

Winter 2024



Dear Prospective Parent,

We are pleased to help you explore your interest in Neighborhood School (NS). Our classrooms and outdoor areas are buzzing with the sounds of learning and friendship. This 'school in a house,' where students are deeply known, where all learners are truly valued, and where restoration, equity, and community are more than just buzzwords, could be a great fit for your learner(s) and your family.

Since our beginning in 1986, NS has involved children in a unique learning community as a progressive independent school with a family-like atmosphere. Our student body includes children who are 5 through 12 years old, from all families of all economic means. A team of excellent teachers and 50 children in two houses amidst a neighborhood campus share the joy of learning. Students typically spend an average of two years within each of our four homeroom levels, collaborating and developing skills while being grounded in justice-centered learning. Curriculum components include literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, drama, physical education, social emotional learning, and personal development. To see images that help tell the story of our learning community, visit the [News](#) area of our website or watch one of these short videos:

- [Teaching Justice with Love](#)
- [Arts at Neighborhood School](#)

While our school is valued for its intimacy, openings are also limited. Siblings of current students and children of staff members are given first consideration in the admissions process.

#### **Applicants for September 2025 openings:**

1. If you would like to register for a **small group tour for adults** and babies in arms (prospective students visit later on in the admissions process), **email [nsadmissions@gmail.com](mailto:nsadmissions@gmail.com) ahead to sign up.**
2. To apply for a position for your child(ren), please complete the [online form](#).
3. **If you are reapplying from last year**, you do not need to send new application forms unless your family's situation has changed. Email your reapplication request to [nsadmissions@gmail.com](mailto:nsadmissions@gmail.com).

All applications will be reviewed, and child visits will be offered if an appropriate opening exists. As we work to balance and broaden many aspects among a small classroom of returning students, we invite a few applicants to visit for each known vacancy. Applicants not being offered a position have an option of joining a short-term waiting list through later spring to early fall, in the event that additional openings arise.

We hope you find the above helpful as you consider Neighborhood School for your child.

Warm regards,

Tricia Morrow and Tracy Pimentel, Directors  
[nsadmissions@gmail.com](mailto:nsadmissions@gmail.com)

# About NS: Our Beginning

---

Neighborhood School opened its doors in September 1986 to a small group of second and third graders. The first floor of 34 Peter Parley Road became home base to this group of students as they, with their teachers, explored ways to create a hands-on, learn-as-you-are-ready, creative, and cooperative environment. Seven students along with three part-time teachers quickly became a family of learners and undertook the challenge of establishing a foundation for a very different kind of Boston early elementary school.

Common bonds shared by the school's founders, including Joyce Mallory and Tricia Morrow, prominently influenced Neighborhood School's core values. Part of their commonality included having a 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 coming together within a cooperative framework. They also knew that the school would be a place influenced by their shared Christian faith. It was from this faith that their focus on the importance of individuals, choice making, and living as members of 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. sharing of holidays, studying history and music). Another cornerstone of the school's foundation was the belief that urban culture has richness in its socioeconomic and ethnic diversity that should be explored and allowed to be of benefit 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.

As the school grew during the following two years 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 taking our student body (ages 4 through 9 years old at that time) and dividing it into 3 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. Offering more opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school was part of this growth. Years of learning how to form and grow a learning community have been filled with challenge, joy, and consistent reward.

It is our primary goal to further Neighborhood School's mission "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 extends from ages 5 to 12 and includes 50 students and 14 teachers. Talented, dedicated teachers continue to make the school an effective and loving environment in which to learn.



# Financial Information

---

## School Year 2024–2025

### Fair Share Tuition

Every family at Neighborhood School pays their fair share of tuition. Economic diversity is a core value for Neighborhood School, as is a commitment to practices of equity. All families are welcome to request an application to determine their fair share of tuition before service contracts are due. Returning families have priority in the process, as the school highly values long-term participation in our program. Approximately one-half of school families pay a fair share tuition that is less than full rate. Some families have the ability to pay more than full rate and they give accordingly to the Annual Fund.

Please contact us at (617) 522-0880 x 203 or email [nsadmissions@gmail.com](mailto:nsadmissions@gmail.com) if you have questions about Fair Share Tuition.

### Tuition, Fees and Payment Options

Tuition for Levels 1–4	\$ 27,555.00
After-School Care (3:30–5:30 p.m.)	\$ 12.00 per hour

A tuition deposit of \$900.00 is due March 15 (current families) or April 5 (new families). All remaining tuition is due according to service agreement terms including required notices of withdrawal.

The tuition balance and other service costs may be paid by one of the following schedules.

- A. The balance is paid in two semi-annual payments, the first by August 1 and the second by January 1. This payment schedule is exempt from finance charges.
- B. The remaining amount after deposit can be financed for a small fee by Neighborhood School allowing for monthly installment payments.

#### Monthly Options

10 Months  
11 Months  
12 Months

#### Beginning Date

August 1  
July 1  
June 1



Neighborhood School (NS) is an independent school in Jamaica Plain, MA. We offer transformative, personalized learning for children representing the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of Boston's neighborhoods in an atmosphere of respect and consistent caring. Having

opened a Level 4 classroom in school year 1999-2000, our program now includes 60 students ranging in age from 5 to 12. Talented, dedicated teachers and concerned, supportive parents make the school an effective and loving environment in which to learn.

Applications are due by January 15 for the following fall.

Please contact Tricia Morrow at (617) 522-0880 for admissions information, or send e-mail correspondence to: [nsadmissions@gmail.com](mailto:nsadmissions@gmail.com).

*Neighborhood Schools, Inc. seeks students of varied backgrounds and abilities, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, family structure, national or ethnic origin, sexual identity, or handicap in administration of its educational and admissions policies, financial aid, and other school-administered programs.*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**With such a small student body, how do you handle a large number of applicants?**

In choosing the applicants to which we can offer visits and then positions, we primarily consider the needs of the group that the applicant would be joining. We maintain gender balance and ensure that students have developmental peers. The parent's written description of his or her child greatly informs our process. Our mission to serve "children representative of the diversity of Boston neighborhoods" is also reflected in our admissions decisions.

**For what kind of child does Neighborhood School work especially well?**

We truly see a tremendous diversity in personalities and learning styles among our students. Our parent population is even more diverse! The school works best for families who are opting for an intimate, diverse setting as opposed to a larger or more homogeneous school.



*"Education powered by love. That's what we found at Neighborhood School."*

*-Parent of NS Student*

Neighborhood School  
34 Peter Parley Road Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
(617) 522-0880  
[www.neighborhoodschooljp.org](http://www.neighborhoodschooljp.org)

Since our teacher- and parent-led beginning in 1986, we have seen that great things indeed come in small packages.



## Personalized...

We strive to develop our students' confidence and self-esteem, and 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. Children have structured opportunities to make choices and to complete assigned tasks while receiving individual attention.

We recognize that children learn and develop socially, emotionally, cognitively, morally, and physically in various ways. At NS, teachers respect and respond to our students' development and learning strategies. Teachers listen to children, consider each child's needs, and record growth through writing, math, and science work samples, reading logs, art work, and anecdotal notes. This information guides us in planning what to teach and in preparing how best to meet each child's needs.

## ...learning...

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

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 think about their own reasoning process.
- In play when children are encouraged to become engrossed in ideas, scenarios, and experimentation.
- Through the arts, in weekly music and art classes, whole school concerts, drama productions, and weekly assemblies.

From Level 1 to Level 4, students 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 strive to foster a joy of learning using the teacher as a model learner. The teacher demonstrates how to gather information, ask questions, and formulate theories.

Along with teaching information and skills, we emphasize learning how to think and solve problems. When a student cannot find a way out of a dilemma, we work to focus attention on ways to move forward, rather than simply providing a solution.

## ...within a community.

At Neighborhood School, children learn to discover and value each other's differences as people and as learners. Time is spent learning about social, emotional, and ethical issues and developing effective communication.

Cultural diversity of children is represented and valued. Within a cooperative learning situation, positive interdependence develops, as 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 understand, and encourage each other to work hard. Learning within a community is seen during classroom meetings, school assemblies, family gatherings, and as talents are shared in performances.

We encourage social responsibility through activities among all ages with neighborhood organizations such as **Boston Healthcare for the Homeless** and the **Franklin Park Coalition**.



children.



community.



neighborhood.