



A great place to learn!

34 Peter Parley Road

Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

(617) 522-0880

www.neighborhoodschooljp.org



2014-15 Parent Handbook



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ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to promote understanding and build community at Neighborhood School (NS). In a small school such as ours, communication is often personal and informal. We hope that the handbook will be helpful yet not a substitute for personal chats.

Trying to compile everything about NS in one handbook is a difficult task. Some things are not covered here in detail. Instead, we have tried to highlight items about which parents inquire most frequently. We urge you to read the handbook carefully and to refer to it throughout the year.

Here's to a year of learning and community building. May we each know the benefit of one another's companionship.

Best wishes,

Tricia Morrow, Director



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

I. THE SCHOOL DAY

Absences

Attendance is recorded daily and is part of a child's permanent educational record. **If the need for an unplanned absence arises, parents should notify the school by phone before 9:00 a.m.** Planned absences, including early dismissals, should be kept to a minimum and communicated in advance. It is helpful for the continuity of instruction and classroom relationships if vacations are planned for when school is not in session.

Afterschool Care

Any change in a child's after school schedule must be arranged in advance with the Director. Afterschool care is available on a contracted basis from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. each day. Drop-in care is also available upon request. Parents should write a note in the spiral log book on the first floor when pick-up arrangements (pick-up time or pick-up person) will be different than usual.

Arrival and Departure

The school opens at 8:00 a.m. and closes at 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Level 4 students are to arrive at school before 8:45 a.m. Level 1, 2, and 3 students are to arrive before 9:00 a.m. Early arrivals at 34 Peter Parley help morning meeting in Level 2 (on the first floor by the main entrance) to proceed without interruption. Classes begin at 8:45 in Level 4 and at 9:00 a.m. in Levels 1, 2, and 3; all classes dismiss at 3:30 p.m.

The bottom doorbell at 34 Peter Parley rings on the first floor; the top bell rings on the second and third floors. The bottom bell at 35 Peter Parley rings Level 4's classroom (first floor). Students are instructed not to open the door unless they notify a

teacher and are given permission.

Cancellation of School

If weather or road conditions are deemed unsafe for travel on Peter Parley Road, we will announce school closing or delayed opening information via the school's answering machine. Our cancellation decisions take into consideration the actions of Boston Public Schools but are not necessarily identical. Please call the school's telephone message at (617) 522-0880 to check for cancellation or delay announcements.

We very rarely close early due to weather, but if that is deemed necessary, we will call parents to notify you directly.

Child Release

Parents are requested to review the child release information on their child's registration form at the start of each school year.

A spiral log book is kept on the first floor radiator at 34 Peter Parley and by the phone in Level 4 for parents to record (or staff to record from parent phone messages) afternoon child release information as well as other pertinent daily information (see also Arrival and Departure; Medical Issues). If your child should be released with someone other than her/his usual pick-up person, please call or write a note in the log book.

Parental Choices that Help the School Day

Our school environment has been so positively affected by parental choices that we decided to write about a few of them!

- When children come to school ***rested and well-fed***, their attitudes about themselves and others are brighter.
- When children come to school ***having had a conversation, read a book, or exercised*** the previous evening and/or that morning, their minds are active and ready for learning.
- When children engage in ***discipline at home that respects the fact that they are children***, thus needing limits, positive reinforcement, and age-appropriate expectations, they come to school self-assured and expecting respectful

guidance from teachers.

- When children have *participated with an adult in viewing or discussing a TV program or movie intended for children, or a website screened for appropriateness*, they come to school with age-appropriate topics to act out, discuss with friends, and write about.

All parents at NS have demonstrated their extraordinary wisdom and desire for their child's best interests by joining this learning community! It is our hope that our time together will prompt each of us to explore choices that help children and our relationships with them.

Parking/Winter Driving

Parents may park in front of our driveway if space is available, or along either side of Peter Parley Road. **Cars should not be parked to block the driveways of our neighbors in any way.** Please be willing to drive farther away from the school before pulling over or parking if spaces in close proximity are not available. There is usually quite a bit of parking farther up the hill. Your courteous and safe driving habits are greatly appreciated.

In the event of a heavy snowfall, parking may become very limited. Carpooling or drop-offs and pick-ups without parking may be necessary to arrange. The following items pertain if we enact our **Winter Driving Policy** (announced on our answering machine and in effect until snow piles melt):

- From 8:00 to 9:00 a.m., we will travel on Peter Parley Road as a one-way (uphill) street. Parents are asked to **“stop and drop”** children as opposed to walking them inside the building. The staff will work to help children make their way inside, change boots, etc.
- Children scheduled for 3:30 p.m. pick-up will be dressed at 3:30 and ready to respond to a **“stop and pick up”** system instead of having parents come into school. As in the morning, between 3:30 and 4:30 p.m. we will use Peter Parley Road as a one-way (uphill) street. If you want your child dressed and ready for a pick-up later than 3:30 p.m.,

please call or leave a note.

- If you need to come inside the school in the morning or evening, please park in spaces other than in our driveway. When inside, please remove wet footwear before going upstairs or inside classrooms. This helps our carpet stay dry for small, slippered feet.

Signing Out in the Afternoon

Please remember to sign your child out on the checklist in the front hall at 34 Peter Parley or on the front door of Level 4. The pick-up person should write in the time of departure and his or her initials next to the student's name. Below are some frequently asked questions about our school sign-out policy.

- **What if I arrive on schedule but linger to chat with teachers or parents?** Chatting time is valuable, and we encourage it! Just note the time you arrived when you sign out.
- **What if my child stays for music lessons or tutoring?** If your child is with us **after** a lesson or tutoring session, the school should be compensated for after-school care. Please note your child's departure time as usual with a T (tutoring) or L (lesson) next to the time, and we will take it from there.
- **What if my child stays for homework time in Level 3 or 4?** Joyce and Drew routinely offer homework times as part of our aftercare schedule. The school should be compensated if students participate. If this time would be beneficial but presents a financial hardship, please speak with Tricia about your situation.
- **If my child participates in aftercare during a parent-teacher meeting, is aftercare charged?** No. If you are here for a meeting when your child isn't usually with us, we do not charge for aftercare. Please sign out at departure as usual and mark it with an M (meeting). We'll figure it out!

II. COMMUNICATION

Calling the School

Parents may call the school at any time during the day. At times the school answering system may also be activated. If the message you leave involves a change in your child's departure routine for that day or other essential information, please call again to insure that the message has been received.

Mailboxes etc.

Family and teacher mailboxes are located at 34 Peter Parley in the first floor hallway above the elevator; Level 4 mailboxes are in the kitchen at 35 Peter Parley. Mailboxes are intended for school-related correspondence. Parents who desire to inform others about events, etc. through fliers are asked to leave copies with the Director or with another NS staff member. Fliers are usually posted near the bulletin boards with copies available. Information of interest to the school community may also be submitted via e-mail to tricia.morrow@comcast.net for inclusion in our weekly *Happy Tuesday* newsletter.

Parent Bulletin Board Area

Parent bulletin boards are located in the first floor hallway of both buildings. Notices sent to all parents and announcements of events pertaining to all levels are displayed on the board. Announcements of particular interest to Level 4 may be posted on the bulletin board at 35 Peter Parley. A vertical file of information pertaining to parents can be found on the radiator at 34 Peter Parley. A filebox for library book check-outs is also located on the radiator, as is the daily log book for parent messages. Parents wishing to share parent-to-parent information on the bulletin board, in the files, or in *Happy Tuesday* should submit the item(s) to the Director or to any staff member.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Parents meet at least twice with their child's teacher during the

school year. Meetings often correspond with our trimester assessment process but can also be arranged at other times. Parents are encouraged to personalize their conference by letting the teacher know if setting an agenda ahead of time or using a particular format for the meeting would be helpful.

Requests for a meeting or conversation with your child's teacher can also be made at any time. Teachers will consider a time suggested by the parent or will offer other possible times before, during, or after school. Please know that teachers are directed to refrain from in-depth discussions about a student while on duty or in the presence of others.

Parents are encouraged to inform their child's teacher or the Director about situations that may affect their child's school performance (e.g. changes within the family, illness, unexpected family happenings, cultural and religious practices).

Parent Visits

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the school in a variety of ways during the school year. Parents frequently visit their child's class to read aloud, "show and tell" something of their life experience, lead a project related to the group's learning theme, or accompany a field trip. Teachers will share specific requests for parent involvement at different times during the school year. Parents may also share their ideas for ways to get involved.

Friday afternoon assemblies at 2:45 p.m. provide a time for parents to join an all-school gathering. Parents can schedule a Friday in order to be "on the agenda" and share something about their interests, hobbies, and experiences. Parents are also welcome to join the audience in the side room.

III. DETAILS OF SCHOOL LIFE

Birthdays

Birthdays may be celebrated in various ways.

1. Families often opt to celebrate at home without school friends. Sometimes this means sending a treat to school to share with classmates. Speak with your child's teacher or Tricia a few days in advance to arrange this.
2. Sometimes a birthday is celebrated at school and family members join the fun. **School parties** are kept simple and can include:
 - shared food and drink
 - a simple game or shared activity
 - paper goodsSchool parties should **not** include written invitations, balloon deliveries, gifts, goodie bags, or outside entertainment.
3. Sometimes, birthdays involve inviting school friends to a weekend or evening party. In this case, parents are asked to take actions that are considerate of the feelings of children in the class. **Invitations that include the whole class can be distributed at school.** If a few children of another level will also be invited, those invitations should be mailed or given by phone. **If you decide to invite a smaller number of school friends, invitations should be telephoned or mailed. Parents should notify their child's teacher,** who can then be available to support communication and feelings about the event as needed. Please do encourage your child to be kind and tactful by not discussing the matter at school.

Clothing

Clothing (especially layers of clothing that can be added or removed) and footwear appropriate for outdoor play should be either worn or brought to school each day, since we encourage outdoor play throughout the year. Our students become experts

at reciting the following lists:

For **wet weather:**

- rubber boots or extra shoes and socks
- a hooded raincoat.

For **winter weather:**

- boots or extra shoes and socks
- snow pants or extra pants
- coat; hat or hood
- mittens or gloves

Children in Levels 1 and 2 should bring an extra set of underwear, socks, and seasonally appropriate clothing, bagged separately and labeled, to leave in their locker.

Head Lice

Parents: we request that you notify the school immediately if head lice are found or suspected on your child.

Like many other schools, over the years we have experienced cases of head lice. It is important for parents and children to know that this condition has nothing to do with health habits or home life, and that with watchfulness and cooperation the problem can be eliminated. Lice cannot jump or fly; they are transmitted by contact with infested persons or their clothing, comb, or brush.

Parents should check their child's hair on a weekly basis as part of personal hygiene. Children who begin to scratch their heads

frequently should be checked immediately, although not everyone experiences itching.

Diagnostic photographs and remedy information are located in the "Medical Issues" parent file on the radiator.



Lice are about the size of a sesame seed and are usually light brown in color. Since they are difficult to see, diagnosis is usually made by finding nits (eggs), which are tiny yellowish-white oval specks attached to the hair

shaft and which will not wash off or blow away. Nits are usually found at the nape of the neck, behind the ears, and on the crown of the head.

When head lice are discovered, children will be removed from contact with others until appropriate treatment and nit removal have occurred. After treatment, a child may return to school to be checked before reentering into contact with others. If nits are found, the child will need to leave school until removal is complete. The aim of this policy is to protect the well-being of children and families in our school. If nits are not removed, a cycle of re-infestation and overuse of pesticides can be the unfortunate result.

Library Books

All students are expected to read, be read to, and discuss books at home on a daily basis. This is indeed “homework” or home learning for all ages. Families are strongly encouraged to visit a public library branch regularly, develop a relationship with a librarian, and learn to use library resources.

The library resources at NS are an essential part of our curriculum. Parents are also encouraged to browse our library (first and third floors at 34 Peter Parley, and in Level 4) throughout the year. Inquiries regarding books to address social-emotional issues or “Life Skills” as well as other topics are always welcome and will be responded to as quickly as possible.

Lunch and Snack

- Each child should bring a nutritionally balanced lunch and snack items, including grains, fruit and vegetables, and sources of protein.
- Beverages can include water, juice, or milk. An ice pack should be included with milk.
- **Candy, gum, or soda pop should not be brought to school for lunch or snack.**
- Our standard requirement at lunch is that children eat at least half of their main course (along with attempts at some

- other items) before moving on to other activities.
- Drink containers should not be made of glass, and utensils should be brought from home.
 - Students may bring a lunch item in a microwave-safe container for warm-up once a week. The item should require 1 minute or less of warm-up time.
 - The lunch bag or box should also contain a mid-morning and/or late afternoon snack, preferably a fresh or whole grain item (see lunch list above for ideas). Please do choose snacks that are low in fat, salt, and added sugar.

Medical Forms and Issues

Medical forms must be submitted with a physician's signature and returned to the school at the beginning of each school year. Please note that Massachusetts State Laws (105 CMR 220.000, M.G.L. c.76, ss. 15, and 15C) require all students to be fully immunized with only two permissible exceptions:

1. A **medical exemption** is allowed if a physician submits documentation that an immunization is medically contraindicated.
2. A **religious exemption** is allowed if a parent or guardian submits a written statement that immunizations conflict with sincere religious beliefs.

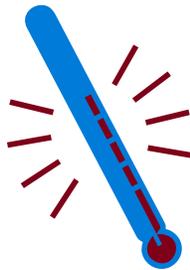
Philosophical exemptions are not allowed by law in Massachusetts, even if signed by a physician. This regulation does not allow for partial immunization. You must do all if you do some. According to this law, students exposed to a contagious disease who are not immunized must be quarantined from school for at least two weeks.

In the event that a medical emergency occurs during the school day, every attempt will be made to notify a parent or an emergency contact person. The school will provide medical treatment according to the terms of the service agreement in the unlikely event that you or your child's doctor cannot be reached. Up-to-date work and emergency phone numbers on the Student

Register form are essential in emergency situations, so please notify the school when family contact information changes.

The school does not have a nurse in residence. The school does not diagnose and treat illnesses but offers temporary first attention to problems that arise during the school day. Parents are called when more appropriate medical assistance is required. Medication may be administered at school if it is sent with written instructions by the parent.

It is vital to the health of the child and others that a sick child not be sent to school. If a child seems too ill to function normally in school, parents will be notified immediately and asked to come and take the child home. All cases of contagious illnesses in the family or any exposure of a child to a contagious illness should be reported to the school. School policy regarding HIV/AIDS conforms with State and City regulations. At the



heart of these regulations is the right of parents to control disclosure if their child has the virus, and the responsibility of schools to adhere to universal precautions pertaining to blood-borne infections. Teachers and students at NS receive instruction in these procedures.

How Sick is Too Sick?

- Unless the child has been awake most of the night and is still sleeping, it is advisable that a decision to stay home not be made when he/she is still in bed or in PJs. Many early morning complaints subside after the child has gotten up and eaten breakfast.
- Fever over 100.4 degrees, recent vomiting, raging sore throats, or non-stop coughing or sneezing are symptoms that warrant staying home. To avoid the spread of contagions, children should not come to school with a fever lowered by Tylenol. It is advisable that she/he not come to school within 24 hours of a fever in the case of viral infection or 24 hours after beginning antibiotics in the case of bacterial infection.

- Usually children with less severe symptoms are sent to school with a note or phone call asking us to watch how the child is feeling. We are very comfortable with this role and take it seriously. **It is not helpful to tell a child that a teacher will call a parent if the child is not feeling well. Instead tell the child, “If you are not feeling well, tell your teacher and s/he will know what to do.”** Calling is one option, but it is difficult for some children to be “all that they can be” if calling the parent is on his/her mind (an opposite behavior—covering illness in order to stay at school—can also occur). Along with asking us to be alert, please give us a heads up about medication (“She’s had Tylenol and can have another dose at Noon,” or, “He had a nebulizer treatment in the night and has his inhaler.”). We can administer medication with parent permission. If the discomfort doesn’t get in the way of the child’s ability to participate, school can provide a good distraction from a slightly “off” day.
- Sometimes Tylenol is given for non-fever reasons at home and we administer a follow-up dosage at school upon request. NS parents have exercised very good judgment in this regard. We can’t eliminate the spread of contagions at school, but we can try to limit the spread. We do our best to prescribe **frequent hand washing** as a primary ally in germ warfare!

Watch for patterns. If physical complaints are rare and you can’t remember the last time your child missed school, don’t second-guess your instinct. If complaints are frequent or mainly on certain days of the week, think the situation through with some other adults who care—teachers, health practitioners—and talk with your child about it at a time he/she is feeling well.

Items from Home

A backpack to hold lunch and other items for school is helpful. Age-appropriate materials related to learning, such as books,

About NS

I. The Story of Neighborhood School

Neighborhood School (NS) opened its doors in September 1986 to a small group of children ages 7 to 9. The first floor became home base for this group of students along with three part-time teachers as they explored ways to create a hands-on, learn-as-you-are-ready, creative, and cooperative environment. The students and teachers quickly became a family of learners and undertook the challenge of establishing the foundation for a very different kind of Boston early elementary school.

Common bonds shared by two of NS's founders, Joyce Mallory and Tricia Morrow, prominently influenced the school's character. One bond was their shared background in special education.

Presented with an opportunity to begin their own school, they knew it would be a place where children with varying strengths and needs would discover the value of learning differences blending within a cooperative framework. They also knew that the school would be a place influenced by their shared Christian faith. It was in this faith that their focus on the importance of individuals, choice making, and living as a community was rooted. An early decision was made to create an environment that would include families and staff of diverse faiths. Religious beliefs and differences were acknowledged as part of life and explored within the curriculum in developmentally appropriate ways, i.e. through the sharing of holidays, the study of history, and the study of music. Another cornerstone of the school's foundation was the belief that urban culture has a richness in its socioeconomic and ethnic diversity that should be explored and understood as beneficial within a school community. Practical application of this belief resulted in the formation of a financial assistance fund and a curriculum exploring the people, places, and history of our families, city, and beyond.

During the next two years, as the school grew to include more students and teachers, principles of developmental education were put into action. A system of grouping students in levels emerged. In simplest terms, levels were formed by dividing our student body (ages four through nine years old at that time) into three homeroom classes. This system insured that mixed age groupings would be present in each homeroom and that students would have different positions in a level's age continuum from year to year. Mixed ages helped create an atmosphere of normalcy for many different layers of learning to happen at once within a classroom or even within an activity.

As the program grew, the next few years were spent broadening and deepening the curriculum in order to flesh out the school's philosophy. Providing increased opportunities for parental involvement in the life of the school was part of this growth. Years of learning how to form and foster a learning community have been filled with challenge, joy, and consistent reward.

Our primary goal is to further the mission of NS: "to provide developmentally appropriate education to children representative of the diversity of Boston neighborhoods within an atmosphere of respect and consistent caring." Having opened a Level 4 classroom in school year 1999–2000, our program now includes 60 students from ages 4 to 12. Talented, dedicated teachers continue to make the school an effective, loving place to learn.

II. Our Learning Philosophy & Practices

"Personalized learning within a community"
is offered to children at Neighborhood School.

Personalized...

- We strive to develop our students' confidence and self-esteem, and we take time to express our appreciation of

children as unique and valuable people. This occurs in verbal and nonverbal recognition of each child's positive qualities and actions.

- While providing targeted instruction, we encourage children to make learning choices through both structured and unstructured individual, partner, and small group experiences.
- We recognize that children learn and develops socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically in various ways. At NS, teachers respect and respond to our students' current development and learning strategies. Teachers listen to children, consider each child's needs, and record growth through writing, reading logs, math and science work samples, art work, and taking anecdotal notes. This information guides teachers in preparing what to teach and in preparing how best to meet each child's needs.

...Learning...

Students at NS are encouraged to take risks and make decisions about their learning. They are given the responsibility and tools to generate their own responses to what they learn.

From Level 1 to Level 4, student experience the whole idea of a subject, see themselves as active participants with the subject, and understand why the parts are useful to learn. We aim to excite children's curiosity and natural enthusiasm for learning about the world while developing their skills. Along with teaching information and skills, we emphasize the application of these skills to students' everyday lives both within and beyond the NS community. Teachers demonstrate how to use materials, gather information, ask questions, and formulate theories. When a student cannot think of a way out of a dilemma, we work to focus attention on how to move forward, rather than simply providing a solution. We strive to foster a joy of learning without focus on comparing oneself to others. The teacher demonstrates how to gather information, ask questions, and formulate theories.

At NS, learning takes place:

- in thematic units that often spur research projects and provide a context for learning.
- in individual and group discussions of learning strategies; children are encouraged and challenged to talk and examine their own thinking.
- in play, when children are encouraged to become engrossed in ideas, scenarios, and experimentation.
- through the arts in weekly music and art classes, drama productions, concerts, and weekly assemblies, as children gain experience and become more confident presenting themselves and their work before groups.

...Within a Community

At NS, children learn to discover and value each other's similarities and differences as people and as learners. Time is spent learning about social and emotional issues and in developing effective communication. Cultural diversity of children is represented and valued. Within a cooperative learning situation, a positive interdependence develops among students. Students see that they can reach their own learning goals while they work to insure that others also reach their goals. Personal accountability and effective problem-solving are also stressed. Students discuss material with each other, help each other to understand, and encourage each other to work hard.

Learning within a community is seen at NS during classroom meetings, school assemblies, family gatherings, and as talents are shared in performances. We encourage social responsibility through activities among all ages in partnership with neighborhood organizations such as *Casa Nueva Vida* (a shelter for homeless families) and the Franklin Park Coalition.

III. Why Levels instead of Grades?

We appreciate having the freedom to put best practices into action at NS. From our experience, we see that children are best served when they do not take on a grade level designation as part of their identity. “I’m a third grader” sounds familiar in our society, but it often translates as meaning, “I’m ready to learn what and how other third graders are ready to learn.” This is often too simplistic to be true. The best label for a child is his or her name. It is a teacher’s privilege and responsibility to get to know each child well as a learner and help him or her learn what and how s/he is ready to learn.

Our use of the term “level” as a classroom designator helps us keep learning about each student in our school. Students may spend one, two, or three years in a level, depending on their maturity, rate of progress, and peer relationships. Students remain in a level for a second or third year or move to the next level as part of a continuous progress education. Simply put, continuous progress means that, when classes resume in the fall, a student picks up where s/he left off without a sense or system of promotion or retention. Students are simply “learning what we’re ready to learn” in the particular classroom that is the best fit for their social, emotional, and academic readiness.

What happens when a student graduates from NS? Some could move on to another mixed-aged, non-graded school. Most will move into graded programs. We work with parents and students as they approach Level 4 to understand how the students’ learning translates to grade level. It is essential to look at a prospective school and learn characteristics of the sixth or seventh graders in that school. It is also essential to look at the student and determine if a certain position within grade level (younger, middle, or older) would benefit him or her as a learner. Parents and administrators, with student and teacher input, usually make the final decision as to whether their child will be best suited and served in a sixth or seventh grade placement after Level 4.

Being part of a unique learning system can be a very good thing. Encourage your child to answer the question, **“What grade are you in?”** in some honest, creative ways:

- “I’m not in a grade—my school groups kids by what we are ready to learn.”
- “I’m 9, and I’m in a class of 8-, 9-, and 10-year-olds.”
- “My school is ungraded. What kind of skills do I need for this team or class?”

These answers might confuse people a bit, but perhaps they will also help them look at children more individually. That seems like a good way to go!

IV. Our Faculty

PEG BONNICE

At NS since: 2011

Position: Level 2 teacher

Education: M.Ed., UMass Boston

Fun Facts:

- Peg previously worked in the Boston Public Schools as a classroom teacher, math specialist, and administrator.
 - Sewing, quilting, and playing pretend with her grandchildren are among Peg's favorite pastimes!
-

DREW CURTIS

At NS since: 1999

Position: Level 4 teacher

Education: B.A. (anthropology), Washington University

Fun facts:

- Drew's background in writing and editing is the impetus for wonderful writing projects in Level 4.
 - No parking? No problem! Proud parent of Max (alum) and Jesse (Level 4), Drew lives within walking distance of NS.
-

DONNA DEVAUGHN

At NS since: the beginning (with a teaching hiatus at Boston Public Schools and Atrium School)

Position: Learning Skills & Level 2 literacy specialist

Education: M.Sc.Ed., C.A.G.S. (special ed.), Wheelock College

Fun facts:

- Donna's passions include singing and drumming, with a dash of piano and guitar.
 - "Have they left home yet?" Donna is the proud parent of Christina, Adrienne, and Tamara, and proud grandparent of Kyrieh, Joshua, and Josiah!
-

JOYCE MALLORY

At NS since: the beginning

Position: Level 3 teacher; Special Education coordinator

Education: M.Ed. (special ed.), UMass Boston. Joyce helps us keep track of learning differences and specific methods of instruction and assessment to meet individual needs.

Fun facts:

- In 1986, with her late husband, John, Joyce brought her pre-school through middle school teaching experience to the formation of NS. Joyce is also mother to Jared (alum) and Jon Marc, and grandparent to Lila and Dylan!
 - Children associate Joyce with music, frogs, cats, and coffee.
-

SORA HARRIS VINCENT

At NS since: 2012

Position: Level 4 assistant teacher

Education: B.A. (psychology & elementary ed.), Smith College, with a license in Elementary School Education

Fun facts:

- Sora attended NS from 1995–97 and still has one of the first books she made in Level 1, “Sora’s Book of Things.”
 - Some of her hobbies include writing, singing, spontaneous dance parties, and cooking.
-

MARY MOORMAN

At NS since: 2013

Position: Level 3 teacher

Education: M.A. (special ed., with a focus on intellectual disabilities & autism), Teachers College, Columbia University

Fun facts:

- As a Peace Corps volunteer in the Philippines from 2008-10, Mary taught in the English dept. at a rural high school.
- Favorite hobbies include knitting, playing guitar, cooking, and playing games with friends & family.

TRICIA MORROW

At NS since: the beginning

Position: Director

Education: B.A. (elementary & special ed.), Knox College; graduate work in educational management and parenting studies

Fun facts:

- Tricia and her husband Scott are the proud parents of alums Anna, Michaela, and Nick.
 - Teaching experience and lots of elbow grease proved helpful as she joined Joyce & John Mallory in the formation of NS.
 - From her rural upbringing, Tricia brings a pig collection and a sense of small-town connectedness to our school.
-

TRACY PIMENTEL

At NS since: 2014

Position: Level 1 teacher

Education: M.A. (early childhood ed.), Lesley University

Fun facts:

- Tracy completed a practicum with Level 2 back in 2005 during her undergraduate days at Lesley University.
 - She & her newlywed husband, Angel, live in Roslindale.
 - Level 1 students will have fun discovering which four languages Tracy can speak!
-

KAYE SCHERER

At NS since: 1994

Position: Level 1 support teacher

Education: M.S. (early childhood ed.), Wheelock College

Fun facts:

- Kaye fosters a creative atmosphere and a holistic curriculum developed around interests of both students and teachers.
 - Who holds the key to Kaye's heart? Her grandsons!
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SHARI ZAKON FEIBEL

At NS since: 1989

Position: Science, technology, & math teacher

Education: M.Ed. (elementary ed.), George Washington Univ.

Fun facts:

- Shari is the proud mother of alums Sam and Eli.
- Shari speaks four languages: English (hello), Spanish (*hola*), Hebrew (*shalom*), and Russian.
- Vindicated: Shari kept the faith for many years. Go, Sox!

LISA MASOTTA

At NS since: 1994

Position: Music teacher and asst. to the director

Education: B.F.A., Mass. Art; M.Div., Harvard Divinity School

Fun facts:

- Lisa has the longest commute to NS—from Attleboro.
- The painted wood panels in Level 4 are from an art project Lisa led with our first Level 4 class and BPS students from East Boston. The project was displayed in a city park and then moved to the Boston Common for First Night 2000.

SCOTT MORROW

At NS since: 1995, when he and Tricia began sharing administrative duties along with home care of their children.

Position: Board member, financial officer, maintenance impresario, and Phys Ed teacher *par excellence*

Education: M.Div., Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary

Fun Facts:

- Basketball, the trumpet, and fatherhood are among Scott's passions.
- Get the scoop: Scott's freezer is usually well-stocked with ice cream of various flavors.

JAI JOHNSON UNDERHILL

At NS since: 1998

Position: Art teacher

Education: School of the Museum of Fine Arts (jewelry & metalsmithing), including work as a teaching assistant

Fun facts:

- Jai began her association with NS in 1991 when her daughter, Emma, enrolled in Level 1.
 - Since 2001, Jai has taught tap dancing to children and adults.
 - Jai is also the stellar costume mistress for our school plays.
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STEVE YAKUTIS

At NS since: 2007

Position: Drama teacher

Education: M.A., Emerson College

Fun Facts:

- Steve is proud parent of two sons, NS alums Sokra and Mey.
 - Ask Steve about his intriguing collection of masks from around the world!
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Notes/Changes