



## Washington Park Early Learning Center Parent Handbook & Bylaws

*Revised May 2022*

This handbook is an introduction to Washington Park Early Learning Center, a place where families join together to create the best preschool possible for their children. Cooperative preschools are unique in that parents have a voice in the mission and operation of the school and personally contribute their time, talents, and skills to run a successful preschool. Becoming part of a parent cooperative preschool means hard work but enormous returns in terms of personal satisfaction, friendships, and most importantly, a caring, joyful and stimulating learning environment for our children. By giving so generously of ourselves, we share and enrich the school experience for all our children.

## CONTENTS

<i>Mission Statement &amp; Philosophy</i> .....	2
<i>Values &amp; School History</i> .....	3
<i>Parent Cooperative Organization &amp; Obligations</i> .....	4
Governance	
Parent Participation	
Communication	
Meetings	
Confidentiality	
Member in Good Standing	
Concerns or Complaints	
<i>Enrollment Policies</i> .....	8
School Calendar	
Nondiscriminatory Policy	
Addressing Special Needs	
Enrollment Policy	
Tuition and Fees	
Tuition Assistance Guidelines	
Withdrawal Procedure	
Suspensions and Expulsions	
<i>School Policies &amp; Guidelines</i> .....	14
Drop Off and Pick Up	
Visitors	
Dress and Personal Belongings	
Meals and Snacks	
Playground Rules	
School Closing Due to Inclement Weather	
Conflict Resolution Guidelines	
Neighborhood Explorations, Television/Video and Special Activities	
School Cleanings	
Enrichment Classes	
<i>Health Policies &amp; Guidelines</i> .....	18
Required Forms	
Immunizations	
Illness, Accident and Injury Guidelines	
Administration of Medications	
Diapering and Toilet Training	
Standard Precautions	
Reporting of Child Abuse	
Head Lice Policy	
<i>Safety &amp; Emergency Procedures</i> .....	22
Safety and Security	
Bathroom Procedures	
Emergency and Lockdown Procedures	
Emergency Planning for Children with Disabilities, Access and Functional Needs	
Temporary School Closure Policy	
<i>Amended Bylaws of the Washington Park Early Learning Center</i> .....	27

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Washington Park Early Learning Center is a parent cooperative preschool that nurtures kindness, encourages curiosity, and celebrates diversity in a play-based environment.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Our school prides itself in:

- Providing hands on child-centered learning opportunities
- Celebrating learning through choice, exploration, and discovery
- Valuing imagination and curiosity
- Challenging all to question, to think, and to collaborate
- Leading with exceptional, qualified teachers
- Enriching the whole child
- Creating an atmosphere where each child takes flight with confidence

We believe children learn best through their play experiences and emphasis on social-emotional development. Children have the opportunity to explore and enrich their world physically, emotionally, and intellectually, striving toward optimum growth. The teachers provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum full of open-ended and hands-on learning opportunities. Language, science, math, dramatic play, social studies, art, and music are offered in an integrated curriculum supporting the tenet that all of these areas are interconnected and occur together in everyday life. The program balances free play and choice time with structured group and individual activities.

Our teachers respect and support each child's learning style and foster each child's self-esteem, individuality, and creativity. They help children develop a stronger love of learning and the courage to question and explore by offering many opportunities to create and solve problems and by modeling and advocating diverse solutions. At WPELC, teachers emphasize the process rather than the product.

It is essential that each child develops a caring attitude toward other children and learns the importance of working together. WPELC supports these beliefs by respecting and celebrating all children, their families, and their diverse backgrounds and cultures. Strong emphasis is placed on peaceful, mutually acceptable resolutions to problems or conflicts.

Parent participation is the hallmark of a cooperative preschool. We treasure the unique talents and interests that each family brings to our school. It is the enthusiastic participation of all parents that makes possible the successful operation of WPELC.

## VALUES

WPELC believes in:

- Curiosity** Providing opportunity for children to explore, create, ask questions, and take risks.
- Kindness** Cultivating empathy and kindness to others, in the classroom and beyond.
- Play** Celebrating the joy of learning through creative play in an intentional environment.
- Community** Creating an engaged, collaborative community.
- Diversity** Modeling the appreciation of diversity and humanity.

## SCHOOL HISTORY

In 1973, a small group of energetic Washington Park parents recognized a common need for a quality community preschool experience for their children. These parents imagined a neighborhood preschool where their cooperative efforts could create a stimulating environment to develop strong self-concepts while promoting social growth and awareness. It was this idea, combined with determination, unselfish giving of time, cooperation, and a variety of skills, that has perpetuated WPELC and made it what it is today for our children.

During the spring and summer of 1973, the founding parents worked daily to make WPELC a reality. Many ideas came from the Denver and Montview Preschool Cooperatives already in operation. At the same time, Washington Park United Methodist Church (WPUMC) initiated a community outreach program, realized the need for a neighborhood preschool and offered classroom space. What had been a dream just six months earlier became a reality in September. When WPELC opened its doors for the first time, parents quickly discovered the value of class participation, and children flourished in the warm environment. In 2013, WPUMC decided that it wanted to utilize WPELC's classroom to expand its own faith-based preschool housed within the same building. Another energetic group of families committed to the WPELC philosophy moved WPELC to a nearby location at the Washington Park United Church of Christ (WPUCC) and built the classrooms and playground found today. Many changes have been made over the years, but the main tenets of the cooperative still exist, including the staff and the parents' active participation in and out of the classroom.

Parents, teachers, and children have come and gone, taking with them unforgettable learning experiences, skills, and a sense of self-worth that have helped them in their education, professions, and family life. New families enter the school bringing fresh energy and enthusiasm and new ideas and skills. You continue the tradition of excellence and cooperation as your family joins the WPELC community.

## PARENT COOPERATIVE ORGANIZATION AND OBLIGATIONS

### **GOVERNANCE**

WPELC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit operated by member families and the Director. The Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws provide that a Board of Directors will prepare the annual budget, ensure the school is fulfilling its mission, and, in conjunction with the Director, develop policy for the operation of the school. The Board consists of the elected officers of the membership (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer), the chairpersons of the Recruitment, Fundraising, Communications, Community, and Maintenance committees. The general responsibilities of the elected officers, Chairpersons, and the Director— along with a brief description of each committee—are stated in the Bylaws and the Board Handbook. Each summer the outgoing Board members give detailed instructions on their duties to the incoming Board members. It is important that Board members are present at all Board meetings. If necessary, however, committee members may sit in the stead of an absent board member in a non-voting capacity.

### **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

When you enroll your child in WPELC, you become one of the member families who assist in the operation of the preschool under the Director and Board's guidance. As a member family, you agree to accept specific responsibilities, including but not limited to, participation in the following required activities:

**HELPING PARENT:** Each parent will assist the teachers in the classroom on a rotating basis, approximately 2-5 times per semester for each child you have in the school, depending on the size of the class and the number of days the class meets each week. The Helping Parent and child arrive before class begins to assist the teachers with classroom set up for the day's projects. The Helping Parent also provides the daily pre-packaged snack and stays after class to tidy the classroom. The Class Representative will distribute the helping parent schedule prior to the beginning of each semester.

Your Helping Parent and Helping Child day is very special for both you and your child. Parents need to make other child care arrangements for siblings on Helping Parent and Helping Child days. Families are encouraged to contact other families at WPELC to swap childcare on those days. For the safety of all children, children under the care and supervision of the school must be enrolled, meet age requirements for each class, and be counted as students when determining ratios and capacity. Depending on applicable public health orders and guidance, the Helping Parent role could be subject to change and any such changes will be communicated by the Director.

**SERVING ON THE BOARD OR COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION:** Parents serve important roles in and out of the classroom. As part of the cooperative experience, all member families agree to help ensure the mission and financial operation of the school by serving on the Board (officer, committee chair, class representative) or as a committee member. The Volunteer Coordinator and their committee work with the support of the President and

Director to determine all volunteer roles. They nominate the Board, who are then voted on by the community at the Spring General Meeting. They also assign committee membership based on your family's preferences, background, and skills. You will be responsible for fulfilling your community role, either as a member of the Board or a committee.

**CLASSROOM CLEANING:** Parents are partially responsible for keeping the school clean, and have two cleaning responsibilities: (1) serving as Helping Parent on the assigned days and (2) participating in at least one All-School Clean Up annually. There are three all-school clean ups per year, and dates are listed on the school calendar (typically in August, January, May). Tasks required for these clean-ups include reorganizing closets and shelves, cleaning toys and surfaces, taking inventory, painting, and performing general maintenance work on the playground or in other common areas. The Maintenance Chair and/or Director assign tasks upon arrival.

Cleaning guidelines for Helping Parents include:

- Prior to serving snack, clean each table thoroughly using provided sanitizer and paper towels, as well as again after snack.
- Clean materials used during choice time play in the Parent-Tot room. These items are collected in blue buckets.
- Clean all servingware with soap and water if the snack is shared.
- Place artwork or other projects in children's cubbies to take home.
- Tidy all play areas.
- Ask the teachers about other tasks that need to be done.

**FUNDRAISING:** When you enroll your child at WPELC as an Early Learner or Preschooler, you agree to participate in all mandatory fundraising activities for the school. Parents enrolled in the Parent-Tot class are invited, but not required, to participate in WPELC fundraising activities. Each family's tuition covers most of the expenses of the teachers' salaries and rent for the school. Other operating expenses (i.e. classroom and cleaning supplies, phone/internet, insurance, repairs, etc.), capital improvements, and the school's emergency fund are completely dependent on fundraising efforts. The annual fundraising amount varies each year depending on the number of families enrolled and the needs of the school.

The Fundraising Committee will set a minimum amount for each family to raise for each mandatory fundraising campaign. Each family is then responsible for raising at least that minimum amount or paying a predetermined buy-out amount for that campaign. Parents of two children enrolled in Early Learner and/or Preschooler classes in the school are responsible for 1.5 times the minimum fundraising requirement per family. In the case of families with more than two children in the school, parent responsibilities will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Board of Directors.

Mandatory fundraising campaigns will be determined on an annual basis by the

Fundraising Committee and the Board of Directors. From time to time, the school may also offer optional fundraising activities (i.e. school T-shirts/gear, Dining Out Nights, etc.), which families are encouraged, but not required, to participate in as they occur.

**CONFERENCES AND SCHOOL EVALUATIONS:** Two parent-teacher conferences occur each year for Early Learners and Preschoolers. Further conferences may be called at the request of either parent or teacher.

Each family should complete the annual school survey to provide feedback to the Director and the Board.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is especially important to our cooperative effort. The primary means of communication is by text, email, and the school's bi-weekly electronic newsletter. Class email lists are generated in the beginning of the year for ease of class-specific communication; teachers may also use texting for daily updates when appropriate. The Director, Board, and staff utilize the newsletter to provide community announcements as well as insights into the school day. Notices, such as closings due to weather, may also be posted on WPELC's Facebook page.

Class rosters are provided to all families at the Spring and Fall General Meeting. The contact information on these rosters is to be used only for school-related business. Families should not use email addresses or phone numbers on rosters to self-promote or advertise personal interests or business endeavors.

### **MEETINGS**

WPELC requires each family to attend two all-school meetings each year. During the Fall General Meeting in August, the community approves the annual budget, and parent orientation takes place. During the Spring General Meeting in May, officer elections for the upcoming school year are held as well as important information about your committee job for the school year.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

WPELC is a small community, and it is important that we respect each other's privacy in personal matters. Please do not ask the teachers personal questions about other children's families. The school maintains the confidentiality of all child and personnel records.

When spending time in the classroom with the children, it is very important to remember the value of confidentiality. It is easy once you have spent time with the children to start assessing them and focus on their more pronounced characteristics. Some of the children may be quieter than others while some may be quite boisterous. Some children may never leave the play-dough table while others may never venture there, and some may rarely talk while others may never stop talking. When we characterize children in such ways, we fail to see the whole child. We understand that it may be difficult to leave information about children out of your casual

conversation, but it is critical that you do so. If ever you have questions or comments about what you experience as a Helping Parent, please talk to the teachers after school or call them. They are happy to help you make sense out of what you observe. The teachers are always willing to share their perspectives on classroom management and to develop a specific plan for your child if he or she is experiencing difficulty.

It is also important to remember confidentiality when it comes to our teachers. The Director is responsible for supporting and working with all WPELC teachers. It is important that you work first and foremost with your child's Lead Teacher directly to address concerns. If you are still having concerns, work with the Director to address teacher or classroom concerns rather than discussing or sharing your concerns with other teachers or community members or going to the Board to get concerns addressed.

### **MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING**

To remain a member in good standing, each family must follow the policies relating to PARENT PARTICIPATION and CONFIDENTIALITY described above. In addition, the following FEES/FORMS items need to be addressed in order to remain a member in good standing:

- Paying tuition and other fees on time
- Submitting health forms and other required enrollment forms
- Notifying the school of changes to your contact information or to the student's emergency contact information to maintain current records
- Fulfilling assigned Committee, volunteer, or Board role, including responding to communications and completing assigned tasks and responsibilities

Procedures for addressing families that are not fulfilling the obligations in regard to parent participation, confidentiality, and fees/forms are the following:

1. Formal email notification from the relevant Board member or staff, with Director and Board President included in communication; possible follow-up by phone call from Board President or staff, specific to volunteering concerns or late fee/form submission, with notifications.
2. If issues persist, the Director sets an in-person meeting with the family and the Board President.
3. Documentation of each communication is kept on file by the Director and is signed by the Board President.
4. Documentation is considered during the annual application process and will impact your invitation to return.
5. In some cases, your child may not be allowed to attend school until the obligation is satisfied. If a family remains not in good standing for a large portion of the school year, the family may be asked to leave the school by the Director and Board.



## **CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS**

In accordance with WPELC governance, we encourage families to address any concerns or complaints to the teacher, Director, or Board President, as appropriate. Concerns and complaints will be addressed in a timely manner and will be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors, if necessary.

## **ENROLLMENT POLICIES**

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

WPELC generally operates from the end of August through the end of May each year. The school generally follows the Denver Public Schools calendar, though there are exceptions. A copy of the school calendar, including holidays and important deadlines, is given to families at the Spring General Meeting and is posted on our website.

### **NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

WPELC admits students of any race, color, gender, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin, and religion to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. WPELC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin, or religion in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, and other school administered programs.

Please note that although we are located in a church building, WPELC is nonsectarian.

### **ADDRESSING SPECIAL NEEDS**

WPELC strives to cultivate positive child, staff, and family relationships. Teachers are expected to maintain a socially and emotionally respectful learning environment. Through child home visits, conferences, Helping Parent days, and annual trainings, our teachers are prepared to provide a connected and meaningful whole family support system.

For children experiencing social and/or emotional issues, WPELC teachers and parents will work together to support positive behavior. Teachers and parents will meet and discuss a consistent plan for social and emotional intervention support. A team-based approach to helping the child will help reduce challenging behaviors and provide the necessary resources to support the child and family.

WPELC has numerous resources for professional support services, including early childhood mental health consultants that will be provided to families if needed. If after certain steps are taken—including but not limited to positive guidance, consistent and appropriate consequences, and documentation showing the steps taken to respond to the challenging behavior—and teachers find that WPELC may not be the right fit for a child, the parents and Board of Directors

will be notified. A conference will be called and will include the parents, Lead Teacher, Director, President, and Vice President. At this time, WPELC will help and provide referrals to the family of a school situation that will support the child in being most successful.

We strive to be an inclusive program. If a child appears to have special needs, the school will schedule a conference with the parent(s) to discuss the child’s abilities and needs and how those needs might best be accommodated. Participants in this conference will include the parent(s) and Lead Teacher and may also include the Director, President, and Vice President. If the conferees cannot agree on a course of action, the matter may be brought before the Board of Directors for a final decision. In meeting each child’s needs and to the extent possible, WPELC will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**ENROLLMENT POLICY**

WPELC is a licensed preschool that serves children ages 2½ to 6 years of age and includes a Parent-Tot (guardian accompanied) class for children ages 1 ½ to 2 ½. A child must be the minimum age for the desired class by September 1 of the school year to be eligible for enrollment.

<b>Class</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Times</b>
Parent–Tot	Wednesday or Thursday	9:15 am – 10:45 am
Early Learner	MWF or TTh	9:00 am – 11:30 am
Preschool	MWF or TTh	9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Optional one-hour enrichment classes may be offered for Early Learner and Preschool classes immediately following the end of class. There may be other enrichment opportunities during the school year. See the Enrichment Class section under “School Policies & Guidelines” for more information.

The Administration and Board evaluates the needs of the community each year to determine what classes would best serve the community. As a result, the number of classes or the days of the week each class is offered may be adjusted prior to the annual Open House in the Fall for the next school year. The Board reviews the class structure and tuition every year in December.

In order to achieve the optimal learning environment for each class, WPELC strives to balance identified gender and the ages of the children in that class. The Director and Administrative Assistant will form the class rosters and waitlists for the coming school year in accordance with the Parent Handbook and Bylaws of WPELC. While we do our best to fulfill schedule requests as we are able, the school cannot guarantee admission or specific schedule requests.

Application forms with a one-time, non-refundable registration fee per child must be submitted to the office or via the WPELC website. Applications will not be considered until the registration fee is paid. Families demonstrating an understanding and enthusiasm for the cooperative model and philosophy will have their applications considered under a lottery system. An unranked wait pool will be formed for those not admitted. If a child is not admitted from that wait pool, that child may reapply for enrollment the following school year (but does not need to pay another registration fee). After school has started, students may be accepted at the discretion of the Director and Administrative Assistant, in consultation with the appropriate teachers.

Admissions priority is given in the following order:

1. Currently enrolled WPELC students whose families are in good standing
2. Children of current WPELC staff members
3. Siblings of currently enrolled WPELC students whose families are in good standing
4. Alumni whose families were in good standing (this includes past WPELC students, their siblings, children of former staff, or children of past WPELC students)
5. New families

Students will be notified of acceptance no later than the last Friday in February.

WPELC does not accept monetary donations from new families with a pending application. Applications are considered pending until acceptance/waitlist notifications are sent out.

*\* Admissions Policy for Returning Kindergarten-Eligible Students*

Advancing Early Learners have priority for available Preschool spots. Students who are (i) Kindergarten-Eligible and (ii) returning for a second year will be placed if spots in Preschool are available after giving preference for advancing Early Learners and non-Kindergarten eligible returning Preschool students. When Preschool spots are limited, a Kindergarten-Eligible student will need a recommendation from their current teacher to be placed in an open Preschool spot.

Admissions priority for Preschool is given in the following order, if their families are in good standing at WPELC:

1. Currently enrolled WPELC students who are not Kindergarten-Eligible
2. Children of current WPELC staff members
3. Siblings of currently enrolled WPELC students
4. Kindergarten-Eligible children returning for a second year of Preschool
5. Alumni (this includes past WPELC students, their siblings, children of former staff, or children of past WPELC students)
6. New families

## **TUITION AND FEES**

Tuition rates are determined by the Board annually utilizing the process outlined in the school's Compensation Policy and Tuition Policy (which can be found in the Board Handbook). Annual tuition rates can be found in the registration materials. Tuition rates are subject to change on 30 days written notice to all members of WPELC.

May tuition is due by the first week of March of the prior school year and is non-refundable. This tuition functions as a retainer fee to secure a child's place in the school and as the payment of the following year's May tuition. If May tuition is not paid by the first week of March, the child will be dropped from the roster and replaced with a new child from the waitpool. For those children admitted to the school after the first week of March, May tuition is due immediately at the time of their acceptance to WPELC, which will be specified in the admissions communication. If the family fails to pay the May tuition by that date, the child will be dropped from the roster and replaced with a new child from the waitpool.

September tuition is due on the date indicated in your acceptance package, but no later than June 1<sup>st</sup> following acceptance. The September tuition payment is non-refundable. If September tuition is not paid by the due date, the child will be dropped from the roster and replaced with a new child from the waitpool. For those children admitted to the school after the September tuition due date, but before school starts, September tuition is due at the same time as their May tuition retainer). If September tuition is not paid by that date, the child will be dropped from the roster and replaced with a new child from the waitpool.

For those children admitted to the school after September, the first month tuition is due at the same time as their May tuition retainer (at the time of their acceptance and prior to the student attending class). If the first month and May tuition retainer is not paid by this date, the child will release their spot.

A non-refundable activity fee is due by the date indicated in your acceptance package, but no later than June 1<sup>st</sup> following acceptance. For those children admitted to the school after the activity fee due date, the activity fee will be due upon acceptance as specified in the admissions communication and before the child attends class. Children will not be permitted to attend school until this fee is paid. Children entering after February 1 of the school year shall pay half the Activity Fee, but no further reductions will be made. This fee is not refundable after 30 days.

Other than the May tuition retainer and September tuition payments (i.e., first and last month tuition), tuition is due the first day of each month—whether or not the child is in attendance—with the last payment due on April 1 for the school year. A seven-day grace period is allowed at the beginning of each month, after which a \$25 late fee will be due. The school offers the option and encourages families to pay the full tuition for the semester or year if they desire and are able. If families are setting up automatic payments from their bank, they should make sure to build in a few days for WPELC to receive the check prior to the first of the month.

If tuition is in arrears by 30 days, the child will not be allowed in the classroom until the tuition and late fees are paid. The child may be dropped from enrollment for late tuition, and the child

will not be allowed to re-enroll for the following school year until the tuition and late fees are paid.

### **TUITION ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES**

WPELC values the diversity of experiences that children of different economic, social, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds can give one another. At times, financial assistance may help assure this goal is met. The tuition assistance process is conducted independently of the admission process and is confidential except as to the Treasurer and Administrative Assistant. The Tuition Assistance Committee reviews all applications, with family identities remaining anonymous. If needed, the Board will be required to approve applications of more than 50% tuition. All questions about tuition assistance should be directed to the Treasurer at [treasurer@wpelc.org](mailto:treasurer@wpelc.org). WPELC offers assistance in accordance with the following guidelines:

#### *Types of Tuition Assistance*

- Full-year Tuition Assistance: Percentage to be determined by family need.
- Semester Tuition Assistance: Awarded to currently enrolled families whose financial needs have changed during the year or to newly enrolled families indicating a need for financial assistance.

#### *Limits of Tuition Assistance*

- Tuition Assistance shall be included as an expense in the annual operating budget. Funds available for tuition assistance shall be no more than 4% of total expected tuition income. Total expected tuition income is equal to nine months of full tuition paid by all families enrolled at WPELC. The percentage of total expected tuition income may deviate from these guidelines with Board approval.
- The Tuition Assistance Committee may award up to 40% of the projected tuition assistance funds prior to the beginning of the school year. An additional 40% may be awarded at the January review. During this review, the entire tuition assistance fund may be reassessed according to need or funds available. Twenty percent of the projected tuition assistance expense shall be set aside to be used as needed to help families whose situations change during the academic year and/or for new families indicating a need for financial assistance.
- The Tuition Assistance Committee shall not feel compelled to award aid to all families who apply.
- At the discretion of the Board, any part of the fund not awarded as assistance may be used for emergency purposes.
- Generally, the maximum grant shall not exceed 50% of tuition. A grant larger than 50% of tuition may be awarded with the approval of the Board.
- As a general guideline, a family would be eligible to apply for tuition assistance if monthly tuition exceeds 3.5% of their gross monthly income. Gross monthly income is defined as:
  - Monthly Gross Wages (before taxes or other deductions)
  - Net Self Employment Income (as would be reported on Schedule C, divided by 12 months)
  - Monthly Income from Dividends, Interest, Bonuses, Profit-Sharing Plans, Pensions

- Monthly Income from Payments on Property, Settlements, Child Support or Alimony
- Monthly Income from Social Security, Disability Payments, or Other Government Assistance
- Extraordinary expenses will be taken into consideration in awarding scholarships.
- Regardless of tuition assistance awards, each child is fully charged all enrollment fees: one-time application fee, May tuition retainer, September tuition and the annual Activity fee. If payment arrangements are necessary for these fees, the Treasurer should be consulted.
- For current families to be considered for tuition assistance, families must have met all parent participation responsibilities and all financial obligations and be in good standing at WPELC.

#### *Tuition Assistance Application and Award Process*

- Tuition Assistance applications are available to all families on the WPELC website at <https://wpehc.org/apply/scholarships/>.
- The Tuition Assistance application and process is confidential. Names are only known by the Treasurer and Administrative Assistant collecting payment. Financial details are only shared with the Tuition Assistance Committee.
- The Tuition Assistance Committee will consist of the Treasurer and two Board members appointed by the President.
- The Tuition Assistance Committee will meet as needed to evaluate the list of applicants and calculate the tuition assistance awards based upon financial need and in accordance with the tuition assistance guidelines set forth herein.
- Recipients of tuition assistance will be notified by email and/or by letter. Recipients are expected to pay the remaining amount of tuition owed by the designated deadline.
- Tuition Assistance will not be awarded retroactively.
- The Treasurer shall provide the Board with a report of the number and amounts of tuition assistance awards while still maintaining the anonymity of the recipients. To the extent a Board vote is needed for an award of more than 50% tuition, the Treasurer and Tuition Assistance Committee will maintain anonymity of the applicants.
- Any family applying for tuition assistance may ask the Board to review the decision made by the Tuition Assistance Committee. After making the requested review, the Board may change the decision of the Tuition Assistance Committee.
- A reevaluation of applicants may occur at the end of the first semester. If deemed necessary, notices requesting updated financial information will be sent to each family that applied for tuition assistance in January.
- Applications for tuition assistance can be submitted any time during the school year. It is the responsibility of the family to submit a tuition assistance application. Likewise, in the event that financial assistance is no longer necessary, it is the responsibility of the family to make that information known to the Treasurer.
- In the event that a member of the Tuition Assistance Committee needs to apply for tuition assistance, the President shall appoint another member of the Board to the committee.

### **WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE**

If a student must withdraw from WPELC before the school year ends, the parent must notify the Director and Administrative Assistant in writing four weeks in advance. Following the four-week notice period, the current month's tuition will be prorated, if applicable, and a refund, less any amount owed for mandatory fundraising to date, will be made, if applicable. May tuition serves as a retainer fee and is non-refundable. The May tuition retainer will not be applied to a family's last month of school if they withdraw during the school year.

If it becomes evident during the school year that the relationship between the school and any child or family is not mutually beneficial, the child may be dropped from the school enrollment. Tuition costs will be prorated and a refund made, if applicable.

### **SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS**

WPELC strives to provide an environment that is nurturing and respectful to all children's needs and therefore does not suspend or expel students from our school. When an issue arises in the classroom concerning a child, the teacher will work closely with the family and Director to find a solution. In addition to meetings and discussions between the family and the school, recommendations for professional support may be requested by the school in order for the child to continue to thrive in this school environment. If this request is not respected or followed through, or if the child continues to not thrive in this philosophy and learning environment, the family might be asked to look elsewhere to find an environment to best fit their child's needs.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

### **DROP OFF AND PICK UP**

Parents and individuals that are bringing children to school or attending events at the school shall make reasonable efforts to park in the parking lot on the northeast corner of Dakota St. and South Williams St. Please avoid parking on South Williams St. Please follow Playground Rules detailed below, and do not allow children to play in neighbors' yards.

Arrival time is normally at 9:00am unless otherwise notified. Please be on time. Do not bring your child to the classroom early unless you are the Helping Parent. Helping Parents should arrive 15 minutes early to help with classroom set-up and Help Child tasks.

Pick-up time is 11:30am for Early Learners and 1:00pm for Preschool unless the child is enrolled in Enrichment. Every effort should be made to pick up children on time. If it is necessary to be late, please text both the Director and your Lead Teacher to notify them. If a child is not picked up within 30 minutes and no contact was made with the family, the teachers will begin calling authorized persons from the emergency contact form. If no one can be contacted within an hour after the end of class, the Department of Human Services may be notified.

For the Parent-Tot class, parents/guardians are to remain with the student at all times.

Children are required to be signed in and out daily on the sign-in sheet by whomever is dropping off and picking up the child, or, in the case of Parent-Tot, whomever is attending the class. Licensing requires daily sign-in/sign-out, and teachers use this as a record of attendance – as well as frequent head counts and visual supervision – to assure that all children present are accounted for. Head counts are done before going outside, before leaving the playground, and after returning to the classroom. A qualified teacher always accompanies children when going to the bathroom or leaving the classroom for any reason.

To ensure the safety of your child at school, please indicate on your emergency contact form the names of those people you wish to authorize to pick up your child. For those days when someone other than those on your form will be picking up your child, please send the Director and Lead Teacher an email or text listing the person's first and last name and giving your permission. The teachers cannot release your child, even to someone familiar, unless your written permission is given. The teachers will request identification of any unfamiliar adults to assure they are authorized to pick up your child.

### **VISITORS**

Visitors to the school must sign the visitor sign-in log indicating the date, time, and purpose of their visit. If the visitors are strangers to the staff or Helping Parents, they will need to provide individual identification.

The children and teachers love to have visitors with a special occupation or skill to share. Please volunteer yourself or a friend, and help us find other resources.

### **DRESS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Send your child in play clothes. School can be messy. We want the children to enjoy the projects and not be worried about getting dirty. Even “washable” paint does not always wash out completely.

Children should be prepared for outdoor play each school day and will be expected to go outside with the group. Appropriate winter attire should be sent in the winter months, including jacket, hat, mittens and boots and snow pants (when there is snow). Sunscreen must be applied in accordance with WPELC's Sunscreen Policy (forthcoming).

Each Early Learner and Preschool child will be provided a cubby in which to keep their personal belongings. All children should keep an extra set of clothing at the school in a labeled plastic bag; we will store these in the bathroom. Children should NOT bring toys, treasures, gum/candy, or money to school. There may be occasions when the teachers ask the children to bring special items for sharing time. The teachers also understand that a child may need to bring a special “lovey” from home as a transition aid to school. Teachers will often ask children to keep these personal items in their cubby during the school day.



## **MEALS AND SNACKS**

Parents are responsible for providing lunch for their child when class time or enrichment includes lunchtime. All snacks brought into WPELC must be prepackaged (store-bought). WPELC is a nut-free school.

Food allergies in any school require thoughtfulness and attention to ensure a safe school experience for all children. Every school year, current food allergies are taken into consideration when creating the approved snack list and lunch policy for each class. Our approved snack list and lunch policy is found on our website and is provided in your Fall General Meeting Packet. This list and policy may change from time to time as allergies become known. Please choose snacks from our approved snack list, as it is for your convenience and for the safety of all children. We cannot guarantee our school or common areas are free of any particular allergen, yet we strive to balance the needs of all students, parents, teachers, and others who use the common areas.

## **PLAYGROUND RULES**

Our playground is a beautiful treasure unique to WPELC and showcases our focus on creating child-centered environments. We ask that families who use the playground before or after school hours do so responsibly, and ensure it is clean and tidy before leaving.

- Keep all gates closed
- Clean up after you are finished playing
- Do NOT climb trees, bushes, or the fence
- Do NOT climb on top of the train or house
- Do NOT dig other than in the sandbox
- Keep all pets away from the playground
- Tidy up toys and logs when finished playing

## **SCHOOL CLOSING DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the event of inclement or excessively hot weather, children will not go outside. If Denver Public Schools are closed, WPELC will also be closed. If necessary, the Director will contact families via email regarding school closure or a schedule change. For details on extended closures, please see the Temporary School Closure Policy on page 26.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION GUIDELINES**

At WPELC, we support the children in addressing conflict when it arises in the classroom. Conflict is both a natural part of life and essential for developing a strong sense of self. We strive to help children articulate their feelings and identify their likes and dislikes, as well as recognize opportunities to empathize with people we care for, and through that gain the ability to compromise. Conflict is a difficult yet important part of growing. We need to be as open and supportive as possible through these times so our children can become strong, compassionate, and self-confident. Below are general guidelines for resolving conflict in the classroom. We encourage adults to:

- Calmly and respectfully comfort all children involved.
- Bring the children together.
- Get on the children's level and engage in eye contact.
- Assist all children involved with using their words about their individual views of what happened. Make sure each child has had enough time to share their perspective.
- Help the children express how they feel about the situation and the other children.
- Listen without judgment.
- Enlist children's suggestions for resolution.
- Ask if there is anything they or we can do to help the children involved feel better.
- Ask if anyone needs a hug, handshake or high-five.

WPELC recognizes the discipline guidelines outlined in the Colorado Rules and Regulations for Child Care Centers and requires both staff and Helping Parents to abide by these regulations.

WPELC shall not use nor permit an employee, Helping Parent, volunteer, or other child to use corporal or other harsh punishment, including but not limited to pinching, shaking, spanking, punching, biting, kicking, rough handling, hair pulling, or any humiliating or frightening method of discipline.

Punishment shall not be associated with food, rest, or toileting. No child will be punished for toileting accidents. Food will not be denied or forced upon a child as a disciplinary measure.

Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief and appropriate for the child's age. The child shall be within sight of an adult in a safe, lit, and well-ventilated area. No child shall be isolated in a locked, closed room or closet.

Verbal abuse or derogatory remarks about the child, their family, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or cultural background shall not be used nor permitted by staff or volunteer parents.

### **NEIGHBORHOOD EXPLORATIONS, TELEVISION/VIDEO AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES**

For in-person learning, WPELC curriculum and activities do not include television, video, or technology. From time to time, WPELC may take a Neighborhood Exploration - walks around the neighborhood - to Washington Park, the Fire Station, around the block, etc.

The following procedures are in place when classes are on Neighborhood Explorations:

- The Lead Teacher and Assistant Teacher are present at all times.
- Children walk single file, or no more than two students side-by-side (one teacher at the front, one teacher at the rear, and the Helping Parent in the center).
- When crossing alleyways or streets, one teacher will demonstrate good crossing practices and will indicate when it is safe to cross.
- One teacher shall remain in the alley/street until all children have crossed.
- Parents should dress children for appropriate weather and walking every day.

## **SCHOOL CLEANINGS**

WPELC's hands-on learning environment means our classroom gets dirty and requires thorough and conscientious cleaning to maintain a pleasant and safe place for our children to play and learn. We all must work together to keep the school clean. Teachers and Helping Parents perform daily cleaning maintenance tasks, and WPELC contracts with a cleaning service to clean the classrooms and bathrooms Monday through Friday. There are three All-School Clean-Ups scheduled during the year; families are required to participate in one of them. They are listed on the school calendar and occur in August, January, and May.

## **ENRICHMENT CLASSES**

WPELC may offer enrichment classes after the typical school hours. Early Learners enjoy "Lunch Bunch" where they eat lunch at school and then participate in an activity focused on science, music or movement. Preschool enrichment includes activities such as Story Book Journey, Cultural Explorations, Music & Movement, Science Exploration, and Children's Theater, which take place after the regular school day ends. These classes are optional and enrollment typically occurs a few weeks into each semester. These classes require an additional enrichment tuition paid to the school.

Enrichment classes are intended to offer additional educational and fun opportunities for WPELC students, and extend the learning day for those who are ready.

## **HEALTH POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

### **REQUIRED FORMS**

WPELC's license to operate depends on compliance with the Rules and Regulations for Child Care Centers issued by the State of Colorado and the City and County of Denver. In order to reserve your child's place at WPELC, all updated health forms must be received by August 1 (unless special arrangements have been made with the Administrative Assistant). Children will not be permitted to attend class until all required health forms have been submitted to the Administrative Assistant. Parent-Tot students are exempt from this policy.

Students admitted after August 1 should complete all health forms and submit to the Administrative Assistant before the first day the child attends school.

Required health forms for Early Learner and Preschool students include:

- *General Health Appraisal* - a medical examination report signed by your child's approved health care provider
- *Immunization Record and/or Exemption* - a signed record of your child's immunizations

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Immunization requirements will be strictly enforced for all students in Early Learner and Preschool classes. Students who do not meet the requirements listed below will be denied attendance according to Colorado law.

You must provide WPELC with one of the following in order to comply with the law:

- *Certificate of Immunization* from a licensed physician or authorized representative of the Department of Health or local health department certifying that your child has received minimum immunizations as indicated below.
- *Certificate of Medical Exemption or Non-Medical Exemption Form (for Religious or Personal Belief)*:
  - Medical exemption signed by licensed physician listing medical contraindications
  - Religious exemption signed by parent or guardian
  - Personal exemption signed by parent or guardian

For children whose Certificate of Immunization is not up to date, the parent or guardian has 14 days after notification to provide documentation that the next required immunization was given and submit a written plan for completion of any required immunizations. If the plan is not fulfilled, the child shall be suspended from school until in compliance.

In compliance with State regulation, while maintaining confidentiality, parents of other children in the class will be notified if a child enters WPELC without having received the minimum immunizations.

## **ILLNESS, ACCIDENT AND INJURY GUIDELINES**

If a child becomes ill, has an accident, or sustains an injury while at school, WPELC will notify a parent and have the child rest in an area separate from the class activities until the child is picked up from school. If a child is injured or involved in an accident at school, WPELC will administer necessary first aid and complete an accident report that is kept on file in the school office. Depending on the type and severity of the injury, the child will return to class activities or a parent will be notified to pick up the child from school. If deemed necessary by the teacher or Director, a 911 emergency call will be made, and a parent will be notified immediately.

Please ask your doctor about when your child should return to school following an illness. If medication has been prescribed, ask your doctor when or if your child can return to school during the course of the treatment. If your child has diarrhea, vomiting, or is running a fever (rectal temperature greater than 100.4 degrees, oral temperature greater than 99.5 degrees, or axillary temperature greater than 98.6 degrees [ref. Your Child's Health, Barton D. Schmitt, MD, 1991]), please DO NOT SEND your child to school. In general, if your child does not seem to be himself/herself/themselves, do not hesitate to keep them home for a day or two.

If your child has been exposed to any contagious diseases or viruses, such as COVID-19, whooping cough, German or regular measles, mumps, chicken pox, diphtheria, pinworms, or scarlet fever, please keep them home and report the illness to the school immediately. WPELC will comply with state requirements for staff and parent notification when students are exposed to contagious diseases or viruses. Parents are required to notify the Director when a student becomes exposed or infected with a contagious disease or virus so that other families in our community may be informed and so that WPELC may make a determination, in its sole discretion, regarding when the student may return to the classroom based on recommendations by the CDPHE (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment) and other relevant public health authorities.

Each child must be observed daily upon arrival at WPELC by a person capable of recognizing common signs of communicable diseases or other evidence of ill health. This procedure might include a temperature check before entering the classroom. A child who is ill upon arrival at WPELC shall not be admitted or must be separated from other children until the parent or guardian can pick up the child.

All families must review and sign the current COVID-19 Addendum before their child may attend school.

#### **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS**

All medication at WPELC shall be kept and stored in the locked school office or classroom. WPELC staff shall administer medications for children in compliance with the Nurse Practice Act and only upon written consent from a parent/guardian and written order from the child's physician. Permission forms to administer medication are provided by WPELC and found on our website. Each prescription shall be in the original, childproof container and carry the name of the medication, the name of the child for whom it was prescribed, the name of the prescribing physician, and the physician's instructions. WPELC staff shall not administer over-the-counter medications without written physician instructions. Parents are asked to avoid a dosing time during school hours unless for emergency situations or as required by the child's physician.

#### **DIAPERING AND TOILET TRAINING**

In the event that a child has an accident or special needs, a Qualified Early Childhood Teacher uses school supplied emergency diapers/wipes to clean and diaper the child as necessary. The child's parents are notified, and the soiled items are sealed in a plastic bag and stored out of the reach of children. Our school and classroom arrangement do not allow for diaper changing. Diapering facilities for Parent-Tot family use is located in the shared Church bathroom.

#### **STANDARD PRECAUTIONS**

To help prevent the spread of diseases caused by body secretions, the following universal precautions are recommended when volunteering in the classroom:

- Wear disposable plastic or rubber gloves when in contact with body secretions including blood, stool, urine, and vomit. Dispose of gloves after each use.

- Cover open wounds until a scab has formed if the child will have any contact with other children.
- Wash your hands after contact with children. Use disposable paper towels. Children should wash their hands after the use of the bathroom or if they have blood or other body substances on their hands.
- Use single-use disposable tissues for runny noses, etc., and dispose of them immediately. Never share tissues.
- Wash toys that have come into contact with body fluids or stool.

### **REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE**

Any teacher or Helping Parent who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child has been abused or neglected, or has observed a child in circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, must immediately report their concerns to the Denver County Department of Human Services by calling the Child Abuse Hotline at (720) 944-3000 or the Denver Police Department at (720) 913-2000.

To report complaints regarding WPELC contact:

Colorado Department of Human Services Division of Childcare  
 1575 Sherman St., 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
 Denver, CO 80203  
 (303) 866-3755

### **HEAD LICE POLICY**

*Background Information:* Infestation with head lice is most common among preschool and elementary school-age children and their household members and caretakers. Head lice are not known to transmit disease; secondary bacterial infections are possible from scratching. Head lice are not related to personal hygiene or the cleanliness of a person, their home environment, or their school environment.

Head lice can infect anyone, regardless of race or socioeconomic status. No one is immune to head lice. Head lice are spread by direct contact with the hair of the infested person. Head-to-head contact is the major way head lice is spread. Rarely is it spread by contact with clothing or personal items.

The Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Association of School Nurses support a caring policy and one that is less exclusionary for children infested with head lice. They suggest that students do not need to be sent home early from school. They promote treatment to take place the evening of the diagnosis and then to return to school as soon as treatment has begun. They believe that the burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families, and communities far outweigh the risks associated with head lice and the risk of transmission in the school setting.

*Rationale:* The WPELC head lice policy is aligned with the National Association of School Nurses evidence-based strategies for the management of head lice in the school setting. The policy, while effectively dealing with individual head lice cases, will also reduce the incidence of infestations, social stigma, and caregiver strain, and the negative impact on the students' education. The school policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of WPELC staff and parents in a community effort to control head lice. This policy draws on information obtained from the Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Association of School Nurses.

*Policy:* All members of this school community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist families to manage head lice effectively.

Evidence shows that we cannot eradicate head lice but we can reduce the number of cases if all school community members work together in a coordinated manner. In this school community, there is a commitment to do this in the following ways:

1. If a child is diagnosed with head lice, the parent will notify WPELC via the Director.
2. The parent will consult with their pediatrician and start treatment immediately based on the recommendations and will complete treatment as directed.
3. The parent will communicate the action plan with the school Director.
4. The Child Health Nurse Consultant will be a resource for the family and provide additional information and resources as needed or as requested.
5. The infected child will be allowed to return to school in the absence of live head lice.
6. If multiple cases are found to be present at WPELC, a school-wide notice will be sent out. If one case is reported, that child's class will be notified. The child's identity will not be disclosed in any communication going out to the community.
7. The Director will assure the cleaning and washing of classrooms, play clothing, pillows, blankets, etc.
8. It will be encouraged throughout the year to frequently check your children for head lice. This will be communicated periodically via the weekly newsletter.

## **SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

WPELC is committed to running a safe and secure preschool. We need the help of all staff and parents in maintaining a safe environment for the children.

At the end of each class session, the classroom, bathroom, closets, office area, and playground will be checked before locking or securing the area to ensure no child is hiding or left alone. The teachers and the Helping Parent will keep each child in the classroom until they are signed out and picked up by an authorized adult.

A Qualified Early Childhood Teacher will always accompany a child going to the bathroom or leaving the classroom for any other reason. Helping Parents do not take children to the bathroom, unless it's their own child.

### **BATHROOM PROCEDURES**

The UCC Women's Bathroom is for WPELC-use-only when class is in session.

- Signs will be placed on bathroom doors before and after class.
- Step stools will be placed at the designated toilets and sinks before class, stored in the bathroom when school is not in session, and cleaned regularly.

#### *Traveling To and From the Bathroom:*

- Only a Qualified Early Childhood Teacher may take students to the bathroom.
- A Qualified Early Childhood Teacher shall be with students at all times.
- A Qualified Early Childhood Teacher will visually confirm the bathroom is not occupied prior to students entering.
- A Qualified Early Childhood Teacher will unlock and lock the bathroom during use.

### **EMERGENCY AND LOCKDOWN PROCEDURES**

**LOST CHILD:** In the event of a lost child, as an emergency procedure WPELC will be placed on lockdown, 911 will be called, and parents will be contacted.

**FIRE:** The teachers and children will gather at the nearest and safest exit. The teacher will take a headcount as the children are gathering and proceed outside, closing the door behind. Once outside, the group should stand 50 feet from the building, and the teacher will again take a headcount. The Helping Parent will be responsible for locating missing children by checking restrooms, closets, and the office for children who may not have heard the alarm. As soon as the Helping Parent is certain there are no children in those places, proceed to the nearest and safest exit and then to the nearest phone.

Fire drills shall be conducted two times per semester.

Fire doors and front entryway doors are to be closed at all times during class. These doors are to be checked before class begins to be sure all remain closed during class, including the door from the classroom to the hallway going to the restrooms and the door from the classroom to the entry vestibule.

All parents must be prepared to help the children safely out of the building if the need should ever arise.

**TORNADO:** Should the Public Warning System issue a tornado warning, the evacuation method will be similar in structure to the fire evacuation method. The adults, however, will evacuate the children into the church hallway perpendicular to the bathroom hallway.



This is a windowless hallway in the interior of the building on the lowest first floor. Children will be instructed to sit down or to kneel while protecting their heads if the threat is imminent. They will remain there until an all-clear signal is issued.

**EMERGENCY BUILDING EVACUATION:** Should the building need to be evacuated for any emergency situation, the adults and children will go to Steele Elementary School where WPELC has arrangements for children and teachers to remain in their gymnasium until each child is picked up by his or her authorized person. The telephone number at the Steele Elementary School is 720-424-3720, and the address is 320 South Marion Parkway, Denver, CO 80209.

**LOCKDOWN:** **When the threat is inside or very close to the school.** School staff secures the building and safely shelters all students, staff, and visitors INSIDE the school building. WPELC will go on lockdown if a threat is in the building or the neighborhood and endangers the occupants of the school. The following procedures shall be performed:

- School business and classroom activities cease.
- No person is allowed to enter or leave the building.
- Facility Manager/Staff lock all exterior doors.
- Teachers/Staff lock classroom/work area doors.
- Staff and students are down, quiet, and out of sight.

**Lockdown Drills:** Parents will receive email notification that a lockdown drill has taken place.

**Lockdown Communication:** Parents will receive email and/or phone communication, when feasibly possible, at the end of a real lockdown.

**MODIFIED LOCKDOWN:** **When the threat is definitely away from the school.** School staff secures the building and safely shelters all students, staff, and visitors INSIDE the school building. WPELC will go on modified lockdown if a threat is in the neighborhood and does not endanger the occupants of the school. No person is allowed to enter or leave the building. For a modified lockdown, follow the procedures for lockdown except:

- Interior doors DO NOT need to be locked.
- School business and classroom activities continue as normal.

## **EMERGENCY PLANNING FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS**

The following is adapted from the Emergency Plan for Students with Special Needs for Marin County School District and designed to assist administrators, teachers, staff, parents, students, and local responders in planning for the support that may be required for students with special needs in the event of an emergency. To comply with laws involving students with special needs, individuals responsible for evacuation and emergency operation plans, notification protocols, shelter identification, emergency medical care, and other emergency response and recovery programs must:

Have sound working knowledge of the accessibility and nondiscrimination requirements applicable under federal disability right laws;

Know the special needs demographics of the students attending classes on site. Within the first three weeks of school, teachers will have specific plans for children with known disabilities. This information will be updated as needed throughout the school year:

- Involve students with different types of disabilities and staff and teachers in identifying the communication and transportation needs, accommodations, support systems, equipment, services, and supplies that they will need during an emergency;
- Consider emergency accommodations for those with temporary disabilities;
- Identify existing resources within the school and local community that meet the special needs of these students;
- Develop new community partners and resources as needed;
- Inform parents about the efforts to keep their child safe at school;
- Identify medical needs and make an appropriate plan;
- Identify any necessary tools such as personal response plans, evacuation equipment, or visual aids; and
- Include local responders and establish a relationship with individual students with disabilities and their teachers.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a 1975 federal law, amended by the Office of Special Education Programs in 1997, which ensures services to children with special needs throughout the nation.

In addition to students with disabilities specified under IDEA law, the Director must identify individuals with a temporary impairment, such as a broken leg or hidden impairment such as asthma, previous panic attacks, allergies, or heart conditions. Students with such documented medical conditions may need to continue their individual medical regime, particularly during a crisis or disaster. Teachers will take all medication and care plans when exiting the building in an emergency.

### **TEMPORARY SCHOOL CLOSURE POLICY**

In rare situations, WPELC may need to close the school and suspend classes to protect the safety of the staff and, most importantly, the students. As a small cooperative preschool, protecting our community is our top priority.

A Temporary School Closure is defined as WPELC shutting down operations for more than one week. This means that there would be no classes or community events for more than five consecutive days. In the interim, regular operations are paused.

In the event of circumstances beyond our reasonable control, including, but not limited to, any fire, act of God, war, government action, act of terrorism, epidemic, pandemic, natural disaster,

or other major upheaval, WPELC may immediately suspend classes without notice until such time as WPELC, at its discretion, determines that it may safely and adequately resume operations. In addition, WPELC may alter its calendar or provide alternative means of instruction in its sole discretion.

Based on any applicable orders, guidance, or other relevant information, the Director is responsible for reviewing, recommending, and implementing any temporary school closures in conjunction with the Board, which will assess the financial implications of a temporary school closure. The Director also is responsible for establishing a return to school date when regular operations, schedules, and classes can resume. In the event that WPELC needs to close temporarily, the community will be notified as soon as possible. The Director is responsible for managing the transition from regular operations to temporary closure, including all communications, prior to and after, regarding a temporary school closure.

In the event that classes are suspended, the Board will determine what financial options are available to families based on the circumstances of the Temporary School Closure and the financial standing of the school.

**AMENDED BYLAWS  
OF  
WASHINGTON PARK EARLY LEARNING CENTER  
Revised May 2, 2022**

**Article I: NAME AND DESCRIPTION**

The name of the organization shall be “Washington Park Early Learning Center” (WPELC). WPELC is organized as a nonprofit corporation pursuant to the laws of the State of Colorado. WPELC shall comply with the rules and regulations for the licensing of children’s centers as set forth in the applicable laws, regulations, and ordinances.

**Article II: PURPOSE**

The purpose of WPELC is to operate a parent cooperative preschool. The philosophy of WPELC shall be to provide an environment that supports and respects the child as he or she is. Through the guidance of qualified teachers, the child will have the opportunity to explore and enrich his or her world physically, emotionally, and intellectually.

**Article III: MEMBERSHIP**

Each person who has a child enrolled in WPELC shall be a member of the corporation. For families not currently enrolled, membership shall become effective upon notification of acceptance of the child in the school and the payment of the last month’s tuition as a retainer fee. Membership shall be terminated on the last day of the child’s attendance in the school. Membership shall be open to all families regardless of race, color, national and ethnic origin, religion, or economic background. The good standing of a member shall be determined in accordance with requirements established by the Board of Directors and set forth in the Parent Handbook. Each member in good standing shall be eligible to vote at General Meetings and hold office.

**Article IV: ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY**

A child must be the minimum age for the desired class at WPELC by September 1 of the entering school year to be eligible for enrollment. The Board of Directors may make exceptions if deemed necessary or beneficial.

**Article V: TUITION AND FEES**

1. To be considered for admission, a non-refundable registration fee shall be paid with the application regardless of when the application is submitted, i.e. even if submitted after the commencement of the school year.

2. An activity fee shall be paid before the child is permitted to attend school. Students enrolling after February 1 shall pay half the activity fee, but no further reductions will be made.
3. Last month's tuition shall be paid by the first week of March of the prior year and shall be held as a non-refundable retainer. September tuition shall be paid no later than June 1<sup>st</sup>. Thereafter, tuition shall be due and payable on the first of each month, whether or not the child is in attendance. A seven-day grace period shall be allowed, after which a \$25 late fee will be due and the names of those delinquent may be posted. If tuition is in arrears 30 days, the child will not be allowed in the classroom until the tuition is paid, the child may be dropped from enrollment, and the child will not be allowed to re-enroll for the following school year until the tuition and late fee are paid.
4. All fees and tuition rates shall be determined by the Board and shall be subject to change on 30 days written notice.
5. Withdrawals from enrollment shall be made only upon four weeks notice to the Administrative Assistant. Current month's tuition shall be prorated and a refund, less any amount owed for mandatory fundraising to date, made if applicable. No refund of the retainer fee (last month's tuition) will be made, nor shall the retainer fee be applied to the child's last month of school.
6. Scholarships shall be awarded in accordance with the Scholarship Guidelines adopted by the Board.

#### **Article VI: LICENSING AND HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

WPELC shall comply with the Rules and Regulations for Child Care Centers issued by the State of Colorado and the City and County of Denver. Each child is required to have an annual physical examination and a completed Certificate of Immunization, or Statement of Exemption to Immunization Law, prior to entering preschool. This health form must be at the school before he/she is admitted to class.

#### **Article VII: MEETINGS**

1. **Board**. The Board of Directors shall meet once each month during the year and at other times that are deemed necessary by the Board. The President must call a board meeting upon written request by 50% of the Board. All board meetings are open to members in good standing.
2. **General**. There shall be two general meetings of WPELC each year. These meetings shall be held: (1) in August prior to the start of school, and (2) in May prior to the closing of school. The Board of Directors shall determine the exact time and location for the general meetings. The Secretary shall provide written notification of the time and place of the meeting to each member in good standing at least one week prior to the meetings.
3. **Special**. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Board of Directors or upon written request of 10% of the members in good standing. Such meetings to be held may be at such time and place as the Board of Directors or members calling the meeting may designate. The Secretary shall provide written notification of the time and place of any such special meetings to each member in good standing at least one week prior to the meeting.

4. Quorum and Manner of Acting. A quorum at any board meeting shall consist of fifty percent of the entire membership of the Board, and a quorum at any general or special meeting shall consist of 50% of the families in good standing of WPELC. No business may be transacted at any meeting without the presence of a quorum. Unless law or the Articles of Incorporation of WPELC require a greater vote, the affirmative vote of a majority of those present at a meeting at which a quorum is present is required to take an action.
5. Action by Written Consent; Telephonic and Other “Virtual” Meetings. The WPELC Board of Directors can approve contracts or motions via written consent, telephonic, or electronic communication. The Secretary tracks and records any motions.

### **Article VIII: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

1. Membership. The direction and management of WPELC shall be vested in the Board of Directors, who must be members in good standing. The Board of Directors shall consist of the following persons: the elected officers of the membership (President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, and the chairpersons of the Recruitment, Community, Fundraising, Communications, and Maintenance Committees.
2. Term. The term of office shall be from June 15 to June 15, except the Treasurer’s term of office shall be from August 1 to July 31 because WPELC’s fiscal year operates from July 1 through June 30.
3. Vacancies. The Volunteer Coordinator shall conduct a search process and interview community members to determine who in the community can best fill any vacancies that occur during the year. The Volunteer Coordinator shall gain approval for a nominee from both the President and the Director. Once the new nominee is finalized, the Board of Directors shall hold a vote on the replacement so that the term of the office may be completed.
4. Powers and Duties of the Board. The Board of Directors shall have the power and authority to conduct and manage the business and property of WPELC subject only to specific instructions from the membership. The Board shall operate and manage the school in accordance with the Bylaws and the current Parent Handbook of WPELC. The Board may create and designate such powers and duties to committees or to persons approved by the Board as necessary and desirable but shall not delegate control of employment practices or the hiring and firing of employees.
5. Parent Handbook. The Board of Directors shall draw up the policy for the operation of WPELC and shall be responsible for making changes in that policy. This policy shall be set forth in the Parent Handbook and shall be presented to the membership at the Spring General Meeting. A copy of the Parent Handbook shall be provided to each member or made available online. The Parent Handbook shall be limited to those issues that pertain to the proper and efficient running of the school.

### **Article IX: ORDER OF BUSINESS**

1. The Order of Business for board meetings shall be the same as the Order of Business for general meetings and shall include the following components.
  - a) Roll call

- b) Proof of notice of meeting
  - c) Reading and correction of minutes
  - d) Read meeting norms
  - e) Reports of officers and committees
  - f) Financial statement and report
  - f) Old business
  - g) New business
2. In addition to the items set forth above, the agenda for the Spring General Meeting shall include:
    - a) An evaluation of the program and operation of WPELC
    - b) Consideration and adoption of amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws
    - c) Formation of standing committees and election of committee chairpersons who will then assign individual roles and set expectations for optimal committee functioning starting in August.
    - d) Election of officers and Board of Directors
  3. In addition to the items set forth above, the agenda for the Fall General Meeting shall include:
    - a) Parent orientation
    - b) Adoption of annual budget
    - c) An outline of the committees for the upcoming year Second official meeting of all committees; time to further hone roles & responsibilities for each committee member
  4. The above set forth order of business may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any given meeting.

## **Article X: OFFICERS**

1. Officers
  - a) All officers shall be members of WPELC.
  - b) The officers shall be: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The offices may be held jointly by two persons. In any office held jointly, the responsibilities and duties of the office shall be shared equally by the persons holding the office.
  - c) Each office position shall have one vote on the Board of Directors, i.e. if there are two persons serving as co-positions, they have one vote between them at board meetings.
  - d) The officers shall be elected by the membership at the Spring General Meeting for a term of one year except for the Treasurer who is elected for a term of two years. All new officers and assistants shall take office starting June 15, except the Treasurer shall take office starting August 1.
  - e) Assistant officers may also be appointed as described in this Article. Assistant officers need not be elected by the membership and do not serve on the Board of Directors.
2. President. The President shall preside at all general and special meetings of the members of

WPELC and the Board of Directors. The President shall be an ex officio member of all committees. The President shall have the usual powers of supervision and management and shall perform other duties as may be designated by the Board of Directors. The President shall review WPELC's lease with the church each year to assure that it is in good order. The President shall review WPELC Parent Handbook & Bylaws annually to assure that they are up to date. The Volunteer Coordination Committee, with approval from the President and Director, shall assign parents to the standing committees. The President shall, with the Vice President, prepare the teacher letters of intent and teacher contracts. The President shall sign the Director's contracts on behalf of the WPELC Board of Directors, which have been approved by the WPELC Board of Directors. The President signs all contracts and legal documents on behalf of the WPELC Board of Directors that have been approved by the WPELC Board of Directors. The President shall appoint two board members to serve on the Tuition Assistance Committee with the Treasurer. The Volunteer Coordinator, with approval from the President, shall assign parents to the Volunteer Coordination Committee. The President must have served at one time on the Board of Directors at WPELC before being nominated for the position. This requirement shall be waived if approved by two-thirds vote by the members.

3. Vice President. The Vice President shall be the liaison between the teachers and the Board of Directors. The Vice President shall be responsible for screening and recommending teacher applicants to the Board of Directors and reviewing salary scales. The Vice President shall, with the President, prepare the teacher letters of intent and teacher contracts. The Vice President shall preside over hiring procedures and discharge procedures of teachers with the approval of the Board of Directors. The Vice President shall, with the Director, coordinate and distribute an annual parent survey and communicate the results to the Board of Directors. The Vice President shall be responsible for updating the Employee Handbook and bringing any changes before the Board of Directors. The Vice President shall review all of WPELC's insurance policies each year to assure that they are in good order. The Vice President shall assist the President with preparation of general meetings. In the event that the President is unable to serve for a temporary period, the Vice President shall serve as the President in the interim. The Vice President shall, in the absence of the President, possess all of the duties of the office of President.
4. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the general meetings, special meetings and Board of Directors' meetings of WPELC. The Secretary will be responsible for the office files and for the records of WPELC. The Secretary shall make the official records of WPELC available to any member in good standing upon proper request at a reasonable time. The Secretary shall provide written notice of the time and place of the Fall and Spring General Meetings and of any special meetings to all members in good standing at least one week prior to the meetings and shall provide written notices of other special events as directed by the President or Board of Directors. The Secretary shall, along with the Administrative Assistant, manage and maintain school-related documents for appropriate lengths of time, or as required by law.
5. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall collect and receive all monies, shall deposit them in a bank



designated by the Board of Directors, and shall disburse them. The Treasurer shall prepare and present a financial report to the Board of Directors at the regular meetings and shall prepare a full financial statement as required for general meetings of WPELC or as otherwise requested by the Board of Directors. The Treasurer and/or a professional bookkeeper approved by the Board of Directors shall prepare all financial reports required by law, including but not limited to, state and federal income tax forms, social security forms, withholding tax forms, etc. The Treasurer shall coordinate the Scholarship Committee and shall prepare and present the scholarship applications to that committee and shall notify scholarship applicants of their receipt or rejection of a scholarship.

### **Article XI: STANDING COMMITTEES**

1. **Recruitment Committee.** The Recruitment Committee shall oversee recruitment tasks and activities including, but not limited to, updating the annual application form, formulating a tuition proposal for the Board to vote, organizing and directing Open Houses, and conducting school tours.. The Recruitment Chair, in conjunction with the Director and Administrative Assistant, shall ensure that the information requested on the application form gathers the required information as set forth in the Rules and Regulations for Child Care Centers issued by the State of Colorado. The Director or Administrative Assistant shall respond to all phone and email inquiries regarding recruitment.
2. **Communications Committee.** This committee shall be responsible for keeping WPELC families, as well as the community, informed about the school and its activities, and publish a newsletter. The Communications Committee will be responsible for maintaining the webpage and sending weekly electronic communication. The Communications Committee shall be responsible for the maintenance and support of all WPELC computers, peripherals, and technical office equipment.
3. **Fundraising Committee.** This committee shall be responsible for selecting and coordinating all fundraising efforts.
4. **Maintenance Committee.** This committee shall be responsible for maintaining the school, including the classrooms, bathrooms, and playground, in a safe and sanitary manner and purchasing the school's cleaning supplies and equipment. The Maintenance Committee is also responsible for keeping the classroom plants and animals clean, fed and watered.
5. **Community Committee.** This committee shall be responsible for fostering community at WPELC, creatively supporting and enhancing the teachers in carrying out their classroom programs, and supporting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts. There are five Class Liaisons, one for Parent Tot and one for each Early Learner and Preschool class. They shall be a part of the Community Committee and help in these efforts by fostering community within and beyond their respective classrooms.
6. **Chairpersons.** The chairpersons of the standing committees shall be elected by the membership at the Spring General Meeting for a term of one year to the Board of Directors.

All new chairpersons shall begin work starting June 15. Each chair position may be held jointly by two persons. In any chair position held jointly, the responsibilities and duties shall be shared equally by the persons acting as co-chairs. Each co-chair position shall have one vote on the Board of Directors, i.e. if there are co-chairs for the Community Committee, they have one vote between them at board meetings.

## **Article XII: SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

1. **Tuition Assistance Committee.** This committee shall implement and administer the tuition assistance policy. This committee shall consist of three voting members: the Treasurer and/or Treasury Assistant and two Board members appointed by the President. The Treasurer shall present the applications. The Treasurer shall maintain the anonymity of the tuition assistance applicants.
2. **Volunteer Coordination Committee.** The President and Director shall approve the appointment of the Volunteer Coordinator, who is selected by the outgoing Volunteer Coordinator and their committee. The Volunteer Coordinator shall assemble a working committee, asking each Committee Chair for one volunteer from their committee, six weeks before the Spring General Meeting. This committee's purpose is to determine volunteer roles for all community members for the upcoming school year. They will create a proposed Board of Directors by reviewing intake data and nominations submitted by both the current board and the general membership. They also will use this information to place all other community members in leadership roles or on committees. The President and Director shall approve the proposed Board of Directors, which will then be voted on by the whole community at the Spring General Meeting. Persons serving on the Volunteer Coordination Committee can be nominated for a Board position.
3. **Other Committees.** The Board of Directors shall create other committees when necessary. The Board shall designate the powers and/or duties of these committees.

## **Article XIII: CLASS LIAISONS**

The Volunteer Coordination Committee shall appoint a Class Liaison from each Early Learner and Preschool class. One additional Class Liaison shall be appointed for all Parent-Tot families. Class Liaisons are part of the Community Committee and shall be responsible for preparing Helping Parent schedules, fostering community, and assisting the teacher with class projects, special activities, and class parties. Class Liaisons shall collaborate with other members of their committee to plan social gatherings for parents and children throughout the year.

## **Article XIV: STAFF AND DIRECTOR**

Annual contracts shall be signed by WPELC and the teachers and the Director prior to employment. The Director shall be qualified as a Director of a Large Child Care Center as required

by the applicable laws, regulations, and ordinances. The teachers shall be qualified as Early Childhood Teachers as required by the applicable laws, regulations, and ordinances. All WPELC teachers hired have demonstrated knowledgeable decision-making judgment and concern for the proper care and well-being of children. Staff, substitutes, and long-term volunteers may not consume, be under the influence of, or bring to school any substance that impairs the ability to care for children during operating hours. When caring for children, WPELC teachers will refrain from using personal electronics including cell phones unless for documentation of learning, photos for blogs, and parent updates or emergency parent communications. WPELC teachers provide the highest level of attention and care for our children. They must be awake, alert, and supervising children at all times. WPELC will maintain staff to child ratios at all times including special activities, outside time, and class time.

The teachers, in conjunction with the Director, will develop and carry out the total educational program and be responsible for the daily operation of the school, subject to the advice of the Board of Directors and as outlined in their contracts and the Employee Handbook. The Director shall be designated as the registered agent of WPELC. WPELC grants the Director certain enumerated authorities without the need of Board approval including permitting the Director to take any action necessary to address an emergency that requires immediate attention.

The Director, in conjunction with the teachers, will develop and carry out the total educational program and be responsible for the following duties, subject to the advice of the Board of Directors and as outlined in the Director's contract and the Employee Handbook:

1. Prepare and update all licensing documents for WPELC.
2. Supervise other teachers employed by WPELC and provide orientation for new staff.
3. Maintain staff files.
4. Organize planning sessions and in-service days for teachers.
5. Provide for substitute teachers.
6. Keep a record of teachers' continuing professional education, personal leave, and sick days.
7. Place advertisements for and assist in hiring new teachers, including screening inquiries and scheduling interviews.
8. Answer initial phone inquiries concerning enrollment or general information about WPELC.
9. Give tours of the preschool and, when not available, assign a parent or teacher to give tours.
10. Form class rosters and waiting lists for the coming school year in consultation with teachers and the Administrative Assistant. Assist the Board with administering the enrollment policies and procedures adopted by the Board of Directors of WPELC.
11. Coordinate beginning of the year classroom set-up and end of the year classroom takedown with other staff and with the Chairpersons of the Maintenance and the Enrichment Committees.
12. Prepare materials for and assist in leading the Fall General Meeting.
13. Prepare materials for and lead the parent education meeting on WPELC philosophy and

- curriculum.
14. Coordinate, with the Vice President, the Parent Survey each year.
  15. Maintain and update the school calendar.
  16. Plan activities for and assist in leading the annual WPELC Open House.
  17. Order all classroom materials and supplies, other than what each teacher purchases pursuant to that teacher's monthly classroom supplies allowance. Coordinate the purchase of non-educational supplies, such as toilet paper and paper towels, with the Chairperson of the Maintenance Committee.
  18. In conjunction with the Chairperson of the Maintenance Committee, oversee classroom and playground maintenance, bringing matters needing attention to the Chairperson's attention.
  19. Act as the liaison between Washington Park United Church of Christ and WPELC on daily issues.
  20. Assist the President in responding to any concerns or complaints.
  21. Supervise the instructor(s) for the summer camp, including checking the classroom and selected classroom equipment out to the instructor at the beginning of the summer camp and checking it in at the end.
  22. Review and update the Employee Handbook annually.
  23. Such other responsibilities as agreed upon by WPELC and Director.

#### **Article XV: FINANCIAL POLICY**

1. **Fiscal Year.** Fiscal year shall be from July 1 through June 30.
2. **Nonprofit.** WPELC shall be operated as a nonprofit corporation. No expenditure of funds shall be made without authorization of the Board of Directors.
3. **Debts.** WPELC shall not be responsible for any unauthorized debts incurred by any member, officer, or director. To be binding on WPELC, a contract or other obligation must be in writing, must be approved by the Board of Directors, and must be signed by the President.
4. **Budget.** An annual budget shall be determined by the Board of Directors and approved by the members at the Fall General Meeting. Approval of the budget by the members shall constitute authority for the Board of Directors to expend funds within the limits of the allocation, but only if sufficient funds are available.
5. **Bank Accounts.** The Treasurer's and one other officer's signature shall be required on all checks.
6. **Non-budgetary expenditures.** Expenses not provided for in the annual budget may be made when necessary upon approval and authorization by the Board of Directors, but only if sufficient funds are available for such expenditures.
7. **Liability.** No officer, board member, or any other member of WPELC shall be liable for acts or omissions of any other officer, board member, or member other than him/herself, whether or

not such an act was in the performance of official duties. No officer or board member shall be personally liable to WPELC or its members for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty when performing their role as an officer or board member to the extent provided under C.R.S. § 7-128-402.

8. Loans and Encumbrances. No money shall be borrowed nor any encumbrances allowed without the consent of two-thirds vote of the members.
9. Audit. The Treasurer's books shall be audited as directed by the Board of Directors. The options for auditing include, but are not limited to, a CPA hired by the Board or a committee appointed by the Board.
10. Indemnification; Insurance. Mandatory Insurance includes Commercial General Liability Insurance, Workers Compensation Insurance, and Directors & Officers Insurance. Insurance coverage and amounts should be reviewed yearly by the WPELC Board to ensure proper coverage. The WPELC Board should consult with its insurer or its insurance broker to obtain this information. Other insurance to consider each year includes Property Insurance needs and Childcare-specific Insurance or an Umbrella Policy.

### **Article XVI: FUNDRAISING**

1. It is the responsibility of each family enrolled in the Early Learner and Preschool classes at WPELC to participate in fundraising.
2. Each Early Learner and Preschool family is responsible for raising or contributing a minimum amount determined by dividing the yearly fundraising budget set by the Board of Directors by the number of families enrolled.
3. A minimum amount to buy or sell and a buy-out amount will be designated for each fundraising campaign.
4. Options for meeting each family's minimum fundraising amount are: (a) participating in all required fundraising campaigns by buying or selling the minimum amount, or (b) paying the buy-out amount.
5. Families with two children in the Early Learner and/or Preschool classes shall be responsible for 1.5 times the minimum fundraising amount per family. In the case of families with more than two children in the school, fundraising responsibilities will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Board of Directors.
6. The minimum fundraising amount will be prorated for families joining at least 30 days after the school year begins.
7. On November 15 the Fundraising Committee will total each family's fundraising efforts to date. If a family is not participating, a bill for the minimum fundraising amount will be sent to the family. It must be paid by January 1. If payment is not received, their children may not attend WPELC or re-enroll for the next school year.
8. In April the Fundraising Committee will total each family's fundraising efforts to date. If a family is not participating, a bill for the minimum fundraising amount will be sent to the family. It must be paid by May 1. If payment is not received, their children may not attend WPELC or re-enroll for the next school year.

9. Families only enrolled in Parent Tot classes are not required to participate in fundraising, yet participation is encouraged.
10. By sharing the fundraising responsibilities, all families participate equally in reaching the yearly goal. It is that effort and commitment that keeps WPELC a special place for our children.

### **Article XVII: AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS**

1. These Bylaws may be amended, repealed, added to, or otherwise altered in whole or in part by the Board of Directors. School members will be notified in writing or online of any changes made to the Bylaws.
2. Amendments to the Bylaws may also be approved (1) by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present at any general or special meeting at which a quorum is present upon submission of the amendment by resolution or petition containing the signatures of at least 10% of the members in good standing of WPELC, or (2) by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present at any general meeting at which a quorum is present upon submission of the amendment by the motion of a member in good standing and the second of a member in good standing.