



Sweet Pea Cottage

Preschool of the Arts
where creative minds begin to bloom

PARENT HANDBOOK



Your guide to life and learning at Sweet Pea Cottage

Queen Anne Location

2011 1st Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109
Phone: (206) 217-9767
Fax: (206) 352-3978

Sand Point Location

5801 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98105
Phone: (206) 527-4677

West Seattle Location

7141 California Ave SW
Seattle, WA 98136

info@sweetpeacottage.org
www.sweetpeacottage.org

updated 03.22.11

Copyright © 2004-2011 Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

Please read this handbook carefully and keep it in a convenient location for future reference. Thank you!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT SWEET PEA COTTAGE 5

Mission Statement..... 5

Vision Statement 5

Core Values..... 5

PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM..... 6

A DAY AT SWEET PEA COTTAGE PRESCHOOL OF THE ARTS 7

GUIDING YOUNG CHILDREN..... 10

SPECIAL PEOPLE AT THE COTTAGE 11

SPECIAL EVENTS AT SWEET PEA COTTAGE..... 12

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES..... 12

YOUR FIRST DAY 13

COMING & GOING 13

Signing In and Out 13

Arriving and Leaving..... 13

Late Pick-Up 14

ATTENDANCE POLICIES 14

Vacation Days..... 14

Make-Up Days..... 14

In-Service Days..... 15

Holidays..... 15

WHAT SHOULD MY LITTLE WEAR TO SWEET PEA? 15

TOILET TRAINING & DIAPERS 16

HMMM... SHOULD I BRING THIS ALONG?..... 16

SICK CHILD & EMERGENCY POLICIES 16

When Should My Child Stay Home? 16

Prevention and Daily Health Checks..... 17

Medications..... 18

In Case of Emergency 18

TUITION & INVOICES 18

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts
PARENT HANDBOOK

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER..... 19

DONATIONS & FUNDRAISING..... 19

OTHER NUTS & BOLTS 19

Mixed Age Classrooms 19

Sweet Pea College 20

Food..... 20

What Should I Do If I Want to Discuss a Concern? 21

Documentation 21

Bathroom..... 22

Incident Reports..... 22

General Celebrations..... 22

Birthday Celebrations & Treats..... 22

Graduation..... 22

Student/Teacher Ratio 23

Notification of Changes to Contact Information 23

Child Abuse Reporting 23

OTHER ENROLLMENT INFORMATION..... 23

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT..... 24

RIGHTS OF SWEET PEA PARENTS, STUDENTS & STAFF..... 24

EMERGENCY CLOSURE POLICY 26

PARENT HANDBOOK RECEIPT VERIFICATION FORM..... 27

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to Sweet Pea Cottage,

WHERE CREATIVE MINDS BEGIN TO BLOOM!

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts believes that, by fostering your child's intuitive nature for creative play and exploration, we can help focus a healthy relationship with the imagination while preparing children with the social and scholastic skills needed for kindergarten and beyond.

Working with parents, we actively work to support the individual needs of each child. We celebrate developmental milestones, while continuing to work closely with both parent and child to encourage growth, expansion, and maturity.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts strives for a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, providing children with a sense of belonging and safety. Our environment reflects the culture and languages of our teachers, children and families and we respect and honor all backgrounds.

We want your child to feel confident and secure to explore and grow in a stimulating educational and social environment. Our programs utilize the arts and the creative process, along with current child development research. Serious education ultimately rests with powerful teachers, supportive parents and determined students. Finding the way to gather these people together is at the heart of what Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts is all about.

This handbook has been designed to answer some of the questions you may have concerning our policies and programs. Our policies and paperwork are necessary to help us provide the safest and most supportive atmosphere for your child. These policies exist to ensure the quality of the programs and your child's health and safety. Throughout this handbook, we have used the term parent and family. We recognize that whether you are a parent, stepparent, grandparent, guardian or foster parent, you are parenting your child. We also recognize and celebrate all definitions of family. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please feel free to arrange a meeting with a staff person.

Please read this handbook carefully and keep it in a convenient location for reference.

We encourage ongoing communications between the staff and parents. Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year, but our teachers are available to meet with you at your convenience to discuss your child. We ask that you set up an appointment with your Site Supervisor at least a week in advance so the teachers are able to prepare for the meeting. Please fill out a Let's Talk form to schedule a meeting.

For the safety of your child, each Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts employee's references and criminal and Child Protective Services backgrounds are checked. We hire our teachers based on experience, arts background, education and a passion for teaching. These guidelines assure the highest quality care and education for your child. All of our teachers are CPR/First Aid trained. Volunteers, including parents, are used in aspects of our programs, opening opportunities for more individualized attention for your child.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts
PARENT HANDBOOK

ABOUT SWEET PEA COTTAGE

Mission Statement

Enriching, inspiring, and expanding every child's education through the arts.

Vision Statement

Where every child walks confidently and compassionately, celebrating the world with innate creativity and a lifelong zeal for learning.

Core Values

At Sweet Pea Cottage we believe in teaching through:

Art

At Sweet Pea Cottage we are dedicated to the philosophy that the arts are an integral component to a child's total development. We aspire to create a multi-lingual, cross-cultural curriculum that celebrates the arts and the creative process. We employ teaching artists in our community to give the gift of their own experiences.

Love

At Sweet Pea Cottage we believe that when each child is taught with love it creates the strongest foundation to communicate and encourages the child to find what they love to do.

Tradition

At Sweet Pea Cottage we value the process of handing down information, beliefs, and customs by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another. We honor cultural differences and celebrate them. It takes a village with helping hands to teach our heritage and traditions.

Community

At Sweet Pea Cottage we recognize and emphasize the inspiration, creativity and friendship a community brings to a child's life. We explore the concentric circles that make the concept of community.

World Perspective

At Sweet Pea Cottage we consider it our responsibility to give a significant insight into the lives of children and their families all over the world. We explore and celebrate the world.

***And in the end, we discover laughter, individuality,
positive choice-making, and a positive future;
in short, a garden of possibilities.***

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts
PARENT HANDBOOK

PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM

The philosophy of Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts is based on the belief that the arts are an integral component to your child's total development. We aspire to create a multi-lingual, cross-cultural curriculum that will foster the physical, mental, emotional and social development of all children while celebrating the creative process.

We know that each child has the capacity to learn and each teacher must provide a loving environment in which the children have the opportunity to experiment and use creative play for academic success. Each child has unique needs that must be addressed by the curriculum, which should provide them with a positive self-concept, a joy for learning and an ability to work and play with others.

Children need the opportunity to learn by actual experience and Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts offers them a wide variety of experiences. Music, drawing, painting, sculpting, dance, theater, poetry, writing and acting are all a part of our weekly schedule. Our classes, which are taught by highly qualified artist-teachers, stimulate the imagination, engage the intellect, strengthen physical skill and enhance curiosity. Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts students learn how to find joy in self-discovery while building positive relationships with others, allowing them to safely explore the world in their own terms.

The environment is also a very important component to quality learning experience. We have designed the space to encourage children to choose activities that promote social interactions while allowing teachers to maintain control of the classroom. Furniture, shelving, bathroom facilities, materials, and play equipment are all age appropriate.

Our teachers rely on the child's natural tendency for discovery, need for learning and close, honest relationships with adults. The children are active participants in the process of selecting curriculum content and the curriculum will move and flow with the children's changing interests and needs. We celebrate all forms of diversity in our classrooms and we openly encourage the children to embrace all that makes them unique and special.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

A DAY AT SWEET PEA COTTAGE PRESCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Upon entering Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts, parents and child(ren) will be greeted by one of our staff. At the greeting area, you will find the Sign-in/Sign-out sheet. Near your child's homeroom you will find the student files. Each student has a file that we will put announcements, monthly calendars and your child's artwork, as well as any business items such as invoices, vacation forms, etc. You may also set up a meeting with teachers, Managing Director or Artistic Director at this time.

Preschool Opens

From the moment your child enters the school, they are welcomed with a warm smile by a greeter at the front door. A staff member greets the child at the classroom door and inquires about the child's evening and morning and discusses any specific information with the parent that will ensure the child's needs are met.

Table Toys

Small motor control & texture play, which includes water play, puzzles, lacing, numbers, magnets, science, free play, creative play, and more.

Circle Time

Activities may include storytelling, Passport Around the World, puppetry, or other creative drama and interactive imaginative adventures.

Snack & Lunch

Often reflecting the geographical location the students are studying that week, we strive for a nutritious snack and lunch appropriate for each child. Your child's dietary restrictions are strictly adhered to.

Rotations

Activities including painting, sculpture, crafts, coloring, drawing, creative drama, dance, yoga, sports, and language. We incorporate language using numbers, letters, objects and basic phrases are practiced using engaging visuals, songs and drama.

Outdoor time

We are committed to being outside as often as possible, rain or shine. Nature walk and field games are a lovely way for us to explore our community and our landscape. Littles should wear clothes that can get dirty and that are weather appropriate. If your little chooses not to dress weather appropriately, please bring in a change of clothes, including shoes for them.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

Sweet Pea College - Kindergarten Prep Time

We believe that everything we do at Sweet Pea is preparation for Kindergarten. We've created curriculum based on Washington's Educational Learning Standards that will prepare *every Sweet Pea child* for kindergarten. Activities include:

Passport Around the World

Go on grand adventures around the world through stories, music, theatre and food, learning about how children live their lives in other countries.

Reading

Beginning to understand that text and illustrations convey distinct information

Phonemic Awareness

Listen to and recite poems and chants, as well as participate in games and lessons involving separation or repetition of words and word sounds.

Decoding and Word Recognition

Match, sort and trace letters, know that certain pictures (icons) go with certain labels (words), explore meaning of words and icons

Reading Comprehension

Connect personal experiences and knowledge to stories and music in order to understand choice and consequences within literature draw pictures based on a story

Writing Strategies

Make controlled and uncontrolled scribbles and name the scribbles or describe their meaning, make mock letters, letter strings and letter groups.

Science

Explore the world around them through basic scientific explanations, explore the seasons, why plants grow, etc.

History

Working with historical fiction, the students explore the history of the Pacific Northwest and the United States. We utilize creative play, movement and dance, and the visual arts to help teach.

Fieldtrip Class, Thursdays 9:30am - 1:30pm (extra class at Queen Anne)

The students whose tuition package includes fieldtrips go on various outings to places such as city parks, farms, the Children's Museum, Seattle Art Museum, and much more. Children must be at least 3 years old, have been a student at Sweet Pea Cottage for at least 6 months, and have approval from the Artistic Director. Fieldtrip class often includes use of public transportation and occasionally requires carpooling with parents.

Children and their parents who are not currently enrolled in the fieldtrip class are welcome to accompany us on any fieldtrip as long as they meet the requirements of being 3 years old and having been at Sweet Pea at least 6 months. However, if the child is not enrolled in the fieldtrip

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

class then the parent must stay with and is responsible for their child for the duration of the fieldtrip. If a parent wants to participate in a fieldtrip, either by accompanying their child or by helping with carpooling, he/she must complete a volunteer form from the office *at least two weeks in advance* to allow for time for criminal and Child Protective Services background checks and have a copy of his/her current driver's license and car insurance policy on file in the office.

CLASSROOM GOALS FOR YOUR CHILD

Emotional and Social Development

We strive to provide experiences that develop healthy attitudes and feelings. Our goal is to help your child achieve healthy personal relationships with others, while strengthening their own identity.

Language Development

Our teachers offer classroom activities that encourage learning how to use language effectively as a means of communication and a resource for self-expression.

Health and Nutrition

Through practice and routine, we help students learn good health and hygienic habits. We also work to raise your child's awareness of good nutrition.

Physical Development

Through movement, outdoor activities, yoga, sports, and dance, our goal is to contribute to the physical fitness and muscular coordination of your child. We work to strengthen the core concept of self through increased body awareness and mastery. We also strive to help each child develop a sense of respect for physical boundaries in both self and others.

Cultural Arts

Our goal is to help your child understand and relate to the world around them by discovering their own unique voice. Free expression through music, theater and the visual arts is a necessary component to this journey.

Multicultural Studies

Through creative play, imaginative travel, stories and special guests, our goal is to open new worlds to your child in order to instill respect for difference, fuel a passion for adventure and understand his/her responsibilities as a global citizen.

Cognitive Development

Our goal is to instill a love of exploration, observation, experimentation, reasoning, problem solving and concentration.

Listening and Speaking

We strive to create opportunities for your child to converse with adults and peers about topics of personal interest, as well as discuss topics beyond direct, current experiences.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

WEEKLY SPECIALTY CLASSES

Because we are a preschool that is focused on the arts, you can count on your child experiencing learning through art every day! Our Circle Time and Table Toy time are key to both arts based learning as is our Passport Around the World and for that reason they happen every day.

We offer specialty classes during our rotation time which include (may vary by site): Music, Dance, Art, Nature Walk, Obstacle Course, Theatre, French, Sports, Yoga, Spanish, and Cooking

GUIDING YOUNG CHILDREN

Our teachers help children understand that resolving differences by using words is the most effective way to achieve their needs and wants. We model and encourage expected behavior, redirecting children into more acceptable activities, setting clear goals and limits and intervening quickly when a child's actions are considered unacceptable or harmful.

Our teachers respect your child's developing diplomatic capabilities and our staff are patient, realizing that not every minor infraction warrants a response. Physical punishment is NEVER permitted at the school by staff or parents. In accordance with state law and our own policies, our school is free from ALL corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to: interference with daily living functions, including eating, sleeping or toileting, or withholding of shelter, food, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning.

Our staff understands that parenting is a difficult job and that children may try even the greatest patience. We do not, however, condone nor accept any physical or mental punishment of a child. We are required by law to monitor and report any suspicions or findings of abuse to police or Child Protective Services.

If your child does have prolonged periods of behavior difficulties, our teachers will work with you to design an action plan so that we can work to assist your child in overcoming them.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts advocates for a child's right to achieve their greatest potential, therefore, termination of services is a last resort. We strongly believe that we must have the help of a child's parents to overcome discipline and developmental challenges.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

SPECIAL PEOPLE AT THE COTTAGE

Artistic Director

The Artistic Director oversees all of the educational aspects of life at Sweet Pea Cottage. This person is the guiding force for the philosophy and curriculum that makes Sweet Pea the magical place it is.

Managing Director

The Managing Director is the administrative foundation for Sweet Pea Cottage. This is the person who handles human resources for the staff, financial aid for students, fundraising, budgeting, marketing, safety, and overall supervision of enrollment and financial management.

Site Supervisor*

This person makes sure students are placed in homeroom classes according to their needs, makes sure that the day is running smoothly, that we know where everyone is and how they're doing as the day goes on. This person greets folks in the morning and helps deliver and transition students through the school day. The Site Supervisor guides the day to day operations of the school.

Registrar

This person handles all enrollment and student scheduling procedures for Sweet Pea Cottage. The Registrar schedules Make-Up Days, Vacation Days or adding additional days as needed. This is also the person who handles tuition invoicing, maintains the student files and processes all new student applications. This position works closely with the Director of Site Supervisor to coordinate student schedules.

Bookkeeper

The Bookkeeper maintains the financial records for Sweet Pea Cottage and supports the Managing Director in fulfilling local, state and federal paperwork obligations. The Bookkeeper works with the administrative staff to develop the annual budget and research and increase funding resources, in addition to tuition, that support Sweet Pea Cottage's mission and vision.

Lead Teachers*

Full-time Lead Teachers are responsible for implementing overall curriculum and arts education structure within their classroom. Lead Teachers serve as a regular component to the student's environment supporting a comfortable and personalized school setting.

Assistant Teachers

Assistant Teachers support the Lead Teacher in delivering the curriculum and arts education structure. Assistant Teachers are also there to support each individual student's emotional and physical needs and to step in as Lead Teacher as needed.

Specialty Teachers

These teachers are hired for a specific unit and come to share their expertise with the littles.

Guest Artists

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

These artists come in to show the littles what they do. For example, a concert pianist is coming to show the children what his work is all about and to perform for them. These are generally one-day visits.

Special Guests

Sweet Pea Cottage enjoys bringing the culture we are visiting to life by inviting special guests to come and share their part of the culture we are studying with us. We encourage family members to be a part of this program. You can also participate by sharing pictures, stories, clothing, or any other aspect of any culture we're studying that you, your family or friends are a part of.

Room Parent

These very special folks help the Lead Teachers achieve the goals of their lesson plans by helping to prepare projects. If you are interested in volunteering to be a Room Parent, please talk to your Site Supervisor!!

Friends of Sweet Pea

This is a volunteer group of parents and family members that help Sweet Pea be all it can be by playing a large role in our fundraising efforts as well as our community events. Friends of Sweet Pea gives a voice to our parents. As a Friends of Sweet Pea member, you will be invited to monthly meetings where you can hear all about what we've been up to in the last month and what we're looking toward in the near and distant future.

Board of Directors

The board is the guiding force behind the operations of Sweet Pea Cottage. Their sole purpose is to support, facilitate and realize Sweet Pea Cottage's mission and vision.

*At some locations, the Site Supervisor and Lead Teacher are a combined position.

SPECIAL EVENTS AT SWEET PEA COTTAGE

We hold regular events outside of preschool hours to encourage the bonding of our Sweet Pea families! These events include:

Kid's Klub AM & PM* Fundraisers * Family Movie and Art Day * Community Gatherings and Meals * Fix-It Days* and Much More! *(We hope you will join us! Watch your newsletter for details!)*

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

We offer additional classes at our Queen Anne location outside of preschool to current, alumni, and waitlisted Sweet Pea families as well as the greater community. These classes include:

Pea Wee Class * After School Studios * School Year and Summer Camps * Kinder Prep Class* and More to come!

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

YOUR FIRST DAY

As a parent of a young child, you may experience difficulty leaving your child in someone else's care. It is important that you and your child come to an agreement of a daily ritual that is short and sweet for saying goodbye when it is time to come to school. It helps the child know that you trust us and know that your child is in a safe place. Please also bring in a change of clothes for your child in a labeled backpack. Your little may bring a book buddy for comfort for the first couple of weeks. At some point during the day a teacher will make sure the book buddy makes it back to the teacher basket outside the classroom door.

A great way to prepare your child for their first day at school is to talk through the routine of the day in a simple way citing three or four activities and a meal time, such as lunch for the early students or afternoon snack for the later children. This helps them think through what comes next and when to expect to see parents again. This way they feel better prepared and more in control of their day.

COMING & GOING

Signing In and Out

The Sign In/Out sheets are located at the doors to each classroom. You, or someone authorized by you, must accompany your child to the classroom door or to the greeter. Please sign in using your full name. Please make sure that you have also verbally checked in with a staff member. Never leave your child unattended.

At the end of the day, sign out according to the exact time of pick-up, as well as verbally letting the teacher know you are taking your child home. Please do not let your child leave the school ahead of you. All others who have been authorized by you to drop off or pick up your child should be instructed to follow this procedure.

Anyone who is not recognized by our staff will be asked to show a valid Driver's License or other picture identification. Someone who has not been authorized by you on your child's approved pick up list will not be permitted to leave with your child. It is very important to notify the school regarding any changes in the person who will be picking up your child.

Those parents who may be having custody issues should consult with an attorney regarding legal protection for their children. Parents must provide us with any court orders so that we can enforce you and your child's legal rights if the need arises.

Arriving and Leaving

Arriving on time will help the transition period for your child between parent time and school time. The doors will open at 5 minutes before the hour and close at 10 minutes after. If you arrive late, you may be disrupting the other children in the class, thus making it harder for our staff to teach.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

After you drop your child off, please take the time to sign in. This is also a good time to check our bulletin boards for news and events. At pick-up time, please make sure to retrieve any artwork, newsletters, invoices or anything else from your student's file.

Remember that our teachers' priority is the safety of your child. Please do not interrupt class or ask a teacher to leave the classroom to discuss an issue with you during arrival and/or pick-up. Feel free to make an appointment with the appropriate staff so we can focus our attention on your needs. You can leave a message in the teacher's mailbox with a Let's Talk form or via voice-mail to arrange appointments.

Children are expected to attend the schedule for their specific program or the schedule that has been arranged at the time of the enrollment.

If your child will be late or absent, please notify the school at least one (1) hour before your scheduled arrival. This allows us to accurately plan for meals and staffing. If your child will be out for a period of time, you are expected to notify the school in writing within two weeks of the expected absence. Exceptions will only be made in case of an emergency.

Late Pick-Up

It is very important that your child is picked up promptly at the end of the session. Your child learns what time it is by the routine in the classroom and he/she will know that you are late by noticing when friends leave before him/her. If you think you may be late in picking up your child, call the school immediately.

We allow a 14 minute grace period for late pick-ups. Parents will be charged a late penalty of \$1.00 when 15 minutes late and \$1.00 for each additional minute thereafter. This penalty is charged per child. The late penalty is not related to special childcare arrangements made in writing with the school. This fee does not cover the cost of paying teachers overtime. The late penalty amount will be added to the monthly invoice.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

At Sweet Pea Cottage, we try to be as flexible as possible when it comes to our attendance policies.

Vacation Days

Each Sweet Pea student receives the equivalent of one week of free vacation each quarter. This means that if your child attends three days a week, you have the option to take up to 3 days of vacation in a quarter. Unused vacation days do not roll over to the next quarter. To redeem these vacation days, please notify the office, in writing, at least two weeks in advance and your next invoice will be credited for those days.

Make-Up Days

Whether it is a sick child, a last minute dentist appointment or a really bad night's sleep, we understand that sometimes a day of school has to be missed. Our make-up day policy allows you *30 days from the day a student is absent*, to make up that day. You must notify the office at least *one week in advance, in writing*, of the day and session you would like your child to attend to make-up the absence. If that time is unavailable, we will let you know as soon as possible. If you are unable

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

to attend the scheduled make-up day, please give us at least 24 hours notice, otherwise the original make-up day will be forfeited. Make-Up Days and Vacation Days are per student and may not be transferred, even between family members.

In-Service Days

- Sweet Pea is closed on the last day of each quarter to prepare for the new quarter.
- We are also closed for one week between summer and fall quarters to prepare for the new school year.

Holidays:

Sweet Pea Cottage is closed for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve Day
- Christmas Day

In order to give our teachers the happy holidays they too deserve, we do not issue credits or make-up days for these holiday or in-service closures. Advance notice of holiday closures will be on your monthly event calendar, as well as in the newsletter.

WHAT SHOULD MY LITTLE WEAR TO SWEET PEA?

Sweet Pea Cottage incorporates movement, dance, painting, clay and a variety of other potentially messy items within our curriculum. It is possible that your child will come home dirty, with face paint, painted or with messy clothes. We believe that it is more important that your child have the freedom to safely play and learn than to have clean and tidy clothes at the end of the day. If you are planning on going out directly after school, we have several bathrooms in which a child may change into the appropriate attire.

We ask that you provide loose fitting clothes and/or appropriate dance attire. Please make sure that your child's shoes fit well and have closed toes. If sandals are worn during the summer months, please be sure to provide an additional pair of closed toe shoes. We do have opportunities for children to take their shoes off.

PLEASE mark all of your child's clothes with permanent ink or name labels. This includes underwear, socks, sweaters, jackets, hats, shoes and mittens/gloves. We encourage all children to care for their clothing, but we cannot take responsibility for clothing lost at school.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

Sweet Pea Cottage will provide a cubby so you can safely store extra clothing from home (at least one outfit in a labeled bag is our recommendation). This will ensure that your child will have dry clothes available in case of a potty accident or a particularly wet nature walk, etc.

TOILET TRAINING & DIAPERS

We will employ the following methods in aiding the toilet training of a Sweet Pea child:

1. A potty chair will be placed in the bathroom.
2. We will offer the child the opportunity to “go potty” often. We will not force the child to sit on the potty chair against her/his will.
3. If the child uses the potty we will verbally praise him/her.
4. If the child fails to use the potty we will not shame him/her but instead keep in mind that we all struggle at times.

If your child is still wearing diapers we will provide diapers and wipes as needed. But feel free to supplement our supply with a diaper or wipe donation at any time.

HMMM... SHOULD I BRING THIS ALONG?

Please understand that anything brought to the school must be shared or stored in the cubby or teacher basket. Oftentimes, children have special security items that they wish to bring and we respect, understand and support a child’s need to bring something from home when experiencing the transition from home to school.

Sweet Pea Cottage is a non-violent environment. Violent toys such as guns or action figures must be left at home. Violent play is never appropriate and *will not be tolerated* at Sweet Pea.

If the school is having “Show & Tell” that day, please exercise common sense when choosing something for your child to bring. Gum and candy are not acceptable “Show & Tell” items, unless previously approved with the Sweet Pea Staff.

Children often take small things home with them to remind them of their time at school. If you find small toys, Legos, puzzle pieces, etc., please return them to your child’s classroom.

SICK CHILD & EMERGENCY POLICIES

When Should My Child Stay Home?

Children may not attend the program if any one of the following symptoms is present:

Coughing

Children should remain home if they have a cough accompanied by fever or difficulty breathing. Asthma is excluded from this rule. Children may return after 24 hours if symptoms have disappeared or with a health care professional’s written release.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

Diarrhea

Loose bowel movements for two (2) days in a row or three (3) times in one day. Children may return after they are symptom free for 24 hours.

Eye Infection/Discharge

Pink eye or any other eye infection is highly contagious. A child may return with a health care professional's written release that the child is no longer contagious.

Vomiting

Repeated forceful evacuation with other symptoms or child's inability to eat. Parents will be notified and the child may be monitored. If vomiting continues and other symptoms occur, then the child will be sent home immediately.

Fever

Children should remain at home if their oral temperature is 100 degrees or greater; rectal temperature 102 degrees or greater; auxiliary (armpit) temperature 100 degrees or greater and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. Children may return when released by a health care professional or when their temperature has been normal for 24 hours.

Lice

Hair must be washed with medicated shampoo and be free of all nits (eggs) and lice before returning to school.

Rashes

Unidentified rashes may be diagnosed by a health care professional and the child may return with a written release.

A child should stay home if she/he is in unusual discomfort, such as with an earache or other pain that causes the child to cry. Measles, chicken pox, mumps, whooping cough and streptococcal infections are very contagious and children exhibiting any of these symptoms will not be allowed to enter the school.

Parents are requested to call the school immediately to report contagious conditions and the administrative staff will then notify the other parents.

Prevention and Daily Health Checks

Most illnesses are spread primarily by hand contact, therefore children and adults strictly adhere to proper hand washing procedures as set forth by the Washington State Health Board. Your child's health status will be checked upon arrival each day. This health check will be informal; however, if your child does show signs of being ill, he/she may not be admitted into the school.

If your child does become sick at the school, you or another authorized person will be called and are required to pick up your child within one hour.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

Medications

Over-the-counter and prescription medication are not to be dispensed by Sweet Pea Staff.

In Case of Emergency

If your child becomes sick or injured while at Sweet Pea, you will be notified immediately by phone. If your child needs immediate medical attention and you cannot be reached by phone, a staff person will take your child to the doctor or hospital designated on their emergency form. In the event of an emergency, we will contact 911 and you will also be immediately contacted. Up to date contact information is critical so we can always reach you.

All teaching staff are trained in CPR and emergency first aid. First Aid boxes are located in every classroom, as well as the administrative office.

In the case of an earthquake, you will most likely be unable to contact the school by telephone. Staff will remain with your child until an adult designated on your child's emergency list picks him/her up. Please review our Disaster Manual for additional emergency information.

TUITION & INVOICES

All fees are payable to and collected by the administrative office. You may pay by cash or personal check made payable to Sweet Pea Cottage. *Please remember never to pay cash without getting a receipt.*

An invoice and any applicable credit memos will be put in your child's file by the first of each month. The payment is due one week later. A \$25 late fee will be applied if your monthly account is not reconciled within two weeks of receiving the invoice. Within those two weeks you may contest any billing issues. Questions regarding billing must be submitted in writing. After two weeks, you will owe the full amount on the invoice. A \$20 service charge will be applied per returned check.

You will be billed for the amount as reflected in the enrollment contract. Each Sweet Pea student receives the equivalent of one week of free vacation each quarter. (Please see the section marked "Vacation Days" for further details).

If you choose to drop your child off on a day not reflected on your contract and you are not making up a sick day, the fee for that day will be \$45.

A tuition deposit equivalent to one month's tuition will be due upon initial enrollment. Annually, a last month tuition deposit will be collected. By default, this deposit will be credited towards June tuition of that school year. Should you choose to withdraw your child mid-year, your deposit may be used towards your final month of enrollment or be refunded if you have followed the withdrawal guidelines. (See Termination of Enrollment) If you withdraw your child after the withdrawal deadline, your last month tuition deposit will be forfeited.

Sweet Pea Cottage reserves the right to modify any of its billing policies upon 30 calendar-days written notice to the parent or guardian.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Each Monday we will publish the current week's newsletter. It is available by email or we will put it in your child's file for you to pick up. It is very important that you read this newsletter every week, because we will communicate any important changes, medical warnings, meeting notices or other necessary information through the newsletter.

DONATIONS & FUNDRAISING

As we are a non-profit 501(c)(3), fund raising and donations subsidize services provided by Sweet Pea Cottage. As with many other arts organizations the dollars you spend on tuition don't cover the actual costs of running our preschool. Fundraising and donations enhance the overall quality of the program through the purchase of additional supplies, equipment, specialty teachers, additional staff support, special events and parent/staff trainings.

Sweet Pea Cottage includes a wish list of our needs in each newsletter to make this school the best learning environment possible. In addition, we need monthly snack donations as well as special art supplies from time to time. Whether you drop off a bag of apples for snack, a can of play dough for table toys or a check for our operations, we will be happy to provide you with a letter acknowledging your contribution to Sweet Pea Cottage and which includes Sweet Pea Cottages federal tax ID number for your tax purposes.

Please contact the Artistic Director or Managing Director to find out how you can make a difference.

OTHER NUTS & BOLTS

Mixed Age Classrooms

Sweet Pea Cottage believes in the mixed age classroom. Studies have shown that children develop cognitively and socially through interacting with older and younger children. One important fact to have emerged is that children benefit greatly from the opportunity to become an 'expert' for younger children to learn from. Younger children look to the older ones to teach them, and older children view the younger ones as in need of teaching and support. Education experts believe this nurtures creative thinking skills, problem solving skills, vocabulary and other social competencies.

In the mixed age classroom where this level of interaction between children has been effectively achieved, there is likely to be a greater general sense of cooperation. Friendship groupings can cross traditional age boundaries and younger children can often view older children as part of the hierarchy of authority in their school when they share the same classroom. This leads to a diminished need for teacher intervention in the event of bad behavior.

Perhaps not insignificant is the fact that mixed-age teaching resembles more closely the family setting that children with siblings find themselves in at home. Growing up with other children of

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

various ages means that children are more than capable of adapting to various social situations throughout their lives.

Sweet Pea College

We have created an original program to specifically meet the needs of our four and five year old students. Throughout the year there will be weekly learning objectives incorporated into new activities to progressively challenge the student in preparation for kindergarten. This program focuses on teaching positive peer interactions and important character building values such as honesty, friendship, and perseverance. Quarterly the child will consider some of the problems in our community and explore ways to help. The children will chart the problem and brainstorm solutions. Together we will plan a solution we can implement such as a food/clothing drive, recycling, fire safety, etc. Parental involvement in early childhood education is especially important. Periodically projects will be assigned that will be fun to complete at home. These projects will also be keepsakes for the years to come. Projects may include: "All About Me Collage", "My Journal", "My Phone Book", "My Favorite Things" and more!

Food

We are committed to healthy food choices for our littles. We are also invested in providing our littles with a wide variety of food experiences. Our meals are carefully balanced for nutritional integrity and to allow for a wide variety of taste, color, and texture. We are primarily vegetarian although we do offer some tuna on occasion.

Children will often reject food because:

- o Of their mood
- o They are going through a period of slow growth
- o They are showing their independence

Is This Child Eating Enough?

Children's bodies grow at different rates. This can change the amount they eat from one meal to the next. Also, children may want to eat their big meal at different times of day. Parents often think children should eat a lot because they're supposed to be growing. It is important to remember that children have small stomachs (about the size of their fist). If a parent is concerned about their child's weight they should contact their pediatrician so they can discuss their concerns with a person familiar with the child's particular situation and history.

How Often Should A Little Eat?

Ideally children (and all of us really) should have frequent small meals. To meet the needs of our littles we offer snack at 10:30am & 2:30pm and lunch at 12:30pm.

Nut Free Zone:

Sweet Pea is a **nut free zone**. This is true without exception. We have children in our care with *severe, and potentially fatal, allergies to nuts*. Please do not bring any form of nut (peanut, pine nut, soy nut, brazil nut, macadamia nut, pecan, walnut, etc.) to school at any time. If your child has had a nut based product during breakfast please be sure to carefully wash their hands and face and be sure that there are no nuts on their clothing before bringing them to school. It is imperative that we all join in this effort to protect our littles.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

Food Offered at Sweet Pea:

Because we have many littles with special dietary needs including severe and potentially fatal allergies, and all littles love to share, it is critical that Sweet Pea provide the snack and lunch to make sure that we've accommodated all the special needs we have. **Please do not bring food to school** unless you have discussed it with the Artistic Director or Site Supervisor first.

We want all of our littles to eat food that they are familiar with at home and we want them to experience food from other cultures. We all have a culture to be proud of and share with others. Food is a great and easy way to share our background with others. We are happy to incorporate any recipe ideas you might have for a unit we are studying. If you bring the idea to us we are able to adjust the recipe if needed so all of our littles can enjoy the special food experience.

Alternate Foods:

Any time we are offering a main course that does not work for one of our littles they are offered an equally appealing and nutritious alternative.

All of our meals are vegetarian but all are carefully balanced and have plenty of protein. If you or a parent have any questions about the combinations of our food please see Artistic Director or Site Supervisor.

What Should I Do If I Want to Discuss a Concern?

We are always happy to discuss any feedback or concerns a parent might have. We want to give your thoughts the focus and attention they deserve. To allow us to focus properly we ask that parents write their concerns on the "Let's Talk" forms and turn it in to the office. We will contact you promptly and will provide a written response within five working days.

It is important to us that parents and staff are allies in supporting *all* of our students. Please use the "Let's Talk" form to tell us that you need to meet so that we can openly discuss any concerns and work together to insure the best possible experience for everyone. Drop off and pick up are great times to fill these forms out but it is challenging to create solutions when getting littles safely to their family is our priority so please encourage drop the form off and know that we'll get back to you promptly.

Documentation

Teachers keep Daily Journals for each student. If anything is out of the ordinary it will be reflected on the student's Daily Journal sheet. If there is a situation that merits further communication we will indicate that we need a meeting on the Daily Journal form. We also keep a running log where we record anything of concern so that all staff is aware and paying attention to the situation.

If behavior is deemed to be of significant concern by the Lead Teacher and/or the Site Supervisor, the Artistic Director is notified and a meeting is arranged with the Artistic Director, the Director of Preschool Operations, the Lead Teacher, and the parent. At times the Lead Teacher and Staff may be asked to keep an ongoing journal for a child so patterns of behavior can be identified and we as a staff can continue to work together with the family and specialist if necessary to help resolve the

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

situation in a positive manner.

Bathroom

Any time a child visits the bathroom there is an adult close at hand. Littles are to go individually into either stalls in a multi-user bathroom or into a private bathroom by themselves. There is always a visual barrier between children while using the restroom. Privacy never means locked doors – staff are always present to insure safety and to instruct on the steps of personal cleanliness including washing of hands.

Incident Reports

We do everything possible to insure the safety of your child. Even so, accidents can happen. Incident reports are filled out any time a little is hurt or is acting out excessively during the course of the day. The incident report will be completed by the staff person who witnessed the incident. A copy of the report will be provided to the parents of both the child who was hurt and, if applicable, the child who acted out. Copies are also kept in the student's file(s) in the office. If you have a question about an incident that took place please speak to Artistic Director or Site Supervisor.

General Celebrations

Children derive great pleasure in celebrating and Sweet Pea Cottage wants to make sure that celebration is a part of their daily life. Please let us know if you would like to plan a special event or celebration during school hours. Please help us plan our schedule to accommodate the celebration by letting us know in writing at least one week ahead of time.

Some of our students may also have allergies to specific foods and it is very important that you check with us before bringing in any outside food. We want to include every child in the celebration.

Birthday Celebrations & Treats

Due to the different dietary needs of our littles we ask that you speak with your Site Supervisor if you want to bring treats into class for your child's birthday celebration. Instead of food, we'd love for you to consider our *Birthday Book* program! This program was introduced by a Sweet Pea parent who suggested that in celebration of a little's birthday the little's family could donate a book to Sweet Pea Cottage from the "Birthday Book Wish List". The birthday book will be read in the child's honor and an inscription will be made in the book commemorating the special donation in honor of their birthday. Please help us celebrate each little's birthday in ways other than with food so that all of our littles are able to participate.

Graduation

We are so proud of our Sweet Pea College program! To graduate from Sweet Pea College your little must be heading for kindergarten in the fall. We encourage graduation as a symbol that the child has completed this phase in their life and they are embarking on a new adventure in "big kid school". We celebrate this momentous transition with a brief ceremony and a Sweet Pea community picnic. The graduation is on the last day of Spring Quarter each year.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

Student/Teacher Ratio

The State of Washington's teacher/student ratio recommendation for our age group is 1:10. At Sweet Pea Cottage our preferred ratio is 1:8 resulting in two teachers for 16 students in each classroom. During the rotation period the classroom may rise to the 20-student limit. However, we would add another teacher in any such circumstance.

Notification of Changes to Contact Information

It is important that the school maintains current and accurate records on your child so we can contact you in case of emergency. Parents must complete enrollment forms and a family profile before your child is able to attend school. The forms must be kept current at all times. The information includes address, home and work phone numbers, email, work location and names of at least three persons authorized to pick up your child or some way to contact someone immediately. Your child's current immunization record must be kept on file before your child attends school and it must be kept current. *It is your responsibility to notify the school of any changes.*

Child Abuse Reporting

Sweet Pea Cottage is required to report any suspected child abuse and/or neglect to Child Protective Services and law enforcement.

Privacy Notice

We strive to maintain accurate information about our families and staff. We may collect non-public personal information about you or your family in various ways, such as on your application forms. We do not disclose any non-public personal information about you, former families, or staff to anyone, except as permitted or required by law, unless authorized by you.

We restrict access to non-public personal information about you to those employees who need to know that information to provide our services to you. We maintain physical, electronic and procedural safeguards that comply with federal standards and requirements to guard your non-public personal information.

OTHER ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

By signing the enrollment contract, the enrolling parent or legal guardian is certifying that they have legal physical custody and authority for the child. Court orders must be obtained to prevent the other parent or legal guardian from certain activities such as picking up the child or visiting the child at the school. Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts reserves the right to prohibit individuals from being at the school if the health and safety of any child is threatened or compromised.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts does not allow staff to make copies of forms and other documents or provide testimony, verbally or in writing, about any child, unless subpoenaed by court order or by written request from a parent. Information from the Daily Journal and other informal parent and/or legal guardian/teacher communication tools are not included in this policy.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

You are required to give written notification to the Registrar of impending withdrawal by the 10th of the month in which you wish to withdraw. If you do not inform the school in writing by the 10th, you will be billed for the next month. The notice requirement for dropping days or for total withdrawal is extended to two-months prior to our two large enrollment periods: Fall Quarter and Summer Quarter. For Fall Quarter enrollment, withdrawal notice must be given by July 10th. For Summer Quarter enrollment, withdrawal notice must be given by May 10th.

Termination of services by Sweet Pea Cottage can occur for the following reasons as required by law or Sweet Pea Policy:

- Failure to provide required documentation and complete required paperwork in a timely manner.
- Failure to provide updated immunization records as needed.
- Failure to pay fees and penalties such as delinquent fees and checks returned for non-sufficient funds.
- Failure to comply with Sweet Pea Cottage policies and/or Washington State law.
- If false information was given on any registration forms.
- Group settings are not appropriate for all children. In the event our program is not appropriate for your child, or your child constitutes a safety or legal hazard to themselves or other children, staff, or the program, we reserve the right to withdraw services at any time.

If Sweet Pea Cottage terminates services, the family may not return to any program offered by Sweet Pea Cottage unless the Artistic Director and Managing Director or his/her designee makes an exception.

RIGHTS OF SWEET PEA PARENTS, STUDENTS & STAFF

Parent's Rights

1. You have the right to review your child's file, to request a conference with any staff member of Sweet Pea Cottage regarding any action that is taken by the agency in regard to your child's services, or to discuss any concerns you have with your child's teacher by asking for a Parent/Teacher conference.
2. Custodial parents/guardians, upon presentation of identification, have the right to enter and inspect the school facility without advance notice to Sweet Pea. Inspection rights are limited to the normal operating hours while their child(ren) are receiving care.
3. The law prohibits discrimination or retaliation against any child or parent/guardian for exercising his/her right to inspect the school or for voicing any complains or concerns
4. The law requires that parents/guardians be notified of their right to enter and inspect.
5. The law authorizes the person in charge of the school facility to deny access to a parent/guardian under the following circumstances:
 - a. The parent/guardian is behaving in a way that poses a risk to children in the facility, or the parent/guardian is denying children and staff of their personal rights.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

- b. The adult is a non-custodial parent and the facility has been requested in writing by the custodial parent not to permit access to the non-custodial parent. When the custodial parent does not list the non-custodial parent on the child's approved pick up list, we consider this as the custodial parent's written denial of the non-custodial parent's right to access.

Children's Personal Rights

Each child receiving services from Sweet Pea Cottage shall have rights, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. To be accorded the dignity in his/her personal relationships with staff and other persons.
2. To be accorded safe, healthful and comfortable accommodations, furnishings and equipment to meet his/her needs.
3. To be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature.
4. Not to be locked in any room, building or facility on the premises day or night.
5. Not to be placed in any restraining device, except by a supportive restrain approved in advance.

Staff Rights

1. To be treated respectfully by other staff, parents and children.
2. To work with healthy children and to be free from exposure to disease.
3. To be free to develop a curriculum based upon developmentally appropriate practices.
4. To be able to leave work at the scheduled time by having children picked up at their scheduled time.
5. To feel safe and to work in a non-threatening environment.
6. To be talked to respectfully and professionally by staff, parents and children.
7. To be listened to with respect and heard by staff and parents.

*Thank you for reading the Parent Handbook for
Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts.
If you have any questions or thoughts please let us know!*

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts
PARENT HANDBOOK

Emergency Closure Policy

Our top priority is always student and staff safety. To ensure everyone's safety during emergencies or inclement weather, Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts follows the Seattle Public Schools emergency closure schedule. If they are closed – Sweet Pea is closed.

When Seattle Public Schools are on 2-hour delay, they cancel their half-day programs, such as AM and PM kindergarten. As Sweet Pea is also a half-day program, when their half-day programs are closed, we are also closed.

If Sweet Pea is closed due to emergency or inclement weather, an email will be sent to the weekly newsletter distribution list and the voice mail will be changed by 8am. Families and staff are encouraged to call and find out if Sweet Pea is open before coming in.

Any time Sweet Pea has an emergency closure, upon request families will receive a donation receipt for the equivalent number of emergency closure days that their student was affected. Donation receipts will be issued at the daily rate of tuition. This receipt may be applied to your taxes - please consult your tax preparer for details.

Families are welcome to instead apply any current quarter, unused Vacation Tuition Credits to emergency closure days or to schedule make up days. To apply vacation credits, fill out the Attendance Change form and turn it in to the Registrar. Credits will appear on your next invoice.

This policy supersedes all previously published policies and governs all emergency closures.

Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts

PARENT HANDBOOK

PARENT HANDBOOK RECEIPT VERIFICATION FORM

This Parent Handbook has been prepared for your information and understanding of the policies, philosophies and practices of Sweet Pea Cottage. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY. Upon completion of your review of this handbook, please sign the statement below.

I, (please print legibly) _____, have received and read a copy of Sweet Pea Cottage Preschool of the Arts' Parent Handbook which outlines the philosophy, curriculum, policies, procedures, tuition & invoices, and general information about the daily operation of Sweet Pea Cottage.

I have familiarized myself with the contents of this handbook and I understand that in addition to my personal copy there is always an office copy available for my reference.

By my signature below, I acknowledge, understand, accept and agree to comply with the information contained in Parent Handbook provided to me by Sweet Pea Cottage. I understand this handbook is not intended to cover every situation which may arise during my child's time at Sweet Pea but it is simply a general guide to the goals, policies and practices of Sweet Pea Cottage.

Parent Name
(please print)

Parent Signature

Date
