



VILLAGE GREEN PRESCHOOL PATTER & CHATTER

▶ September 2023 ◀



VILLAGE GREEN PRESCHOOL
 6 Meetinghouse Hill Road
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❖ **PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR:** Karen Ormsbee

MWF Teaching Team:

- ❖ Jillian McAlevey: Lead Teacher & Assistant Director
- ❖ Lori Schoolcraft: Co-Teacher
- ❖ Kaiya Correia: Co-Teacher

TuTh Teaching Team:

- ❖ Caitlyn Candiello: Lead Teacher
- ❖ Amanda Stevens: Co-Teacher
- ❖ Lori Schoolcraft: Co-Teacher

Hello Preschool Parents & Friends—Welcome to VGP 2023-24
 As we prepare to begin another wonderful year of preschool together, please take a few moments to review this special 20th edition of our “VGP Patter & Chatter” ... it addresses some frequently asked questions and classroom changes. Please keep a copy handy for reference during the fun-filled & ever-busy months ahead!

QUESTIONS ☆ COMMENTS ☆ CONCERNS

★ **PLEASE ASK!:** Please don't hesitate to bring questions, comments or concerns to the attention of the director or teachers throughout the year: in person or by phone & e-mail address listed above.

▶ A “Home-School Connection” is very important to us at VGP and we encourage on-going communication to help ensure the most successful early-education experience for our little learners!

★ **WHEN IS A GOOD TIME?:** Quick issues can always be addressed at Greeting Time or Dismissal, but please understand that our primary focus during school hours is the preschoolers. Therefore, we request that any lengthy or involved conversations be reserved for outside of class time when the children are not present. The Teachers are always willing to make themselves available for parents who wish a private one-on-one conference (in person or by phone) when class is not in session.

★ **DIRECTOR'S HOURS:** Karen Ormsbee can usually be found in the preschool office during all preschool sessions, generally 8AM to 4 or 5 PM. It is always best to set up a meeting to be certain of availability outside of regular hours.

★ **CLASS HOURS:**

Morning session

Drop-off 9:00 AM
Pick-up 11:30 AM

Afternoon session

Drop-off 12:30 PM
Pick-up 3:00 PM

Early Drop-off*

8:00-9:00 AM
(\$55 or \$80/mo.)

Late Pick-up*

3:00-4:00
(\$55 or \$80/mo.)

Lunch Bunch**

11:30-12:30
(\$55 or \$80/mo.)
(no fee for full day)

*Early Drop-off and Late Pick-up requires a commitment from Sept.-Dec. and/or Jan.-May. Parents are asked to drop off and pick up at a consistent time each day.

**Lunch Bunch (11:30-12:30) is included for students attending all day (meals are not provided) but is optional depending on space available for others. Students enrolled all day and families with siblings attending an AM + PM class the same day are given priority.

★ **PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES**: VGP Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice a year, in November & May (see School Calendar for potential dates.) These brief meetings are held so we can discuss your child's adjustment & progress up to that point. Conferences are held during our regular VGP class hours – all parents will be assigned a 10-minute conference time that will be posted the week prior to conferences. We ask that you *adhere to this strict time frame* so conferences can run on schedule, however additional conference time can be scheduled at any time if desired.

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GREETING & DISMISSAL

After entering the foyer, please sign your child in on the sheet at the top of the white board and read any notices posted there (take a photo to share/read later!) Then have your child place their belongings onto their hook (backpack on bottom hook and sweater/coat on top hook) – removing papers to return to school, and lunch box (if using.) Lunch boxes should be placed on the shelf above their hook.

The preschool door opens at 9:00* for the morning session and 12:30 for the afternoon session. The Greeting Time before our 1st Circle is a very important time of the day. It is when the teachers get to welcome the children; however, if you are running behind for any reason and will be late for arrival, no problem! Please advise us of any late arrivals or absentees by calling the preschool (978-422-8256) and leaving a message before class begins. You can also call or text Mrs. Ormsbee at 508-667-4394. We generally close the door at 9:15 and 12:45. **IMPORTANT: DO NOT KNOCK ON THE PRESCHOOL DOOR!** For everyone's safety, the teachers are instructed never to answer the door – ever. If you happen to arrive after drop off time and find that the preschool door is closed, please bring your child to Mrs. Ormsbee in the preschool office and she will escort your child to the classroom. Please take the time to put their belongings on their hook prior to bringing them to the preschool office.

* For children being dropped off early (8:00 AM), please follow the same procedure for children arriving at the usual class time (9:00 AM.)

★ **TRANSITIONAL SIGNAL**: We begin & end each day with an auditory transitional signal - the ring-a-ling of our “Bear Bells” -- Parental understanding & cooperation is key to its success:

▶ **Beginning of Class Bells**: Parents should not linger in the classroom after dropping off their child.* We ring our special “bear bells” (a Star of the Week job!) at approximately 9:10AM & 12:40PM to signal it is time to gather for circle. **It is imperative that any parents or siblings still in the classroom when the bells ring, please promptly exit the classroom.** This helps all children prepare for their independent transition to Circle Time. It can be very difficult for some children to say “good-bye” once the transition to Circle is underway & even harder for the other children whose own parents have already departed in a timely fashion! **So, IF YOU'RE STILL IN THE CLASSROOM WHEN WE RING THE BELLS, PLEASE DEPART QUICKLY!** The Lead Teacher will commence Circle Time with songs & activities to engage the children while the other teachers tend to any children who may need some extra comforting.

*an exception is made when staying to celebrate a birthday/half-birthday at preschool.

▶ **End of Class Bells**: On days when we dismiss from the playground, we will ring the bells just before 11:30 AM & 3:00 PM* to indicate the end of our school day. All children begin to be dismissed at this time (parents should inform the Director and Lead Teacher when a child will be dismissed before the regular dismissal time.) All children will be asked to stop their play & line up along the fence near the gate for their turn to depart. In turn, parents need to proceed toward the gate for dismissal - this helps to foster a happy & prompt dismissal for all and eliminates the awkward negotiations of “One more turn!” or “Not yet!” For safety reasons, please approach the gate

instead of waiting on the driveway – teachers keep their eyes on the children to make certain that they arrive safely back to a parent/caregiver. Please allow some leeway with the teachers at the beginning of the year as we adjust to new faces and family connections.

*For children being picked up late (4:00 PM), please follow the same procedure for children being picked up at the usual class time (3:00 PM.)

★ **DISMISSAL & SPECIAL PICK-UP ARRANGEMENTS:** We usually dismiss from the playground, but it is sometimes necessary to dismiss from inside due to inclement weather or time constraints. For all dismissals, first sign your child out, collect your child's belongings from the coat hook **and** cubby, then proceed outside to the playground or wait in the foyer for the class door to be opened. For outside dismissal, please see “End of Class Bells” above. For inside dismissal, please proceed to the classroom door where your child will be dismissed with one or two others. Please allow some leeway with the teachers at the beginning of the year as we adjust to new faces and family connections. Please move toward the door to make it easier for your child to find you. To avoid hallway congestion, everyone is encouraged to depart quickly.

If someone other than a parent or regular caregiver will be picking up your child at dismissal, **YOU MUST** notify us in writing and verbally communicate this to the Director and Lead Teacher! **As a safety measure, we may request a photo ID before dismissing your child to anyone that we do not recognize (including parents) — do not consider this an inconvenience, but rather an extra layer of protection for your child. So, be sure that anyone who picks 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. They may be asked to present identification – at any time - and anyone new to the Lead Teacher will be asked to present ID.

★ **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 the Director and Lead Teacher of your plans in advance.**

★ **CLASSROOM DOORS ARE LOCKED AT ALL TIMES:** The preschool entrance door in the foyer must remain locked at all times for safety reasons. If it is closed, it is locked! Should you arrive while class is in session, go directly to the Director's office & you will be escorted to the preschool room. As stated under “Greeting & Dismissal” above, the teachers will not open the door for anyone. Parents are not allowed to linger in the building.

★ **IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE ON TIME AT THE END OF CLASS:** Children often become anxious when they are the last one waiting and parents are asked to please be considerate of our teachers' very tight prep schedule by arriving on time for dismissal. Following each class session, the teachers must return to the classroom to tidy up from the previous class & then prepare for the next session — with little margin for spare time!

In case of an emergency, however, do not hesitate to call the school and advise us of your unforeseen delay — no child will ever be left unattended or uninformed!

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SNACK TIME

Snack Time is always a favorite time of day in preschool! It is a wonderful opportunity to foster independence (children pour drinks, serve themselves, and clean up) & practice good manners. A teacher always sits with children at snack time and engages them in conversation. Snack will be served “family style,” which means that each child will bring snack for the entire class (quantity 24 so there are a few extras) a few times during the year (one of them will be their birthday or half-birthday snack.) Each family will receive a snack schedule and a reminder from the snack teacher prior to their assigned snack day. There is no need to bring a drink as we provide fresh water at snack daily.

★ **HOW MUCH?:** Snack should be just enough to provide fuel to get our friends through the end of class and it should be a healthy choice. Because the children will serve themselves, it is preferred that a large bag of pretzels be brought rather than individual packages. Any leftovers will be placed on top of the cubbies for retrieval at the end of the day.

★ **WHAT DO WE BRING?:** Think healthy (except nuts!*) We strongly encourage healthy food choices such as cut-up fruits (grapes cut in ½ lengthwise), yogurt (frozen yogurt tubes work great!), vegetable sticks, small muffins,

to the door off the back hallway to alleviate congestion in the foyer (go down the hallway to the left of the main entrance door.)

► For children attending school all day, please have your child place their lunch on the shelf above their hook.

★ **The following guidelines will make the Lunch Bunch transition go smoothly:**

- Name needs to be CLEARLY visible on the front or top outside of the lunch box/bag and on drink bottles (Mabel's Labels work great! www.villagegreenps.mabelslabels.com)
- Choose healthy foods from a variety of food groups (we talk about fruits, vegetables, proteins and treats every day)
- We cannot reheat food, and ice packs should be used to keep items cold (for all-day friends)
- Include any utensils needed to eat their food (spoon, fork)
- Water is always available, but you are welcome to provide a drink (please label their bottle.)
- We encourage children to rinse out their fruit cups, yogurt bottles, etc. to be recycled.
- Please observe our nut-free policy, which means **no nuts or nut butters are allowed.**

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CUBBIES & HOOKS & BACKPACKS, TOO!

Every child at Village Green is assigned a Mail Cubby and a Coat Hook at the beginning of the year. Since all 4 preschool classes share these spaces, we use a color-coding system for the children's names: **TuTh AM is RED // TuTh PM is BLUE // WF is GREEN // MWF is YELLOW**

★ **CUBBIES:** A cubby is each child's special place to keep the day's artwork & other projects, and to place removed articles of clothing (barrettes, sweaters, etc.) Cubbies are also used to communicate important information via notices or notes from teachers. At Dismissal Time, the rolling cart of cubbies will be moved into the foyer so that parents may retrieve all articles from the day. Art that is wet &/or messy will be left to dry in the classroom & can be found in the cubby at the next class, but you're welcome to also take it home or leave art that has been placed into the cubby when wet!

★ **COAT HOOKS:** Coat hooks are located in the foyer, and for safety reasons, they may **NOT** be accessed by preschoolers during the day. Children only access them under teacher supervision when it is time to get ready for the playground. Our Coat Hook Guideline is as easy as 1 – 2 – 3:

<p>#1. SMALL BOTTOM HOOK: for Backpack or Tote Bag</p> <p>#2. LARGE TOP HOOK: Jacket goes on top hook for easy removal by small hands! (During winter months: Hats & Mittens should get tucked into a coat sleeve!)</p> <p>#3. BELOW HOOKS: Boots & winter gear bag (when needed) should be placed on floor directly below coat</p>
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★ **BACKPACKS:** It is ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL that each child bring a backpack or tote bag containing a complete set of spare clothing every day-- **including underwear, socks, shirt & pants or dress.** Extra shoes are helpful but not required. We recommend storing items in a zippered plastic bag to help keep them fresh. Teachers must frequently access extra clothing: toileting accidents, excessive wetness/messiness at art & the sensory table, "oops!" spills at snack, etc. Please remember to replace the clothing as seasons & sizes change during the year!

► **VERY IMPORTANT NOTE:** Teachers **DO NOT** open backpacks unless there is a need to access spare clothing, so **DO NOT** place important teacher notes & paperwork – OR – **outdoor gear** that you wish your child to wear for outdoor play inside the backpack/tote bag!

★ **BBBB! COLD-WEATHER GEAR:** As you know, it gets quite blustery in Sterling for many months of the school year, but weather permitting; we try to get out to the playground each day to exercise our large motor muscles and big voices! Every day when you enter the building, please take a peek at our VGP Weather Watcher traffic light to see whether or not we intend to go outside to the playground:

GREEN LIGHT = Yes! // RED LIGHT = Not Today! // YELLOW LIGHT = Maybe?

★ **PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE:** We strongly recommend **practicing independent dressing at home!** It not only helps to foster a strong sense of “I Can Do It!” in the children, but also ensures additional time spent outside on the playground instead of inside the classroom waiting for assistance! With 20 preschool children, +40 mittens, +40 boots, +20 hats, +20 snow pants, +20 coats, and other misc. gear inside 1 classroom with 3 teachers, it is SO VERY IMPORTANT that we have a consistent policy in place otherwise tears & frustration are maximized, and beloved playground time is thereby minimized!

VGP SUGGESTION TO PARENTS OF ALL PRESCHOOLERS:
😊 **Practice independent “Outer Gear” dressing at home as much as possible!** 😊

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LABEL LABEL LABEL LABEL LABEL LABEL LABEL

We cannot stress enough the importance of labeling ALL removable items that come to preschool with your child (don't forget Mabel's Labels: www.villagegreenps.mabelslabels.com!) Not only does uncertainty over ownership complicate the flow of our classroom routine, but unmarked items can be more difficult to retrieve once lost. Our *Lost & Found* bin in the office frequently overflows with abandoned treasures ... which then become monthly donations to a local charity if unclaimed. The best policy: label all items that can be removed & lost during the school day!

PLEASE PUT LABELS WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME ON ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- ▶▶ **Backpacks & Tote Bags**
- ▶▶▶▶ **Coats & Jackets**
- ▶▶▶▶ **Headbands & Jewelry**
- ▶▶ **All Shoes & Boots**
- ▶▶▶▶ **Hats, Mittens, Scarves**
- ▶▶▶▶ **"Show & Tell" / "Letter Finder"**
- ▶▶ **Sweaters & Vests**
- ▶▶▶▶ **Lunch Boxes & Drink Bottles**

★ **IS IT MINE?:** Preschoolers do not always recall what item belongs to them, even if they selected it lovingly from the store, shelf or toy box that morning. Pink mittens, black snow pants, and Velcro-strapped boots, etc. all manage to look alike during the playground dressing process!

★ **HOW TO LABEL?:** There are many different options to choose from, but the most common include permanent marker, iron-on patches, pen on masking tape...or our popular VGP fundraiser, **"Mabel's Labels"**! First name, last name, both names, or just initials are all fine – as long as we have some method to help identify the rightful little owner quickly before complications have a chance to set in!

Special Note: Please continue labeling as the seasons & sizes change throughout the year or you purchase new clothing! Don't forget to label those little **shoes and sweaters/sweatshirts** at any time of the year as they are often removed in the Dress-up area & throughout the course of the day.

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WHAT TO WEAR TO PRESCHOOL?

PRESCHOOLERS SHOULD WEAR CLOTHING THAT IS COMFORTABLE, WASHABLE, AND SAFE SO THAT THEY CAN LEARN, WORK & PLAY FREELY AND ATTEMPT INDEPENDENT TOILETING SKILLS!

★ **DRIP-DROP-SPLAT!** We try to provide a variety of interesting art, sensory & tactile experiences that may be messy and while we encourage the use of smocks, clothes can & do provide an unexpected “canvas” of sorts! Our tempera paints are mixed with dish detergent, and we use “washable” markers & inkpads, so most stains can hopefully be removed or lessened after treating at home (try Lestoil or OxiClean)! ▶▶ **Expensive special-occasion clothing is strongly discouraged at preschool, unless noted on calendar (no messy materials will be used that day)**◀◀

★ **CAN I WEAR THIS TODAY?:** Using gentle guidance, we encourage parents to support their preschoolers' independence in choosing what to wear & how to wear it to school. Patterns do not need to match and favorite shirts may be worn again & again (and again!) but please leave pjs & costumes at home. It's the beaming smile and sense of “I can do it!” that counts! ▶▶ **Belts, leotards, and “onesies” can make independent toileting frustrating.**

★ **SUGGESTIONS:** Anything found in nature; photos of loved ones; vacation brochures; kitchen or workbench tools or gadgets; artwork made at home; seasonal items; sports equipment, etc. Anything expensive, fragile or irreplaceable is not recommended in a preschool setting. Consider sending a photo of the item instead.

★ **"I FORGOT!":** Not a problem – children who do not bring in an item for Show & Tell will be encouraged to select something from the classroom or chat about something special, with our guidance. A “visual” is not required!

★ **SAFEKEEPING:** Upon arrival, Show & Tell items will be placed in a basket and used only during Show & Tell. Parents can retrieve them from the same baskets at the end of class. At Dismissal, the baskets will be found on top of or beside the Cubby unit in the foyer. Don't forget to check, please!

★ **WHEN IS “SHOW & TELL”?:** Please check your VGP School Calendar/schedule and the monthly class calendar. White board notices are usually posted prior to the theme as a reminder as well. If school is cancelled Show & Tell will not be rescheduled.

★ **The following guidelines are very important for a successful preschool Show & Tell:**

1. **NAME LABEL:** Children's names must be clearly marked on the item, using marker or tape, if possible! We always have tape available on the whiteboard and at the door on these days. —
2. **ONE SMALL ITEM ONLY:** ONE ITEM per child, due to limited attention spans, and space and time restrictions. Even if it is part of a larger collection or set, please! For example: select just ONE trading card, not the entire collection... or just ONE princess doll but not her dresses & friends.
3. **GUNS & WEAPONS:** Any toys that denote aggression or violence of any kind (fighting, force, and/or empowerment) are not permitted at VGP...EVER. Please leave these at home!

☺ **Dress-Up Days** at Village Green provide a fun opportunity to participate in wearing something that begins with the letter of the week. Exceptions are pajama day in December and wear a VGP shirt in January. This home-school connection provides the opportunity to work with your child to wear the chosen item that begins with the letter, or not! It is ALWAYS your child's choice. In addition, these choices should come from your child's existing wardrobe - we do not want parents rushing out to find something the night before.

★ **"I FORGOT!":** It is NEVER a problem – dress-up days should always be your child's choice and they are usually fine if they did not wear the specified item.

☺ **Color of the Day** at VGP can be really fun with so many different shades of one color! Every month, we introduce a special color right from the beautiful rainbow spectrum & then some! It will be noted on the Class and School Calendars; a whiteboard notice reminder posted and indicated by the paint color provided at the easel on these days. Children are encouraged to wear a bit of the Color of the Day to school; however, this & all dress-up days are OPTIONAL. Try searching for items of that color on the way to & from VGP! Color of the Day is usually on a Thursday and Friday, and we tend to align the colors with the season or nearest holiday.

★ **"I FORGOT!":** It is NEVER a problem – participating in color of the day should always be your child's choice

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☺ **LETTER FINDERS** ☺

A new letter is introduced in random order each week. On Mondays and Tuesdays, this special letter is noted on parent calendars. We discuss how to write the letter, practice the sound/s that it makes, and find words that begin with that letter. We use the letter in easel, art and writing center projects. Typically, on Thursdays and Fridays - we ask the children to bring in something that begins with the letter of the week. As with Show & Tell items, please do not bring anything too big or anything depicting aggression or violence of any kind.

★ **"I FORGOT!":** Not a problem... children who do not bring in a Letter Finder item can still participate by observing, listening, and asking questions about what others brought.

