other places), others may not want their children's pictures shared via e-mail, Facebook or any of the other myriad ways of sharing information that are available to us all. Therefore, we ask that you not send or post pictures of any children other than your own unless you have cleared it with all parents involved. Thank you for your help and cooperation. **Please do NOT create any class Facebook pages, blogs, etc.**

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Articles of interest to parents are posted periodically on the school webpage – www.ys.mdpc.org - under "Parenting Tips and Resources"

PARENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Each year we offer parent orientation meetings, first day coffees, parent meetings, our annual Book Fair and Art Show, end-of-year picnics and social gatherings planned by individual classes.
- If you have a special talent or interest you would like to share with us – helping in the classroom, substitute teaching, reading to the children, doing a project with the children, helping in the school library, playing (or just showing the children) a musical instrument, etc., please let the teachers and/or the director know.
- When taking field trips, we use the church buses to transport the children. We often ask parents to accompany the children on field trips. If you would like to participate in a field trip, please make arrangements, if necessary, for the care of siblings. **We are unable to take extra children on field trips.**
- We want and need your input. Each year we ask you to complete a **Parent Survey**. This is an opportunity for you to answer specific questions about the school and to make suggestions. Please take a few minutes to complete it. It will be available online in April.
- You are welcome in the school and we encourage your observations, comments and suggestions. If you ever have a problem or concern about anything at the school, please let us know immediately by talking with a teacher, the director or the assistant to the director.
- Each classroom has one or two Room Mothers who help recruit parents to go on field trips, make arrangements for snacks for holiday celebrations, plan teacher appreciation activities, etc. If you would like to be a Room Mother, please sign up on the volunteer form, at a Parent Orientation meeting or at your First Day Coffee.
- The Yellow School Advisory Committee is composed of nine people, MDPC members and interested parents, who assist with school events and help set policy, fees, and other matters necessary for providing the best education for your children. The committee meets once a month. If you are interested in serving on this committee, or know someone who might be, please contact a committee member or the school director.

- Should you have an article of interest or a special community event that you would like to share, please bring it to the office for approval. Nothing should be sent home without prior approval of the administration.
- If you are interested in substitute teaching, please let Naomi know. A class will be held early in the school year to train all parents in the areas of child abuse and neglect, basic safety and first aid information, licensing laws by which the school operates discipline and classroom management.

RESOURCES and SPECIAL SERVICES

SCREENINGS

A developmental readiness test and vision, speech, hearing and language screenings are scheduled each year for children in the pre-k, PM and kindergarten classes. If there are concerns about a younger child, he or she may also participate in the screening process. There is a minimal charge included in the program fee for these state mandated screenings and the readiness test.

LIBRARY

The Yellow School has a wonderful selection of books for children, which you are welcome to borrow. Follow the directions found on the library shelf or ask one of the staff. Please return books within two weeks. There are also some books available for adults on child development, parenting, and illness and death. Please follow the same procedure to check them out.

PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN

We take great care to protect the children in our care and to keep them safe. It is important that our teachers, staff, volunteers and parents are all educated and informed. All employees are required to have annual training in preventing and responses to abuse and neglect of children which shall include:

- warning signs of possible abuse and/or neglect
- how to report a suspected incidence of abuse and/or neglect
- awareness of prevention techniques for parents and employees
- actions that a parent of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should take to obtain assistance and intervention
- information for parents about appropriate community organizations, therapists, etc.

Link for training: www.dfps.state.tx.us/training/Reporting/default.asp

Link for information on learning the signs of abuse and neglect:

<http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/itsuptoyou/recognize.asp>

To report suspected abuse, call 1-800-252-5400 or visit www.dfps.state.tx.us

If you are a victim of abuse and need help, call 1-800-252-5400 Harris County Women's Center – Domestic Violence – 713-528-2121. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

PROFESSIONAL REFERRALS

We keep a list of speech therapists, psychologists, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, etc. should you have need of them.

THE STATE OF TEXAS WANTS YOU TO BE ASSURED... (Gang-free zone and consumer product safety)

- House Bill 2086 states that licensed childcare programs are to notify parents about the new gang-free zone designation. A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where certain gang-related activity is prohibited and is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. Specific locations where certain gang related criminal activity is now prohibited include, but is not limited to, public schools, playgrounds, video arcade facilities, and day care centers. Certain

gang-related activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of our program is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty.

- As of 8/31/09, I certify that all bulletins and notices issued by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission regarding unsafe children's products have been reviewed. I also certify that there are no unsafe children's products in the center of home except for the following: A product that is an antique or collectible children's product and is not used by, or accessible to any child, an unsafe children's product that is being retrofitted to make it safe and the product is not used by, or accessible to any child.
- Parents are welcome to review the State Minimum Standards and the school's most recent licensing report at any time. The report is posted on the bulletin board just inside the front door. Ask the Administrative Staff for a copy of the State Standards.
- Firearms are prohibited (concealed or open carry) within our program unless the individual is a law enforcement official who is trained and certified to carry a firearm on duty.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Address: 2221 West Loop, South
Houston, TX

Phone #: 713-940-5200 or 713-767-2670

Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

You may report suspected abuse of neglect at www.txabusehotline.org

Website address: www.dfps.state.tx.us

Poison Control Center – 1-800-222-1222

HARRIS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

www.houstontx.gov/health

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PLAY AND LEARNING

Alliance for Childhood

www.allianceforchildhood.org

American Academy of Pediatrics

www.aap.org

The National Association for the Education of Young Children publishes many articles for parents and teachers, including many on play and learning at www.naeyc.org

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

www.tea.state.tx.us

STAFF – ADMINISTRATIVE

Candice Alexander, Director Tara Riebschlaeger, Assistant Director

TEACHING STAFF and other assistants

Cary Alfieri	Shonda Lockett	Sarah Padar
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Nancy Been	Amanda Sierra	
Dalynn Boggs	Jan Conant	