



VILLAGE GREEN *the gazette*

**VOLUME 43 • ISSUE 1
SEPTEMBER 2023**



WELCOME

The staff at Village Green Preschool welcomes all our new and returning preschoolers and their families to our program. After a busy summer of planning and preparation, the first days of preschool went well (considering Tuesday's closing due to local flooding!) As the year progresses, we look forward to getting to know you and your children better. We are confident that this year will be a positive and enriching experience for both you and your child.

For parents of children who are new to VGP - these first few weeks represent a time of separation and adjustment for your child, more difficult for some than others. We suggest a warm goodbye and then leaving the classroom quickly, resisting the urge to linger, but don't sneak out either. If your child is upset, be sure to leave him/her with a teacher before you go. We do ask all parents to please exit the classroom using the door at the far end of the classroom as it helps to relieve congestion near the entrance door.

Classroom Security

The three classroom doors leading into the preschool room, including the main door off the entry foyer, will always be locked when class is in session. If it is closed, it is locked! Should you arrive while class is in session, please go directly to the Director's office & you will be escorted to the preschool room. Although it may seem inconvenient if you arrive late, this is done for security purposes and is in keeping with the "Safe Church Policy" of First Church. Please check with Karen if you have any questions.

Parent-Teacher Communication

It is important to all the staff at Village Green to foster a strong home/school connection for the benefit of our children. We encourage parents to email, phone or speak with Karen or the teachers at any time. Your questions, ideas and suggestions are valued and welcome. Brief conversations with teachers are always possible at pick-up and drop-off or parents can arrange for a more private meeting time with a teacher if needed.

Preschool Website

Our website is an excellent source of information for both prospective and current families. Check out documents on our Resources page including theme calendars and newsletters. A password protected Class Information page also provides current class lists and snack schedules. Don't forget to utilize this handy tool!

www.villagegreenpreschool.org

Snapshots

We take a variety of photos or videos of the children at preschool. The purpose of these is to display for VGP parents, use on the VGP website (no identifying names) and also for the children to enjoy. If you object in any way to having your child photographed while he/she participates in preschool activities, please provide a written note to Karen. Children's names are never identified in photos.

Teachers will be uploading photos to the website to share with families! Photos are shared by class day (TuTh or MWF) under the password protected 'Class Information' tab on the 'Current Families' header on the website! The photos are provided privately to our families and the intent is that only VGP families and teachers will be able to access them. For privacy, and out of respect for other families, please do not post the photos publicly unless your child is the only one in the photo. Please be patient as teachers find time to upload images. We hope families will enjoy getting a peek of our time in the classroom!

Program Goals for 2023-24 School Year

Following discussion and input from the teaching staff, comments from the Developmental History Forms completed by our preschool families "What would you like your child to gain from their preschool experience this year?" and the annual program evaluation last spring, we have set the following goals for the upcoming 2023-24 school year:

- To facilitate and encourage positive social relationships and interactions of all the children built on an appreciation for the diversity and value each child brings to our program at Village Green
- To provide a balanced curriculum that recognizes the importance of play in the lives of young children while incorporating the readiness skills necessary (emotional, social and academic) for their future school success
- To have an increased emphasis on literacy and language with our four-to five-year-old children through a wide variety of planned activities and games
- To focus on the ongoing assessment of each child to better meet his/her individual needs and more appropriately inform curriculum planning with special attention to the expectations in today's kindergarten programs
- To continue our emphasis on building a strong sense of community among Village Green families and further enhance parent/teacher communication
- To continually review and reassess all policies and procedures at Village Green that we may provide a program that successfully meets the very best practices in early childhood education today



Parent Advisory Board

We have a board of parent volunteers who help to set policies, oversee the maintenance of the classroom and playground, lead and execute fundraisers. You may receive emails from the Parent Advisory Board (vgpparentboard@gmail.com) regarding events, fundraising, and volunteer opportunities. As a way to facilitate communication and answer some of the many questions that may arise, several of our Board members have offered to serve as "Room Parents" for the school year. Feel free to email your child's Room Parent with questions or comments you feel do not need to be brought to a staff member.

Room Parents

Thank you to all of our wonderful Room Parents and Parent Advisory Board members for Purchasing snacks for the playdates, helping at the play dates, providing food for the Parent Coffees, and assisting at the Play Dates and Parent Coffees. Thank you for all that you do!

Snacks

Village Green Preschool enjoys a 'family style' snack, which we carry-out in specific ways to foster growth and development. Eating snack together is more about enhancing social and fine motor skills and sharpening our use of manners than it is about eating. With a communal snack, the children learn to serve themselves, pour their own water and spend a few moments getting to know classmates at the snack table. We have found that even "picky eaters" end up trying new things and at the very least will take a moment to have a drink of water with friends and the teacher. The shared snack has worked well at VGP for many years. Traditionally, the only children who should bring a snack each day are those with food allergies or sensitivities. Please see 'Food Allergies' for those who need to bring an individual snack daily.

What to bring - we emphasize healthy options (cut fruits or fresh vegetables, mini muffins, yogurt, cheese sticks, etc.) As always, no nuts or nut products, including nut butters, are allowed at school. The snack helper will be contacted by the snack teacher a week or two prior to their scheduled snack day. Please bring snack to the back door with your child where they are greeted by the teachers and can start their preschool day.

Food Allergies

We ask all parents keep us updated on any changes to food allergies and sensitivities for your child. We need to be sure that our list is current and accurate. The snack item is posted on the bulletin board in the foyer – please get used to checking the posted snack. If your child has food allergies, please leave a separate snack (labeled with your child's name) in their backpack. If your child is unable to eat the snack that was brought in to share, please bring the backpack snack to the snack teacher. As another reminder –nuts and nut products, including nut butters, are never allowed at preschool snack or Lunch Bunch.

TuTh AM Class	Jillian Stillman	jnosel.kennedy@gmail.com
TuTh PM Class	Patty O'Keefe	ppisini@gmail.com
MWF AM Class	Juliet Matte	julietmatteyoga@gmail.com
MWF PM Class	Holli Hepburn	hollirow@gmail.com

Observation Door

By now, you have probably found that the back door to the classroom has a one-way mirror for observation. We hope this provides you a peace of mind to watch your child interact and adjust at the beginning of their day. You are welcome to watch for a time, but please remember that your voices can be heard in the classroom and your outline can be witnessed from inside the classroom. Please be mindful as you interact with other parents while observing.



Playground Improvements

Over the summer, the sandbox in the playground was moved to allow room for storage structure improvements. James Stillman and his crew from [Stillman Landscape](#) donated their time and materials to create the new sand area, level the slope and improve drainage. We can't thank them enough for doing such a beautiful job for us! The fencing and new storage structure improvements will take place over the course of the school year or next summer.

Dismissal Procedure

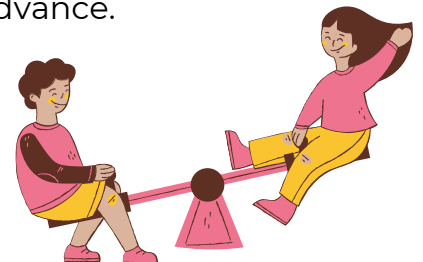
If possible, please come inside the building first to retrieve backpacks and items from your child's cubby (which will be relocated daily into the foyer.) Remember to sign out! All children will be dismissed directly from the playground. If you arrive early and want to watch, we ask that you do so along the fence near the library. Once teachers begin to dismiss all the children, be sure you are near the gate area to greet your child. Teachers watch your child go directly to you, so please practice this safe procedure. If we are not outdoors, please retrieve items from their hook and cubby and wait for the door to be opened. Children will be dismissed in small groups from the classroom. Please move toward the door to make it easier for your child to find you. To avoid hallways congestion, everyone is encouraged to depart quickly.

Playground Walkway

We would like to remind all families to please use the access driveway between the church and the library when going to and from the playground. Please also watch for vehicles leaving the new parking spaces on the lawn. We appreciate your cooperation with this attempt to make the driveway safe for all to use. Please also refrain from playing on the church lawn or steps - a happy alternative is to cross over to the town common to play with friends.

Early Dismissal

Should you ever need to pick up your child before our scheduled dismissal, do not hesitate to do so! At the playground, simply let the Lead Teacher know and she will retrieve your child. If we are still in the classroom, go directly to the preschool office and Karen will escort you to the classroom. Whenever possible, please notify Karen and the Lead Teacher of your plans in advance.

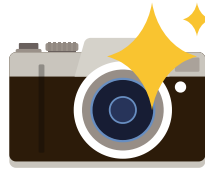


Orchard Field Trip

We will visit Clearview Farm at 4 Kendall Hill Road in Sterling with families on Th., Sept. 28th or Fri., Sept. 29th **in the morning only** (9:30-11:30). The fee to attend is \$14.50 per child, parents do not have to attend but need to provide transportation. If your child attends on Th. and Fri., you can attend either or both of those sessions. However, payment for each session must be received. Class sessions will be held at the preschool in the afternoons on both days, but Lunch Bunch will not be held on either day. If cancelled, preschool will be held at the usual times. Please see separate email for all of the details.

School Pictures

School photographer, Nancy Terlato, will be returning to VGP again this year on Oct. 12 & 13 to take both individual and class pictures of the children. Nancy has a calming way with the children and captures multiple images of each child. Look for a signup sheet on the parent bulletin board in the foyer next month for "Family Photo Day" which will be held on Sat., Oct. 14th. There is no sitting fee for the family photos and Nancy offers the same package pricing for those as she does for the school photos. A detailed flyer will be sent home in early October.



Save the Dates

Family Night & Food Drive Held October 6th

We hope you will save the date of Friday, October 6th, for our annual preschool "Family Night and Food Drive". This year, the event will be held outside at Memorial Park in Sterling (located directly behind the fire station.) Rain date is Saturday, October 7th at 5PM. We ask that you arrive between 4:30 and 4:45 - the entertainment begins at 5:00 PM. This year's program features marionette and puppeteer John McDonough of Pumpernickel Puppets, whose special marionettes will sing, dance, and entertain for approximately 35 minutes. It is suggested that you bring a blanket to sit on and snacks/dinner for your family only. There are no bathrooms at the park.

We are holding a food drive again this year in conjunction with Family Night for the benefit of families in need in Sterling and the surrounding area. The Wachusett Food Pantry needs the following items the most: snack foods, canned protein sources, canned fruits & vegetables, canned soup, pasta sauce, boxes of cereal and oatmeal, peanut butter, mac 'n cheese, personal care items (soap, shampoo, etc.) and paper products (toilet paper, tissues.) Parent Advisory Board Members will be at a table collecting food items (if you are able to bring food in a paper grocery bag it is greatly appreciated.) Please do not bring expired or perishable food, medications, school supplies or clothing.

Family Night is sponsored by the Preschool Parent Advisory Board free of charge for your enjoyment and as an opportunity for everyone to get better acquainted. When you arrive, look for your child's teachers at a table parallel with Cross Street near the food collection table. Please be sure to visit these tables soon after you arrive. Teachers will find your child's nametag with colorful circle/s identifying the class/es your child is in (red=TuTh AM, blue = TuTh PM, green = WF AM and yellow = MWF PM.) These colors will help you to find families in your child's class/es. Permanent markers and nametags will be available on the table for parents to make nametags for themselves/family members. We hope to see you on the 6th!!



Health Protocols

Our parent handbook outlines health and safety protocols and the latest Dept of Early Education and Care (EEC) guidelines for COVID can be found [HERE](#). Hand washing and hand sanitizer remain the best defenses against illness transmission. We all wish that COVID was over, but unfortunately it still exists. Please keep your child home to rest if they exhibit any signs of illness (fever/chills, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, cough, fatigue, body aches, headache, sore throat, congestion, or runny nose.) If your child has had symptoms for a couple of days, it is best to contact your child's doctor.

Alternate Pickup Person

If someone other than a parent or regular caregiver will be picking up your child at dismissal, it is imperative that the school be notified in writing and that you tell the Lead Teacher and Director who will be picking up your child! We will ask for ID from anyone we do not recognize, so please be sure that anyone who will be picking up your child brings their photo ID with them. The Lead Teacher generally dismisses, but a different teacher may be at the gate/door instead and not recognize someone who regularly picks up your child.

Supporting VGP

Our preschool greatly benefits from the generosity of our VGP families and community. If you are interested in donating items to our classroom, please see the [Amazon wishlist](#) our teachers have put together for the 2023-24 school year. Thank you for your support!

Useful Website

The MA Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) sponsors a website designed for parents of children from birth to six years of age. 'One Tough Job' provides information and resources to help moms and dads be the best parents they can be (www.onetoughjob.org)

New Calendars

In addition to the new Newsletter layout created last spring, Parent Advisory Board member Holli Hepburn used her talents to help us once again! Parent feedback indicated that parents don't want to use too much ink on printing the calendars or simply don't have a printer at home to use. Holli skillfully created a simpler layout that uses less color for our parent calendars and put together a beautiful school calendar as well. She has simplified things for parents and for the teachers. Thank you, Holli!

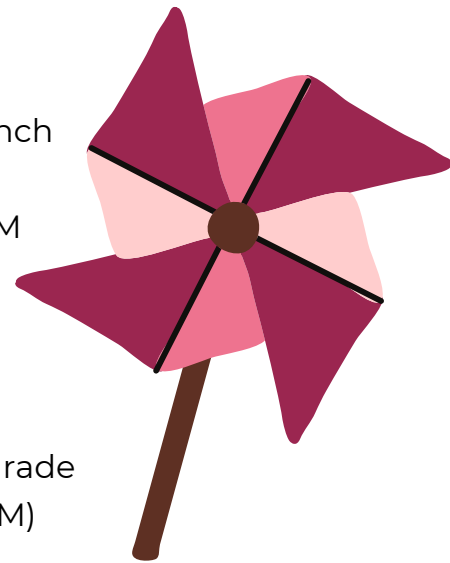
Learning Through Play

We have come across recent articles about the benefits of unstructured play ([one is linked here](#).) We believe that children learn through play, and we develop curriculum that incorporates learning into activities that we do every day. We try to make learning fun without children realizing that they are learning. Please let us know if you have any questions about our curriculum or activities.



Upcoming Events

- Sep 28, 29.....Clearview Farm Fieldtrip (9:30-11:30 for all)
- Oct. 1.....Oct. tuition, early drop off, late pick up and lunch
bunch payments due
- Oct. 6.....Family Night w/Pumpnickel Puppets @5PM
- Oct. 9.....Indigenous Peoples' Day – no preschool
- Oct. 12, 13School pictures taken
- Oct. 14Family Photo Day (at Evergreen Tree Farm)
- Oct. 15Rain Date for Family Photos
- Oct. 23VGP sponsored Community Spooky Walk Parade
- Oct. 26, 27VGP Halloween Parade (10:45 AM and 2:00 PM)
- Oct. 31, Nov. 1, 2, 3Parent Conferences held
- Nov. 1Second quarterly tuition payment due or Oct. tuition,
early drop off, late pick up and lunch bunch payments due



Special Thanks

- Mandy (Mrs. Crowley) for helping in the morning classes for the month of September
- The Gaw family for donating two sets of dress up clothes from our Amazon Wish List!
- The Ruggiero family for donating two books and two boxes of glue sticks from our Amazon Wish List!
- The Perla family for donating a package of large glue sticks!
- The Lawlor family for donating two packages of disappearing glue!
- Juliet Matte, Kristina Biro and Holli Hepburn for scrubbing our preschool chairs - it was much needed!
- Holli Hepburn for putting together the fantastic photo board in the foyer showing all of our fabulous preschool board members.
- Kristina Biro, Patty O'Keefe, Holli Hepburn, Kaiya Correia, Jen Skorinko, Annemarie James, Ankita Gobain, Jillian Stillman, Juliet Matte and Elizabeth Vokes for cleaning our classroom
- James Stillman for all of his work improving the playground's drainage and for installing a new sandbox for us!
- All of our Parent Advisory Board members for selflessly serving the preschool to help create an even more special learning environment. If you would like to join the board, please let Mrs. Ormsbee know!
- A special thank you to Jillian (Mrs. McAlevey), Lori (Ms. Schoolcraft), Caitlyn (Mrs. Candiello), Amanda (Mrs. Stevens) and Kaiya (Ms. Correia) for always making Village Green Preschool amazing for our preschool families!

