

Amherst Nursery School



Parent Handbook 2021 - 2022

Welcome to Amherst Nursery School (ANS), WNY's oldest cooperative preschool. Thank you for choosing ANS for your child's nursery school experience. Joining a cooperative (co-op) means joining a network of supportive families who are also working to give their children superior learning experiences while continuing to grow themselves. ANS fosters relationships and friendships between families through parent education opportunities and monthly social events.

Please read this handbook and familiarize yourself with its contents. If at any time you have questions, please contact your child's teacher or the director.

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Part I General Information

2021-22 Educational Staff and Classrooms

<u>Class</u>	<u>Staff and emails (Lead teacher in bold)</u>	<u>Room #</u>	
4-year-olds	Jennifer Howell Misty Rojek	mrs.howell@amherstnurseryschool.org mrs.rojek@amherstnurseryschool.org	6
4-year-olds	Liza Keenan Julie Brown	mrs.keenan@amherstnurseryschool.org mrs.brown@amherstnurseryschool.org	8
3-year-olds	Alicia Ehre Laura Zubricky	mrs. ehre@amherstnurseryschool.org mrs.zubricky@amherstnurseryschool.org	11
3-year-olds	Martha Barrett Kara Colvin	mrs.barrett@amherstnurseryschool.org mrs.colvin@amherstnurseryschool.org	7
2-year-olds			9
Education Director	Michele Sciolino	mrs.sciolino@amherstnurseryschool.org	2
Office Aide	Bev Mancini	mrs.mancini@amherstnurseryschool.org	2
Music Teacher	Diana Kane	mrs.kane@amherstnurseryschool.org	18
<u>Optional Programs</u>			
Fours Plus	Jennifer Howell (Mon)	mrs.howell@amherstnurseryschool.org	6
Creative Movement	Debbie Terranova (Mon)	debbiet158@verizon.net	youth hall
Spanish for Preschoolers	Lisa Almeter (W)	director@theenrichmentcompany.org	18
Soccer Shots	Mark Miller (Th,Fri)	ssbuffalomaureen@soccershots.org	youth hall
Engineering for Kids	Kindra Medina (Tues)	efkbuffalo@engineeringforkids.net	18

2021-22 Parent Board of Directors *Board member duties are listed on page 10. Please e-mail the appropriate Board member with questions about non-educational topics; notes can also be left in the ANS office in the Board member's mailbox.*

<u>Position/Name</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
<u>Executive Board</u>	
Chairperson	chair@amherstnurseryschool.org
Co-Chair	co-chair@amherstnurseryschool.org
Secretary	secretary@amherstnurseryschool.org
Treas (Payables)	payables@amherstnurseryschool.org
Treas (Receivables)	receivables@amherstnurseryschool.org
<u>Non-Voting Board Positions</u>	
Purchaser	purchaser@amherstnurseryschool.org
Fund Raising	fundraising@amherstnurseryschool.org
Marketing	marketing@amherstnurseryschool.org
Social Media	social.media@amherstnurseryschool.org
Participation	participation@amherstnurseryschool.org
Maintenance	maintenance@amherstnurseryschool.org
Social Events	social.events@amherstnurseryschool.org
Technology	techchair@amherstnurseryschool.org
Co-op Liason	co-op@amherstnurseryschool.org

Facility Information

Amherst Nursery School (ANS) leases the east wing of Christ United Methodist Church (CUMC), 350 Saratoga Rd at the corner of Harlem Rd in Snyder. Please use the front entrance at the east (Harlem) end of the building. Enter the building through the far right glass door. Smoking is prohibited at all times inside or outside on church property, especially in the vicinity of the school entrance, playground or garden. Please do not allow your children to run outside on the church property or to go into the landscaped areas.

Security. The outside door to the building will remain open during school hours, but the ANS wing will be secured and locked at all four entry points when school is in session (between 9:30 and 11:45am). To gain access at the main door to the ANS wing, you must press the button to the right of the door to speak to the office. Please stand in front of the camera so we may identify you before buzzing you in. Make sure that the door closes behind you whenever entering or leaving the ANS wing.

Parking. When dropping off and picking up, you may park on Saratoga Rd. or on Harlem Rd. Please note that the area between the signs directly in front of the church entrance is for 15-minute loading/unloading only. Due to the large number of cars trying to find spaces at arrival and dismissal times, a quick departure from your parking space would be helpful. Please park in the church parking lot when you are co-oping or if you will be in the school longer than 1/2 hour. Additionally,

- Do not leave younger siblings unattended in the car or in any area while escorting students to their classrooms.
- Please be considerate of the school's neighbors. We may not use, block, or turn around in their driveways. Do not do 3 point turns in the street, or block the entrance of the parking lot.
- Unauthorized parking in handicapped spaces or church staff spaces in the lot is strictly prohibited.

Days and Hours of Operation. In general, school vacations and holidays follow the calendar of Amherst Central School District. ANS is open Monday through Friday. Classes operate as follows:

2 yr olds	9:15 to 11:45 am Tuesday/Thursday or Wednesday/Friday
3 yr olds	9:15 to 11:45 am Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday
4 yr olds	9:15 to 11:45 am Tuesday through Friday
Fours Plus	9:15 to 11:45 am Mondays (beginning in October) depending on enrollment
Creative Movement	11:45 to 12:15 pm Mondays (2-3 sessions per year)
Spanish	11:45 to 12:15 pm Wednesdays (3 sessions per year)
Soccer Shots	11:45 to 12:15 pm Thursdays and Fridays (3 sessions per year)
Engineering for Kids	11:45 to 12:15 pm Tuesdays (3-4 sessions per year)

In the beginning of the school year, all ANS classes follow an abbreviated schedule to acclimate the children to a full session. ANS 2 and 3 year old classes will be at full session after 4 class days. 4 year old classes will be at full session after 2 class days.

Emergency Closings and Dismissals. ANS will cancel classes due to inclement weather whenever Amherst Central School District does so, or at the discretion of our Education Director. Should there be a need for a cancellation or emergency dismissal, all parents will be contacted by their respective room parents, through the Remind App or email. Please do not call the school directly during an emergency dismissal situation; your room parent or digital media will be your first source of information. We will attempt to notify parents and post announcements to social media as early as possible.

Part II Educational Information

Educational Philosophy

It is our philosophy that young children learn best through play in a secure and happy environment that has been carefully structured to encourage all aspects of development across domains, including cognitive, social, emotional, and motor. We believe that all children learn differently and are unique, and that the classroom environment should foster creativity and exploration. Classrooms are set up in learning centers that children explore and utilize according to their needs and interests. These well-equipped and developmentally appropriate learning centers include areas for reading, science, sensory exploration, math, fine motor activities, art, writing, dramatic play, and block play. Teacher-guided “circle” times and other daily guided activities also provide important learning experiences.

Curriculum and Daily Activities

Our curriculum reflects NY State recommendations for preschool, including the Early Learning Guidelines and the Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core. Teachers incorporate developmentally appropriate practices through weekly themes based on seasons, holidays, early learning concepts, social skills and other topics of general interest to the students. Thematic activities are planned which address many important learning activities (see sheet on Curriculum and Age-Level Goals) and are extremely creative and fun! Thematic fun can be found in the learning centers, at teacher-directed circle time, in art activity choices, and in various teacher supported learning activities.. A typical day at ANS includes self-guided play, center time, arts, group or circle time, music and movement activities, snack time, and a trip to the indoor playroom or outdoor playground.

Field Trips and School Visits

An important part of the ANS curriculum is exposing the children to many varied experiences within the community. Field trips are offered for our four year-old students at the discretion of the Education Director, teachers and ANS Parent Board. Permission slips will be distributed before each field trip by the classroom teacher and must be signed and returned prior to the trip. Each class will arrange its own chaperones; each family is offered the opportunity to chaperone one field trip. Due to safety reasons, school buses will be chartered for all field trips unless the trip is close enough for parent drop-off and pick-up or walking. A field trip fee will be collected from all four year old families prior to each trip. Admission fees for parent chaperones will be collected prior to each trip. Chaperones must provide their own transportation to the destination. All students will ride the bus.

In-school visits by many interesting and entertaining professionals are arranged for all classes. Firefighters, dental hygienists, a storyteller, the Aquarium Touch Tank, farm animals, and others are frequent ANS visitors. Parents who have interests, talents or occupations that may coincide with ANS themes are encouraged to approach their teachers to discuss classroom participation.

Music

All classes will have a 25 minute music class each week. The ANS music teacher will create a developmentally appropriate environment for all children to feel welcome and participate through singing and moving. Mrs. Diana Kane, owner of Creative Connections, is the new ANS music teacher.

Additional and After-School Programs

Fours Plus. An optional enrichment day designed for our present four year old students to extend their week to 5 days in preparation for kindergarten. Fours Plus will be taught by current four year old teaching staff. Students may register for fall, winter and/or spring sessions; Mondays 9:15 – 11:45am.

June Camps. The first 2 to 3 weeks in June, the ANS staff invite our students to become “campers” and join us for a fun-filled week immersed in possible themes such as camping, art, space, cooking, music and more. The campers come Monday through Friday from 9:00am-12:00pm. No co-oping is required.

After School Programs – all meet ½ hour after school. Parents should pick up at 12:15pm

Spanish for Preschoolers. This program is offered to 3 and 4 year old children on Wednesdays. Three sessions are offered throughout the course of the year. Please refer to the Enrichment Company flyer. You must register for each session online.

Soccer Shots. ANS hosts this nationally recognized intro to soccer where fun and character development add to the basic soccer skills that are learned. Offered on Thursdays and Fridays; three sessions per year. See Soccer Shots flyer. Registration is online.

Engineering for Kids. This popular program is a hit for our “Junior Mechanical Engineers” with an interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)! Offered on Tuesdays (four sessions per year) for four year olds only. See Engineering for Kids flyer. Registration is online.

Creative Movement. After-school active fun with moving, shaking, twirling, and exercising. This program is offered on Mondays to 3 and 4 year old children. See Creative Movement flyer. Register through the ANS Office. Three sessions per year.

Staff

ANS has enjoyed an excellent reputation since its establishment in 1938. In large part, this is due to the many dedicated, nurturing and highly competent individuals we have been fortunate to employ as directors, teachers and aides. At present, the ANS teaching staff includes the Education Director, two teachers for 4 year olds, two teachers for 3 year olds, one teacher for two year olds and a Music teacher. Each classroom teacher will be supported full-time by a teacher aide. The Education Director is assisted by an office aide Monday through Friday. The **Education Director**, who is a year-round employee, oversees the staff and has the responsibility for all educational aspects of the school including educational philosophy, curriculum, staff assessment and development, school wide programs and special events, and any specific educational concerns that cannot be resolved by the classroom teacher. The director acts as a liaison between the staff and the ANS Parent Board. Our ANS **classroom teachers** are responsible for planning and implementing daily classroom activities. They create an attractive and engaging environment that reflects appropriate educational aims and inspires social development, cognitive growth, creativity and fun. The teachers ensure that all activities are developmentally appropriate and that the appropriate skills for each age level are addressed during the school year (See Age Appropriate Skill Development Supported by ANS Curriculum). Classroom management is also the responsibility of each teacher whose goal is to encourage healthy social and emotional growth for each child while maintaining a safe and nurturing learning environment for all. An ANS discipline policy is available for parents to view in the office. It is the teacher’s responsibility to communicate with parents and the education director about any developmental or behavioral concerns she may have about a child. Teachers supervise and assign duties to classroom aides and co-oping adults.

Teacher aides are assigned to all classes and will be in the classroom each day to provide support to the teacher and consistency for the students. Aides are a great source of information and co-oping parents are strongly encouraged to observe our aides and pattern their own co-oping behaviors similarly.

NYS Registration

ANS is officially registered with the NYS Department of Education under the provisions of Part 125 of

NYS Education Law that outlines the Voluntary Registration of Non-Public Nursery Schools and Kindergartens. We submit an annual report to the Department and host an onsite visit every five years in order to renew our registration. Nursery schools in New York are not required to register with the state; it is our voluntary decision to comply with their standards, which include parameters for building and facilities, fire and safety regulations, education equipment, health, staff requirements, teacher-pupil ratio, and educational programs. Part 125 may be accessed in full at www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/nurse.html.

Health Information

Health forms must be on file for each child prior to the start of school, including an Immunization Form from your pediatrician with a signed statement that your child is healthy and able to participate in nursery school. Please make sure to inform the teacher and office specifically if your child has or develops any medical condition requiring special monitoring. Medicine such as Benadryl or epi-pens may be kept with the teacher and will be administered if needed in an emergency situation – doctor’s written instructions and dosage information is *required*. *ANS staff are not permitted to administer medications except in an emergency.*

Co-ops and staff must be vigilant in monitoring hand-washing, children’s respiratory hygiene and in keeping shared items or surfaces clean to prevent the spread of illness in the class. If an outbreak of an illness or communicable condition occurs, parents will be informed via email. Class or school closing will be under the guidance of Erie County Health Officials or at the discretion of the Educational Director if absenteeism affects the functioning of the school.

ANS Health Policy. Because we are concerned for the health of your child and other children in the school, ***you must keep your child home when any of the following apply:***

- Elevated temperature, 100 degrees or higher (must be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning)
- A sore throat, and/or excessive coughing and sneezing
- A runny nose with thick white, yellow or green mucus
- Earache or draining ear
- A rash of any kind that has not been diagnosed and declared benign
- Red, runny or matting eye which may indicate “pink eye”
- Started an antibiotic but has been on it for less than 24 hours
- Vomited within the last 24 hours
- Has had symptoms of head lice and has not been declared “nit-free” by a nurse / doctor

Children who come to school with any of the above conditions will not be allowed to remain. If a child becomes sick during school, he or she will be kept comfortable and separated from the other children until the caregiver arrives. Please report any communicable disease or condition (flu, strep throat, chicken pox, head lice, etc) to the office as soon as possible, so that we can alert other parents and staff.

In the event of a public health emergency, both adults and children 2 years of age and older may be required to wear a face mask when on the ANS premises. A brief health screening, consisting of a temperature check and health questions may be administered upon entering the building. ANS will follow the guidance issued from any or all of the following: CDC, NYS, AAP, Erie County, ACSO.

Absence. Please call ANS at 839-0298 before 9:15 am if your child will be absent. Please inform us of any extended absences. If possible, provide your child’s teacher with written notice in advance of the absence.

Snack

Children have snack time each day. It is an important time to sit down together and practice both self-help and conversational skills. Good manners are encouraged. The co-oping parent has the responsibility of bringing a snack and drink for the children and staff in their child's classroom.

***SEE 2021-2022 COVID POLICY FOR TEMPORARY CHANGES**

***** ANS is a tree nut and peanut-free school. Please do not bring any snacks containing tree nuts or peanuts, including peanut or other nut butters, granola bars containing nuts, trail mix, peanut butter crackers, etc. If packaging states that the product may contain tree nuts and/or peanuts (a nut warning), please check with your teacher to see if it will be allowed.**

Food Allergies. Please inform the teacher, office (via health form) and room parent, prior to the start of school, if your child has any allergies to certain foods, as well as other allergies that may be potentially serious (such as insect bites). **Your allergist must provide an action plan to ANS, detailing whether a child is endangered by ingestion, by contact, or by proximity of the allergen (i.e., if food must be restricted from the entire classroom).** If there is a documented food allergy in your child's class, an approved snack list will be provided to you.

***If your child has a food allergy,** please contact the school prior to the parent meeting. We will ask you to provide a list of safe snack suggestions for other parents in the classroom. We will also ask you to stop into the classroom each morning to approve the snack brought in that day. If you prefer, you may leave a supply of safe snacks for your child to choose from if the class snack is unsafe that day.

***If your child has dietary restrictions such as pork or meat,** please let your child's teacher know prior to the start of school.

Healthy Snack Suggestions. Apple slices, veggies and dip, orange slices, cut grapes, strawberries, melon pieces, baby carrots, mandarin orange sections, bananas, pear slices, dry cereal mixtures (no nuts), pretzel rods, string cheese, goldfish or other crackers, breads, cubed cheese, kernelless popcorn, mini muffins, mini bagels and spreads. Please do not make portions overly large due to waste and time considerations. Water is generally the preferred drink (mini bottles or a gallon jug). Birthday snack ideas include cupcakes, cookies, sweet breads, pudding cups, and rice krispie treats. Please let your child's teacher know what you will be bringing ahead of time. A refrigerator is available in the kitchen past the Youth Hall for our use. Cups and napkins are provided at the school.

Medical Emergencies. During school hours, first aid will be administered to students by our staff who are trained in child CPR and first aid by a certified instructor. The parent or authorized adult will be notified as quickly as possible if an injury occurs. If medical attention is required, the staff will call 911 (if authorized by both parents' signatures on Emergency Medical Authorization form) who will direct further care. In this event, every effort will be made to contact the child's parents or pediatrician. **If there are any changes with your child's emergency contact information, please inform the school office immediately.**

Developmental Readiness for School

Readiness Guidelines. Once school begins in September, the teacher will assess your child's readiness for school. (See separate handout - "Readiness Guidelines") If a child is not meeting *or making progress towards* most of these criteria in the first weeks of school, the teacher and education director may conclude that the child is not "ready" for school at this time. Parents will be informed of any concerns right away. Possible courses of action which the teacher and education director might recommend include: 1) referring the child for developmental screening in order to facilitate early intervention; 2) having a parent or caregiver temporarily remain with the child in school; 3) waiting to begin school until January when readiness can be reassessed.

Early Intervention. Teachers may recommend to parents that a child be screened for intervention services due to their observation of possible delays in language, sensory, behavioral or fine motor development. We earnestly hope that parents will pursue this recommendation by contacting their school district's Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) for 3 and 4 year olds or Erie County Early Intervention Services for 2 year olds. Early intervention is very common and truly benefits the child, especially now, at the beginning of his/her educational life. If early intervention services are warranted, therapists are most welcome in the classroom. All personal student information will be kept confidential.

Toileting. ANS expects that most two year old children wear disposable diapers and procedures are in place to accommodate diaper changing for the two year old class. ANS expects three and four year old children to be toilet trained or in the process of training at home. We ask that all children keep a complete change of clothes in their cubby in case of an accident. Three and four year -olds who are not potty trained and whose toileting becomes a frequent disruption to the classroom should wear pull-ups and may be asked to leave the school unless other solutions can be found.

School Day Information

Arrival and Dismissal. All children must be escorted to and from the classroom by a parent or caregiver. If you arrive before the school doors open by 9:15 am or 12:15pm, please wait with your child in the foyer and supervise them diligently. As well as being concerned for the children's safety, we and CUMC cannot tolerate any extra mess in the church foyer, excessive loud noise, or running. Please do not be excessively or chronically late in arrival as this is disruptive to the class, difficult for the teacher, and unfair to your child who will miss important fun and learning. Once you have greeted your teacher in the classroom, help your child to follow the arrival procedures. **After your have said your goodbyes to your child, we ask that parents leave the classroom and school hallways promptly.** Parent social gatherings and conversations are very disruptive to children and staff. Please socialize upstairs in the lobby, outside, or at another location. We appreciate your understanding in helping to curtail this problem. *If your child will be absent, we request that you call the office before 9:15 am or 12:15pm for the afternoon class, so that teachers are not delaying classroom activities to wait for your child's arrival.*

When it is time for pick-up, parents should wait in the foyer until notified that your child's class is ready to be dismissed (or check the "IN" and "OUT" sign on the foyer wall). In most cases, we ask that parents wait in a single file line against the wall outside the classroom door while children are dismissed individually by the teacher in an orderly fashion. ***Again, please do not linger in the classroom after dismissal - teachers need this time to straighten the room and prepare for the next day's work.*** Don't forget to check the teacher's bulletin board for important notices and your child's mailbox for important items to come home.

Alternate Pick-up Authorization. You must indicate in writing if your child is involved in a car pool or if someone other than a parent is going to pick up your child. If you did not include a name on the Alternate Pick up Authorization section of your child's registration form, you may add names throughout the year by writing a note or calling the office. Please notify your teacher as well. Identification will be required, if the person picking up your child is not known to the staff. **PLEASE INFORM any alternate caregiver who may be dropping off or picking up your child of these procedures, especially about waiting in the foyer for class to begin or end.**

Late Pick-up. If you experience an emergency and must be late in picking up your child, call ANS at 839-0298 as soon as possible. Excessive or chronic late pick-ups will not be tolerated; this is unfair to your child and to the staff. Once class is dismissed and a reasonable amount of time has lapsed - no more than 10 minutes - children will have to wait in the ANS office for pick-up. More than two late pick-ups in a three-month period will result in a \$15 fine.

Personal Belongings. Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and sneakers or rubber soled shoes. Daily preschool activities can be active and messy! Smocks are available in class. ANS will not be responsible for damaged clothing. A bag or backpack should be brought to school each day for transporting projects, newsletters and memos. These should be kept in the child's cubby, along with a change of clothes for accidents and emergency purposes. Please do not encourage children to bring their own toys from home, unless needed temporarily to soothe separation anxiety. The teacher may occasionally request that items be brought in for a special project or activity. Please clearly label all of your child's belongings (hat, boots, mittens, tote bags, etc). ANS has a Lost and Found box located in the hallway.

Communication with Parents. The ANS staff makes a concerted effort to communicate effectively and frequently with parents. A school-wide calendar and newsletter will be emailed home monthly. Notices will also be emailed regarding items to be brought from home (such as secret letters, hard-boiled eggs, teddy bears, etc) and reminders about all sorts of school events. To foster classroom communication, teachers will post a monthly schedule of themes and fill out a daily class information sheet which is posted outside each classroom door. Please take the time to read what happened during the day when you pick up your child - it can make for some enlightening conversations in the car or at dinner that night! And, it will let your child know that his or her school experiences are important and interesting to you. You may be able to extend the learning at home or inspire curiosity about upcoming themes, which will make the educational experience even richer. You will want to explore our Facebook page and the ANS website, amherstnurseryschool.org. Emergency information, important reminders, upcoming events will be communicated via email or on the Remind App. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU HAVE PROVIDED US WITH AN EMAIL ADDRESS WHICH YOU CHECK FREQUENTLY. If you are unable to access email, please inform the office so we can provide you with paper copies.

Classroom teachers welcome discussion of educational ideas, concerns or questions about the class or your child. If teachers are not free to talk with you at drop-off or pick-up time, please understand that teachers must maintain discretion when discussing students and they are responsible for the entire class until all students are dismissed. Please inform the teacher in advance if you desire an extended private conference after dismissal. If your educational concern is not resolved, please contact the Education Director at any time. ***The best method to communicate privately with teachers is by emailing them.*** Email addresses are found on each class's roster. The school email is amherstnurseryschool@verizon.net if you need to communicate with the office (or call 839-0298). Parent-Teacher conferences for ANS students will be held in March. If you would like to discuss any educational concerns with your child's teacher before the conference date, please do not hesitate to schedule an appointment.

Part III Non-Educational Matters

ANS Parent Board of Directors

The Parent Board oversees the business operation and non-educational policy aspects of ANS. In addition, the Board runs many extracurricular social events and programs for families. The volunteer positions and their duties are as follows:

<i>Chairperson</i>	Sets agenda & chairs meetings; prepares staff contracts
<i>Co-op Liaison</i>	Organizes Fall Meeting; oversees room parents, co-oping
<i>Secretary</i>	Takes & distributes meeting minutes; updates Parent Handbook
<i>Receivables Treasurer</i>	Collects tuition, fees and fines
<i>Payables Treasurer</i>	Pays all salaries, bills & reimbursements, meets with accountant
<i>Fundraising</i>	Selects & runs fundraisers (2 positions)
<i>Purchaser</i>	Purchases materials & supplies
<i>Membership</i>	Organizes Get Acquainted Coffee Hours, Open House & Registration
<i>Participation Coordinator</i>	Organizes & records parent commitment jobs
<i>House Maintenance</i>	Oversees cleaning, maintenance & repairs
<i>Marketing</i>	Places ads, distributes flyers & other publicity materials
<i>Social Media</i>	Oversees website updates & other social media needs
<i>Social Events</i>	Organizes family social events throughout the year
<i>Technology</i>	Oversees all technology for ANS

The ANS staff respectfully requests that parents having concerns or comments relating to Parent Board responsibilities make every effort to bring that concern directly to the appropriate Parent Board member or the Chairperson. These sorts of concerns include fundraising questions, tuition, fees, fines, co-op scheduling, most participation commitment jobs, board sponsored events, house maintenance, etc. Members can be contacted by email or by leaving written messages in their mailboxes in the office. Emails are listed on page 2.

The Parent Board meets monthly year round, one evening of every month at the school. A meeting date and time will be agreed upon by current board members. The date of the upcoming meeting will be posted on the monthly calendar. Meetings are open to all ANS parents and staff members. If a parent would like to present a specific issue to the board, they should notify the chairperson a week before the meeting to request an addition to the agenda. The parent must either attend the meeting or submit their issue in writing for Board consideration. Non-voting board members will attend board meetings and may voice their opinions. Executive Board members vote on behalf of the board and parent body.

Board Sponsored Events/Programs. The Parent Board is responsible for organizing several events throughout the year that benefit the school. Included in these are: the Playground Meet-Up, Fall Parents' Meeting, Room Parents' Meeting, Fall and Mid-Year Indoor and Outdoor Clean-Ups, Get Acquainted Coffees, Cookies & Cocoa with Santa, Movie Nights, Open House, and Spring Dinner.

Pre-Registration and Open Enrollment Periods

ANS families will receive notice about pre-registration for the following school year in early January, preceding the Open House. During a two-week period, current ANS students and siblings may submit applications and deposits (see below) to reserve a spot in their preferred section of the next year's classes (although specific teachers may not be requested). Pre-registration is a benefit due to the probability that some ANS classes will fill up quickly at the February Open House.

Open enrollment. New students will be allowed to enter an ANS class if there is availability, during the months of September, October and January (although exceptions for 4 year old students may be made on an individual

basis). They must meet age eligibility requirements: for 4-year old classes, children must be 4 by Dec 1; for 3-year-old classes, children must be 3 by Dec 1; for 2-year-old classes, children must be 2 by Oct 1. Children who turn 2 between Nov 1 and Dec 1 are eligible for admittance to a two year old class in January, if a spot is available. Siblings of existing students are given priority.

Tuition and Fees

ANS tuition is determined by the number of hours per week a child is in school. If siblings are enrolled, the younger child's tuition is discounted by 10%. A non-refundable deposit is required at registration and is credited towards tuition. Tuition (less deposit) is payable in four installments, usually due May 1, Sept 1, Dec 1 and Feb 1. **Tuition payments are to be made in the form of a check or money order. No cash payments will be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made.** The Receivables Treasurer of the Parent Board will notify parents of exact dollar amounts for each payment at least two weeks before the due date. Please make all payments by the due date. Payments are essential in keeping our school running smoothly. If a family has need, the Receivables Treasurer can arrange an alternate payment schedule. As stated in the Application/Agreement form, our tuition policy is:

- Any tuition outstanding 14 days past due date will result in a \$25 fine.
- Any tuition outstanding 28 days past due date may result in child's dismissal from school and inability to participate in optional programs available through ANS. If the child is registered for the following year at ANS, his/her place will be revoked.
- Any outstanding tuition or fees after May 1, 2022 may result in legal action.

ANS is responsible for collecting all tuition, fines and fees. Payments may be put in the board mailbox in the ANS Office or in the locked mailbox in the school foyer. Possible fines include: \$15 for excessive late pick-up, \$25 for a returned check, \$25 for failing to co-op or provide a substitute; \$200 fine for failing to complete a 4 hr participation commitment. All payments are to be made in the form of a check or money order. Cash payments will be accepted if a prior agreement has been made with the treasurer.

Refunds - a prorated refund of tuition (not including deposit) or any installment thereof will be made under only one of the circumstances below. For prorated calculation purposes, the school year begins on the day of the Fall Parents' meeting. A written request for tuition reimbursement may be submitted to the parent board. Individual cases will be considered at the next board meeting and are at the discretion of the parent board.

1. Withdrawal of the child for medical reasons certified by a physician
2. The Teacher and Education Director decide that the withdrawal is in the best interests of the child and school

Withdrawals

Should a child withdraw from the school during the school year for reasons other than those listed above, no refunds will be given.

*Refunds will not be granted for reasons such as moving, changing programs, or acceptance into UPK.

****See new COVID/Health Emergency Policy on withdrawal/refunds/closure on page 20-21.***

Deposits

All deposits are non-refundable. Beginning in 2022-23, deposits will increase to \$250.

Fundraisers

At ANS we try to keep tuition as affordable as possible; it covers only the essential operating costs of our school. Because of this, monies received through fundraising have greatly enhanced ANS over the years, allowing us to purchase larger items such as a state of the art security system, playroom equipment, carpets, furniture and office equipment as well as adding to our wonderful selection of educational toys, books, music, supplies and playroom equipment. Fundraising allows us to leave ANS a little better than we found it each year. Rather than asking each family to sell things throughout the year, from which ANS only receives a small percentage, we do an “Armchair” style fundraiser for the month of October with a goal of raising \$15,000 for the year. Every year is a little bit different, but it’s a fun community building experience. It is also a chance for us to spotlight businesses and the talents of our parent body.

ANS participates in the Scholastic Book Program that makes books and other educational items available for families to purchase at moderate costs. Generally, ordering and distribution occurs every month or two, or at the discretion of our Scholastic Book Coordinator (a non-Board position). On-line ordering is highly popular – our school code is GPPHG. Based on the number and amount of orders our parents submit, ANS accumulates bonus points which can be used to obtain books for the classroom, teacher resource material, and other school needs such as CD players and big book easels. You are encouraged to take advantage of the Scholastic Book Program when you would like to purchase books.

Soliciting on School Premises. All solicitation must be authorized by the ANS Parent Board. The class roster and children’s mailboxes are provided for school purposes only. No solicitation of school families or staff members is allowed by phone, e-mail or by distributing printed information.

Participation Commitment to School

In the cooperative spirit and to enhance the programs, experiences and events at ANS, we require a minimum participation commitment of four hours per year from each member family. Your commitment may be fulfilled by working at one or more events such as a social event, the major annual fundraiser, or school-wide clean-up, by volunteering to make play dough for the classes, or in a host of other ways in school or at home. You are also free to come up with your own ideas of ways you might best serve ANS. Families must sign up for their parent commitment choice by the end of September. Jobs still in need after the sign up period will be assigned to parents who failed to sign up. Failure to complete your minimum four-hour service commitment will result in a \$200 fine.

Publicity

The good word of past and current families is our most valuable form of publicity. We feel that we have a special school, where all families are embraced and where young children thrive across all developmental domains under the guidance of our highly qualified staff. Your recommendation to other friends and relatives is much appreciated. Please invite them to our Open House and Registration the first Saturday in February for the following year or to fill vacant spots in current classes during the open enrollment months of September, October, and January.

ANS Publicity Release. By completing this form, you authorize or prohibit the use of your child’s photo in print media, on the ANS website or on the ANS Facebook page.

Remind App. Each class will use the Remind App to communicate with families. This app also allows the director and parent board to communicate important information and reminders to the whole school.

Paid Parent Jobs

Paid Helpers. Paid helpers agree to keep one or more mornings per week available to work as substitute co-ops for ANS parents who find they are unable to keep their co-oping commitment at the last minute. A Paid Helper List is compiled and distributed to parents along with their co-op schedules. When emergencies arise, and other avenues have been exhausted, the “hiring” parent will contact the paid helper(s) who have signed up to be available that day of the week. The paid helper signs in at the office and then reports to the teacher. The “hiring” parent will pay \$20 for the services of the paid helper and should bring that money to the office on their child’s next school day.

ANS Parent Code of Conduct

In response to parent concerns, the ANS Parent Board created a Parent Code of Conduct in 2012, which is enumerated on the Application/Agreement Form and your Confirmation of Enrollment. All parents have signed this form in order to register their child. Unacceptable behaviors include: cursing or swearing, using violence or acting in a threatening manner, smoking on school property, quarreling with parents or staff, interfering with staff, violating confidentiality about children or parents, posting photos of children on social media without parent’s consent. See Social Media Guidelines. Failure to comply with the code of conduct will be reviewed by the Parent Board and appropriate action taken at their discretion.

*Parents/Guardians will be required to sign a form acknowledging that they have read the parent handbook and agree to the Parent’s Code of Conduct.

Child Abuse/Molestation Policy

ANS teachers and the director are mandated by NYS to report possible cases of child abuse and neglect. Staff members are aware of physical and behavioral indicators of possible physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect or maltreatment.

Non-discrimination Policy as to Students

The Amherst Nursery School welcomes families and admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, sex, marital status, disability, and age in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Diversity and Personal Respect

The Amherst Nursery School embraces diversity and values the integrity of the individual. Individual differences of religion, culture, socioeconomic status, national origin, race, ethnicity, biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical appearance, and ability are acknowledged and respected. Every member of the community strives to behave in a sensitive, open, and respectful manner. A diverse student body is an essential component of an experiential education. Students are most able to understand, appreciate, and respect differences in a setting that includes these differences. Amherst Nursery seeks a diverse community in order to fulfill its mission to provide a strong education for all students.

EEO Statement

The Amherst Nursery School is an equal opportunity employer dedicated to a policy of non-discrimination based on the race, color, creed, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, pregnancy, transgender, transsexualism, sexual orientation, age, national origin, citizenship, primary language, military or veteran status, physical handicap, disability, medical condition, mental disability, genetic characteristic or information, ancestry, or based on any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws.

Weapons Policy. Under no circumstances may a firearm or weapon be brought into the building.

Part IV Co-oping

The Co-op Liaison of the Parent Board has the responsibility for all issues surrounding co-oping, including instructions for room parents, the paid helper system, co-op scheduling and co-oping guidelines.

Room Parents. Each class at ANS has a room parent whose primary responsibility is to facilitate and coordinate the co-oping schedule via www.SignUpGenius.com on a monthly basis. Room parents are also a source of information about good co-oping and contribute to class harmony by their helpfulness and positive attitudes. Room parents are responsible for communicating important information to parents in their class, organizing special activities, and collecting monies for teacher and aide gifts.

Co-op Scheduling

Each child's family will be required to co-op once per cycle. A cycle is defined as the number of co-oping days equal to the amount of children in the classroom. Co-op schedules will be parent centered, allowing parents to sign up for a date that is convenient for their family. Co-op schedules will be created on a monthly basis. Each room parent will activate the co-oping schedule on www.SignUpGenius.com on the 1st of the previous month. Parents will have 1 week to sign up for 1 co-oping slot for the month. The room parents will review the co-oping schedule on the 7th of each month to see if the schedule is complete. If additional co-oping slots are available, the room parent will send an email to parents asking them to sign up for additional co-oping days. If by the 14th of the month, co-oping slots still remain available, the room parent will assign families to those co-oping slots on a rotating basis. Each family will then be informed by the room parents the additional days they have been assigned. If the co-oping schedule does not allow for every family to co-op during a particular month, those families not assigned during the month prior will have first choice for co-oping the following month. Co-operators provide healthy snacks and drink as indicated on the schedule.

For the first month or two of school, most classes require two scheduled co-operators. Room parents will work with teachers to transition the schedule to one co-operator. A paper calendar will be filled in the evening of the Fall Parents' Meeting to assign co-op dates for the month of September only. Immediately following the Fall Parents' Meeting, parents will receive an email prompting them to create an account at www.SignUpGenius.com and have access to signing up for co-oping slots for the month of October. It is important that parents understand that once the co-oping schedule is reduced to one required parent per day, they are still welcome to sign up as an optional co-operator if there is additional availability. In fact, on some special days throughout the year, two co-operators will be requested.

Families with Multiple Children in the School and Other Special Circumstances

Families with multiple children in the school (of the same or different ages) are expected to co-op once

for *each child* during his/her classroom co-oping cycle. When parents of multiple children are unable to fulfill their co-oping responsibilities themselves, ANS encourages them to consider sending alternate family members/caregivers or hiring one of the ANS paid co-ops to complete some of the family's co-oping duties.

The room parent may use teacher input or his/her discretion to handle any exceptions due to hardships that may cause a disruption in the ability of a family to cover their co-oping duties, *while not creating a burden for any other family within the classroom.*

Birthday Scheduling. If a child's birthday occurs during the school year (Sept - May), every effort will be made to schedule a co-oping date to celebrate it close to the actual date. However, we will refrain from celebrating any birthdays on days of class parties, field trips or during the last week of school. Summer birthdays will be celebrated during the year, as close to the child's half birthdate as possible, or at a time specified by your teacher. Use our healthy snack list for healthy birthday snack ideas. Please do not bring extra party items, such as favors, for the class, as this quickly becomes competitive. Birthday candles are prohibited.

Changing the Co-op Schedule. It is mandatory that all scheduled co-oping positions be filled. If you find that you cannot work on the day you are scheduled, you are responsible for providing an alternate co-oping adult. Once the published co-oping schedule is posted, changes need to be made by the parent, not the room parent. Please be aware that a co-oping parent may not bring another child to school while co-oping. Any parent who does so will be turned away to the detriment of their child's classroom and a fine of \$25.00 will be imposed. Our preference for finding substitute co-ops is as follows:

- Switch co-oping days with another parent in the classroom. In other words, call another parent and see if he/she can work for you and you can work for them another day. You may have to call several, or all, of the parents in your class to find a "switch." Please try very hard. "Switching" gives the benefit of having the co-oping adult be someone who is familiar with the children and teacher and who knows the class routine. If the switch is done ahead of time, make sure the teacher and room parent are informed and make the switch on their co-oping schedules.
- Enlist the help of a relative or trusted sitter to fill in for you.
- Hire a "paid helper" from the list that will be distributed with your schedule. This option should be reserved strictly for last minute emergencies. The fee for hiring a paid helper is \$20.00 which is due in the ANS Office on your child's next day of school.

In order to cover the cost of increased staff hours, you will be charged a \$25.00 fee if you fail to co-op as scheduled or to provide a substitute, even if circumstances are totally beyond your control. Additionally, you will be required to replace the snack supplies utilized by the classroom.

Co-oping Guidelines

Come to school with a clear focus - the children. Enjoy them! Encourage their creativity at free play and art and help initiate discussion at snack time. Have positive interactions with all children giving them equal attention. SMILE, BE ENTHUSIASTIC, LEARN AND USE THE CHILDREN'S NAMES. **Co-oping provides a unique window as we watch our children learn and grow. Along with this pleasure and privilege, you assume the responsibility for being an attentive and caring co-op.**

Therefore, you MUST NOT:

- Socialize with the adults rather than giving that attention to the children
- Conduct business or social affairs on a cell phone or leave the class to do so
- Bring other children to school with you when co-oping
- Bring cups of hot beverages into the classroom
- Violate the social media guidelines below

Social Media Guidelines. Photos or videos of the class may not be posted to any personal social media account. The Parent Board will set up a private site for each ANS class which all classroom parents will be invited to join. If parents do not want their child to be photographed for this private site, their names will appear on a “NO PHOTOS” list in each classroom. You must check this list and refrain from photographing any children on it for social media sharing, including on the private classroom site.

The Co-oping Day. Co-oping parents and children need to arrive ten minutes prior to the start of class (9:05 am). Ask your teacher about specific duties that may be needed that day.

Children Arrive. Greet and welcome each child by name with a warm smile. Eye level communication is encouraged. Be aware of the classroom dynamics - if the teacher or aide is soothing a child who is having separation difficulties, quietly ask if you can step in to help in other ways.

(Order of events listed below may vary)

Free Play/Center Time. Interact with the children working on puzzles, building blocks, etc. Please do not stand by and simply watch! Help children use words to resolve conflicts about sharing, etc. with their classmates. If a child seems hesitant to join in, help that child feel comfortable and gently encourage them to play with you (and other children, of course). Keep a vigilant eye on any possible safety concerns, such as a wooden block tower getting too high or someone getting ready to throw a toy! Step in and redirect. Look for cues about children needing to use the bathroom or a tissue and assist them. Assist at activity tables according to the teacher's instructions. Help children to hold their pencils and scissors correctly. Encourage children to make their own projects. *Remember the process the children are engaged in is much more significant than our grown up opinion of the final product!* Label the craft with a child's name. Help with smocks at the easel. Help children to wash and dry their hands if needed.

Circle or Group Time/Music Class. Encourage relaxation and good listening behaviors. Please monitor class for children who need help quieting down and sit with them or next to them. Refrain from talking louder than the teacher when trying to help a child relax. Model participation by joining in with songs, dances, games and fingerplays. Encourage children to take turns and to listen when others are speaking. Attend to children who need a shoe tied or a tissue. It's greatly appreciated when co-ops take care of these non-educational jobs for the staff whenever possible.

Clean Up. Learn the clean- up song and join in. Help each child find something to put away so they can participate and feel proud of their clean room. Clean the activity tables with a disinfectant wipe, especially before snack. Check the floor and sweep (especially under the tables after art and snack, and under the sensory table after free play).

Toileting. Parents may accompany their own child to the bathroom. Staff members will assist all other students in the bathroom. If the child requires a staff member to enter the bathroom, the door will be propped open. At no time is an adult to be alone with a non-related child in the bathroom with the door closed. When taking your child to the bathroom, please remind him/her to flush and wash hands. For two year-olds in diapers, two adult staff members will be present to change the diaper.

Playroom. Review the rules posted in the playroom and remind the children, if necessary, using positive words rather than negatives. Supervise safe play while having fun with the children. Engage in their imaginary scenarios if they desire or play a game of catch. Help children with social interactions as during free play in the classroom. One adult should be stationed at the climbing apparatus when in use. One adult should supervise children using riding toys in the hall. Please reinforce the often stated rules, “Only slide down the slide on your

bottom” “Hold on to the handle of the trampoline when jumping,” “We only use the hippity-hops in the playroom, not in the hall.”

Snack Time. Make sure snack tables have been cleaned with a disinfectant product. Snack parent (with child if desired) should set tables with napkin, snack and a cup of drink for each child and adult. Our four year olds enjoy pouring their own drink. Please fill the provided plastic containers halfway and place one on each snack table. All children need to wash hands before snack. One adult should sit at each table, so he/she can help all the children contribute to an enjoyable conversation. When everyone has been seated, join in the snack “Thank you” song and “dig in!” Co-ops should help bring “seconds” around. Children are normally expected to clean up their own places; help to remind them to do so. Complete a more thorough clean up after children have done their part.

Dismissal. At teacher or aide direction, put artwork, projects and memos in mailboxes. Monitor the hall while children get belongings from their cubbies. Encourage self-help in dressing, but be happy to assist. When the teacher indicates, one parent should call parents in from the foyer for dismissal and switch the magnet on the IN and OUT Board. After dismissal, please empty the trash can and replace the liner in the classroom and bathroom. Trash can be discarded in the large garbage can in the back hallway. A vacuum cleaner is also available in the supply room. Plastic, glass, cans and clean cardboard can be placed in the blue recycling bin in the back hallway.

Donations and Supplies

Supply list. Each summer the teachers get together a short supply list of items needed for use in the classrooms. Parents are asked to bring the items to the Fall Parents’ meeting, or you may choose to opt out of providing supplies with a \$25.00 contribution. If supplies are depleted, another supply request may be issued in the spring.

**** 2021-2022 school year- ANS will be collecting a \$25 supply fee for each child. This fee will be added to the tuition payment due September 1, 2021.** Our supply needs are different this year, due to Covid-19, and we feel it is easier and safer if we purchase the supplies ourselves.

Some of the items that we will be purchasing include:

Crayons, markers, glue, glue sticks, pencils, journals, individual school supply boxes, various sizes of Ziploc bags, baby wipes, paper towels, tissues, hand sanitizer, antibacterial wipes, Lysol, disposable masks, gloves, watercolor paints, scissors,

ANS Wish List

Other items are frequently needed in school. Your contributions help to defray costs, keep our children safe and healthy, and make our program and facilities even better. Your donations are greatly appreciated.

Donation Ideas

New bagless vacuum cleaner
new brooms with dustpans
playground climbing equipment
new riding toys for the playroom
new sandbox toys (shovels, pails, scoopers)
bags of play sand
sidewalk chalk
large containers of bubble soap



ANS Recipes to try at home:

***Colored Rice/Pasta How To:** Put 2 tsp. food coloring & 3 tsp. rubbing alcohol in a ziploc bag and fill $\frac{3}{4}$ full with pasta or rice. Knead to distribute color.

ANS Playdough Recipe –

1 cup flour, 1 cup water, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt, 2 tsp cream of tartar, 1 tbsp vegetable oil, food coloring
spice, oil, or kool-aid for scent (optional)

Mix water & food coloring in a pan on low. When hot, remove from heat and add flour, salt, cream of tartar, oil, and scent (if desired). Mix until dough sticks together. Drop onto a plate and knead until very smooth (no lumps). Store in a sealed container.

Part V

2021-2022 Covid/Emergency Policies

I. COVID-19 Vaccine and Masks

Amherst Nursery School will require all staff, parent board members, parents/guardians, caretakers, vendors or other visitors to wear a mask when on the ANS premises. All staff will be required to submit documentation of vaccination prior to the start of the school year. Amherst Nursery School reserves the right to request official documentation (at any point asked) from any person or individual that does not properly wear a mask within the school itself. Amherst Nursery School is a community that thrives on cooperation, trust, and a loving and caring environment. Our main concern is with the safety of our students, who are unable to be vaccinated at this time. ANS follows the guidance of any or all of the following: CDC, AAP, NYS, Erie County and the Amherst School district.

*ANS reserves the right to change or relax this policy based on current data and information from the aforementioned agencies. At the discretion of the parent board, should more dire, favorable, or unclear virus/pandemic circumstances arise in the school year, we reserve the right to revise, reverse, or strengthen preventative measures to keep the whole of the community healthy." (or something like that?)

II. Refunds: Amherst Nursery School's budget and finances are directly tied to tuition and the number of students enrolled. We can only open classrooms that have a set number of students enrolled. If we drop below that amount, the school is unable to operate in a fiscally sound manner. As a result:

- A) If any family member is unable to produce valid confirmation of vaccination status and refuses to wear a mask, they may be asked to leave the school. Any payments already paid to the school will not be refunded as they do not abide by the policy requirements.
- B) Any funds already paid to the school will not be refunded, should the school be unable to reopen due to a public health emergency. Factors influencing this decision are at the discretion of the school board, but will be based on potential COVID-19 positive cases within the school, or also informed by either: the United States government (federal law, executive order, CDC guidance, or any other regulatory/enforcement body, etc.), New York State (state law, executive order, Department of Health or any other or any other regulatory/enforcement body, etc.), Erie County (county law, executive order, Department of Health or any other or any other regulatory/enforcement body, etc.) or the Amherst Central School District.

- I. **Should the School Close:** Should the school be required to close based on the possibilities outlined in the bullet points II-A and II-B, *the school will transition to an online format*, facilitated by teachers and aides. This format will occur at the start of the following week. The virtual program would be developed by ANS staff, but primarily facilitated by a child's parent/guardian/etc. The virtual program would consist of pre-recorded video links from your child's teacher and aide, followed by a live Zoom call once a week. Lessons will be provided each day of the week that your child(children) is enrolled in school. There will also be a weekly music video. Staff will prepare at home bags for each student, to be picked up by the parent/guardian on specified days.

In the event that ANS must transfer online for virtual instruction, as laid out above, we will continue to do so until the next tuition payment is due. We reserve the right to re-evaluate the virtual program after 6 weeks, and no refunds will be given as stated above in II. At that time, ANS may continue to provide virtual instruction at a discounted rate, or discontinue instruction altogether, until in-person instruction can be offered safely in accordance with federal, state, county, and CDC guidelines. These decisions will be made as needed by the parent board, and we will welcome your input as the parent community.

II. **Illness**

In the event of a student or staff member becoming ill, we will follow the guidelines from the Amherst Central School District. If the absence is due to illness, a note from the pediatrician, a negative COVID test, or a quarantine of 10 days will be required to return to school.

****-2021-22 Snack Policy**- Due to COVID-19 concerns, we feel it is safest to bring snacks that are:

1. Individually wrapped and purchased from the store.
2. In an unopened container or bag from the grocery store (such as a bag of goldfish, pretzels, cereal...).
3. Special birthday treats may be brought in provided they are purchased and unopened (eg.-cupcakes, cookies). No homemade treats are permitted at this time.

****Snacks will either be sent home with children at the end of the morning, or consumed outside, weather permitting until further notice.***