



**SCHA**  
PRESCHOOL

# Preschool Handbook

Southern CT Hebrew Academy Preschool  
261 Derby Avenue, Orange, CT 06477  
(203)795-5261 [www.schacademy.org](http://www.schacademy.org)

Dear Parents,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the SCHA Preschool! I am confident that you will be pleased with the quality and dedication of our staff, our rich and stimulating curriculum and our wonderful facilities.

We have been working extensively to be able to re-open in the fall, and as such, there will be some new health and safety protocols in place to ensure that everyone remains well. Please read through the handbook which includes our Preschool policies and procedures. The handbook is designed to help us create a safe and healthy environment for our children, as well as helping to ensure a smooth transition into the new school year. A separate and detailed list of COVID-19 plans and procedures will be emailed to you.

At SCHA Preschool, we encourage parental involvement and input. Our goal is to create a 'home away from home' for your child, and we hope that you will feel the same way about our school. We want you to share in their preschool experience and understand and share in their excitement!

As parents – you are your child's first teacher. We thank you for the opportunity for allowing us to share and be a part of your child's early childhood experience! Through working together as a team, we know that we can help your child grow and blossom to his/her fullest potential.

It is going to be a fantastic year, and I look forward to working with you, and getting to know your child/ren! If you have any questions, concerns, comments or ideas, please do not hesitate to call me at (203) 795-5261 or email at [rkaplan@schacademy.org](mailto:rkaplan@schacademy.org).

My best wishes to you and your family for a wonderful year!

Sincerely,

Raizy Kaplan  
Preschool Director

**Southern Connecticut Hebrew Academy  
Preschool  
Operating Policies**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Phone number:

 Office phone: (203) 795-5261

 Raizy Kaplan email:

rkaplan@schacademy.org

Address:

- Southern Connecticut Hebrew Academy  
(a.k.a. SCHA) Preschool  
261 Derby Avenue  
Orange, CT 06477

**ADMISSION**

SCHA Preschool serves children 18 months through 5 years by December 31<sup>st</sup>. All enrollment forms must be fully completed before a child may attend school. This includes a medical form, with an up to date immunization record within the past twelve months. The health record must be kept current with any new medical information or immunizations. All records are kept secure in the nurse's office. Per the State of Connecticut regulations, any child, who does not have a current health form on file, will not be allowed to attend school until the record is updated.

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

Full day - 8:15 AM - 3:45 PM

Half day(includes lunch time) - 8:15AM – 12:30 PM

**Friday 2:00 p.m. dismissal** (winter months)

Full day – 8:15 AM – 2:00 PM

Half-day – 8:15 AM - 12:30 PM

## **Holidays, Vacations Etc.**

### **Credit for Illness and/or Family Vacation:**

Every child is enrolled for the entire school year. Since most of the school's costs are fixed and do not vary according to daily attendance, the school cannot issue refunds or credits for illness, holidays or family vacations.

**Make-Up Days:** Make-up days and substitutions are not available. Children may come on days when there is a special program or event (ratio permitting). This should be cleared with the Preschool Director and the Teacher.

**Holidays:** Check the school calendar for any school closings and events. Notices or an email will be sent out in the event of any changes to the calendar.

**Withdrawal of Children:** In the event that parents will withdraw their child from our program, a 30 day notice must be given. All tuition through 30 days remains due.

**Provisional Enrollment Period:** Our preschool does not offer a provisional enrollment period.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

### **Arrival**

SCHA Preschool is located at 261 Derby Avenue, Orange, CT.

We will be having multiple entrances (front and side) to school to limit the flow of traffic. Staff will be present every morning from 8:10am-8:30am to welcome your child at the door.

All staff and students will undergo a health screening before entering the school, as per state guidelines.

Parents will complete a daily health screening before morning drop off. An app link will be provided prior to school beginning.

If you did not complete the screening before drop off, you will have to perform the screening on site before your child(ren) can access the building.

During arrival and dismissal, a mask should be worn if getting out of the car. To decrease opportunity for potential transmission among adults, parents will not be able to enter the building and adults must wear masks for drop off and pick up.

Please use the front entrance after 8:30am.

We strongly encourage bringing your child to preschool on time, as this is most beneficial for your child to ensure a successful day.

During the first days of school, although you may be feeling anxious, it is important that your child sees that you are calm and confident. This will reassure your child during the separation process.

**Separation:**

*A child's attachment to his/her parents is natural, therefore, separation, especially if it is for the first time, can be a difficult process. It is necessary for a child's healthy development that he/she learns how to say goodbye to his/her parents. Children must develop an understanding that there are other caretakers (their teachers) who love them and will nurture and care for them while their parents are away. In order to ease the*

*difficult process, parents and teachers need to work together to build a foundation for positive experiences at school.*

*All parents must say goodbye to their children and tell them when they will return. Parents may NOT sneak away in order to prevent the child from crying at that moment. Leaving without saying goodbye may be easier for the parents than leaving while a child is crying, but is **not** easier for the child. Their tears are symbols of their attachment to you and they must be allowed to express their emotions. It is a sign of the healthy bond they have with you. Children will be comforted by their teachers. Leaving without saying goodbye can also make separations more difficult because a child will fear the unexpected departure and try to keep a close eye on his/her parent. This fear will prevent him/her from engaging in play or interacting with teachers and other children. Children must trust their parents and when they learn the tangible process of separation, this helps them to do so. Our Preschool offers a Phase In process to help the children transition into school smoothly.*

### **Dismissal Process**

In our efforts to ensure safety of our children, the following dismissal procedure will be followed:

Children will wait in their classroom for the dismissal process. Preschool children will be escorted out beginning at 3:40p.m. As cars line up along the building, names will be called and children will be brought out by a teacher or an older child (Grade 4+ with parents' permission) in the same carpool. In order to keep the

dismissal process flowing smoothly, long conversations with parents and teachers will not take place (teachers will always be in touch with you at appropriate times). We strongly encourage you to pick up your child on time, as your child is eager to see you at the end of the day.

Only authorized individuals will be allowed to pick up children (those listed on authorization form). If your child's end-of-day arrangements are different from the usual, you must email the office at [pickup@schacademy.org](mailto:pickup@schacademy.org) before 3:30pm. In addition, you may call or give a written notice to the Preschool Director or Teacher.

### **Half Day Dismissal:**

All half day children will be waiting in the front lobby for pick-up. Please be prompt when picking up your child. A late fee of \$10.00 per 15 minute increment will be applied for any child who is not picked up by 12:45pm.

**The school facility and playground may not be used while school is in session.**

### **After School Policy**

Our dismissal communication ends at 4:00 p.m. Any child not picked up by 4:01pm will be directed to the front lobby with a designated staff member to await pick up in a socially distant manner. Staff will follow our late pick-up policy on file in the director's office. Parents who arrive after 4:00p.m. must come to the front entrance to pick up and sign out their child/ren. Parents who are late more than twice per semester will be charged \$10.00 per 15 minute increment. You will be required to have a credit

card number on file and fees will be charged automatically.

Special circumstances such as weather, traffic etc. will be taken into consideration.

If you know you are going to be detained, please notify the school immediately so that we can reassure your child. There is an overtime charge, but we are reasonable.

### **Early Pick-up**

If you will be picking up your child early please sign them out with the office. A teacher or the director will bring your child to the front entrance to meet you.

### **Parking**

Please use caution when entering our parking lots since other children may be entering/exiting the building. For safety reasons, parking is not permitted in the fire lanes on the sides of the building. Designated parking areas are located around the backside of the building.

PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY!

### **Open-door Policy**

At SCHA Preschool, we maintain an open-door policy. Due to COVID-19, we will not be allowing parents to come into the building at this time.

Any parent/visitor who must enter the building, will be screened. Our large classroom windows provide a great way for one to peek into our classrooms.

### **Absentee Policy**

If your child is ill or taking a day off please email [info@schacademy.org](mailto:info@schacademy.org) or call the school at 203-795-5261. This will allow us to keep track of

illnesses and take the proper precautions. If your child will be out for pleasure reasons, please inform the school/teachers ahead of time.

### **Field Trips**

At this time, we will be taking the extra precaution and not plan for any field trips. If the health situation improves, we will be in touch with you with possible field trip information.

### **Medical Emergency**

In case of a medical emergency, we will immediately attempt to contact a parent. If we cannot reach you, we will call your child's physician. If necessary, we will also call an ambulance or paramedics. Until your arrival, the director or school nurse will be in charge and make all decisions about your child's care. Resultant costs will be your responsibility.

### **Minor Injuries**

An accident report will be sent home with your child if he/she was injured during the day. A description of the injury and the first aid administered will be included in the report. You may receive a phone call from your child's teacher or director as well.

### **Emergency Numbers**

It is to your child's benefit that you keep the school up to date on phone numbers, emergency contacts, and other pertinent information. Please make sure the school knows the most direct means of contacting you during school hours.

### **Mandated Reporter Information**

Teachers and child care administrators are

required by law to report evidence of child neglect or abuse. Those who fail to report according to state regulation can be held accountable under the law. No one, including school management and/or a child's parents, can interfere with this reporting requirement.

### **Fire/Lockdown Safety Drills**

SCHA, with Global Operations (a private security company) and the Orange Police Department, have established procedures for fire, lockdown and similar safety situations. Drills will be held throughout the year. The goal of these drills are to help children become familiar with the procedures and remain calm in the event of an actual emergency. Parents will be contacted via email during drills/emergencies.

### **Meals and Snack**

Parents supply their child's morning nutritious snack and lunch. Morning snack shall include 2 items from 2 food groups (ex: vegetable and pretzels, fruit and cheese stick, fruit and yogurt etc). Our Preschool will have individual snack bags for children as an afternoon snack if needed. Please label your child's lunch box and send in an ice pack every day, as per state regulations.

Only pareve and/or dairy foods are permitted in our classrooms.

### **Nutrition**

A healthy nutritional diet is an important component to keeping your child healthy and happy. It is best to develop good eating habits while your child is still young to positively impact his/her future eating habits.

The following foods are considered dangerous choking hazards for young children: (please avoid sending these items to school)

- Nuts
- Popcorn (N3 and younger)
- Whole grapes (acceptable if sliced in half to avoid choking)
- Raw vegetables (acceptable if cut into small bite size pieces)
- Candy

### **Allergies**

In the event that a child has a particular food allergy in your child's class, those foods will not be allowed into the classroom. If this is the case, you will be informed.

### **What to Wear to School**

- Please dress your child for active play and learning. This means casual, comfortable, washable clothes and sturdy, rubber-soled shoes.
- For safety reasons, please do not send your child to school in flip-flops, or shoes that are too loose.
- Please send your child in clothing that encourages toileting independence. Elastic waist pants are encouraged for children learning how to toilet, as well as for children who have difficulty with belts, buttons, overalls etc.
- Provide sweaters and jackets even on the first sunny fall days.
- Please provide your child with sunscreen and a labeled water bottle for those hot sunny days.

- Children should wear or bring sneakers to school on gym days.

### **Extra Clothing**

Please provide the school with complete change of clothes in a Ziploc bag. Please label the bag and all clothes with your child's name. Please update the change of clothes based on the seasons, and as your child grows. Soiled clothing will be sent home double bagged. Please wash and return to school the following day.

### **Rest Time Necessities**

Please bring in rest time items (a small sheet, blanket and pillow), which will be stored in your child's cubby. Sleeping cots will be provided for each child. Your child's bedding will be sent home periodically for washing. Please remember to return the items immediately.

### **Diapers and Wipes**

Children, not yet toilet-trained, should have a supply of disposable diapers and wet wipes sufficient for several days at school. These should be replenished as needed.

### **Toileting Procedures**

- A child does not need to be toilet trained in order to participate in our program. The timing is up to parents to determine. A child is considered to be trained when they initiate trips to the bathroom, and go almost every time. A child who needs regular reminders is still at the beginning stages of training, and should be in a diaper in school. After 1-2 weeks of being in underwear at home, it is

probably a good time to try underwear in school.

- In order to provide a quality program for all of the children, it is important that these policies are kept. Children are busy with the daily activities and do not want to spend extra time getting changed due to accidents. The rest of the class is entitled to better quality teacher time as well. Of course accidents happen, and when they do we treat them in a calm, matter-of-fact manner, that preserves the child's self respect.
- Teachers will work with you to help train your child. Please remember that each child functions differently and what is good for one is not necessarily good for another.
- We have regular 'bathroom' times throughout the day, and will always take a child when they request to go.
- If your child usually wears a diaper or pull-up while sleeping, he/she should wear one during rest-time.
- Please send your child in clothing that encourages independence when toileting. Especially when children are learning or have "just learned"; clothing that has easy and quick access will limit the number of accidents.
- Toilet training will not be coerced.
- Children may use the bathroom whenever necessary.
- Children will be escorted to the bathroom at all times.
- Children will be escorted to the bathroom from outside play.

## **Communication between Parents and School**

Effective communication is the lifeblood of an educational organization. Feel free to contact the school concerning any matter.

We have developed many strategies to facilitate communication between home and school. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance in this area.

- **School Events and Notices:** Our system of communication for any upcoming events or information will be as follows – school calendar, regular emailed newsletters and an email reminder one day before.
- **Weekly Newsletter and/or Photos:** A weekly newsletter will be sent home, or photo collage, to inform you of classroom happenings and learning experiences, reminders, and information about special events. Please make note of the important dates and activities.
- **Daily Toddler Reports:** A daily report of your child's day will be sent home with all children in the Toddler classes (full time students only).
- **Progress reports:** We will do our best to keep you informed of your child's progress. Twice a year, a written report reviewing your child's progress will be sent home (N-3 and Pre-K).
- **Parent-Teacher Conference:** Formal Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice a year after progress reports have been issued. These conferences are opportunities for the parents and staff to discuss the interests and development of each child. All

information discussed about your child will be kept confidential. The staff members are at liberty to discuss your child only with you. Attending Parent/Teacher Conferences is strongly encouraged and most beneficial for your child.

- **Contacting Teachers:** If you feel the need to talk to your child's teachers at any time, please call the school and leave a message for her. She will return your call at her earliest convenience. It is not our policy to discuss personal issues and concerns while other children and parents are present. The director is also always available to speak with you. Drop-off or pick-up times are good for greetings and very brief exchanges. Teachers need to be involved with the children, so they will not be able to engage in long conversations.

**Parental absences:** Be certain to let us know when you will be away from home and your child will be in the care of another adult, either at home or elsewhere. This is critically important in case of transportation changes and other emergencies and will also enable the teachers to better understand your child.

**Change in Child's Home Environment:** It is important that we know of any changes taking place in your child's environment. The birth of a sibling, change of babysitter, or family crisis can affect your child's behavior in school. The more informed we are, the more we can do to offer extra support and understanding to your child during unusually stressful times.

## **Parental Input/PTO**

If you would like to share a talent that you may have or spend some time as a volunteer, please speak with the director or the classroom teacher. As always, please feel free to voice any suggestions, concerns, or questions.

We encourage your involvement in our PTO and participation in school functions. This demonstrates your support and encouragement for your child and school. PTO Provides many opportunities for volunteer efforts.

## **Health of Your Child**

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. Upon enrollment, you must file with us a health form signed by a physician. We also require that each child have certain standard immunizations and a tuberculin clearance.

It is your responsibility to determine if your child is physically well enough to come to school. If your child is not feeling well or is overly tired, please keep him/her at home. This will protect his/her health, as well as that of the other children in the class.

Although we hope that everyone stays healthy, it is normal, and even healthy, for young children to be sick in the early years. Their immune system becomes stronger. Parents should anticipate that their child may get sick and will have to pick up their child. The Director or Nurse has the final decision when a child should be excluded from the program. This is for the benefit of your child, the preschool children and staff.

If your child becomes ill during the school day, you will be notified so that you can make necessary arrangements for him/her to be picked up.

In such cases, your child will be isolated from the others and you will be contacted.

Please keep your child home if he/she:

- Has a fever of 100° or has had one during the previous 24-hour period.
- Vomiting or has vomited within the last 24-hour period.
- Diarrhea more than 2 times during the previous 24-hour period.
- Has a heavy nasal discharge.
- Has any eye discharge, and if eye is crusty or swollen.
- Open sores or rash. Any type of skin rash requires a doctor's note before the child can be admitted back to school.
- Is taking an antibiotic for less than 24 hours.
- Has uncontrolled coughing.
- Has symptoms of a communicable disease.
- Is too uncomfortable/sick to participate in the activities that the program routinely offers, or if the child cannot fully participate in the regular activities, such as outdoor play, requires constant one-on-one attention etc.

Your Child May Come to School:

- If a cold is over, but a minor nasal drip remains.
- If a child has been exposed to a communicable disease, the school must be informed. The school nurse will determine

the date your child may return to school. A doctor's note is fine as well.

- Please review our additional and detailed COVID-19 protocols that will be followed.

### **Medications**

SCHA Preschool will only administer non-prescription topical medications and diapering ointments. All ointments and lotions must be brought in their original containers. Proper forms, with specific instructions about its usage, must be filled out by parents.

The preschool will store and administer prescribed inhalers and epi-pens, emergency oral medications, such as Benadryl, and non-prescription topical medications with a parent's consent. An action plan from the pediatrician and authorization form, **which must be signed by the doctor and parent**, is available at our Preschool.

### **Personal Hygiene**

- Staff and children will wash their hands with soap and running water at the following times:
  - Before eating or handling food
  - After toileting
  - After coming into contact with bodily fluids or discharge
  - After handling animals, toys and equipment etc.
  - Other times in which the child's hands become dirty

Liquid soap (or hand sanitizer if necessary) is used at all times.

## **Classroom Management Policy**

Discipline at SCHA Preschool will take the form of positive classroom management. Good classroom management will:

- Strive to help the child become self-controlled – that is, help him/her to experience the intrinsic pleasure in appropriate behavior.
- Take into consideration behavior which is typical and age appropriate. Teachers will be thoroughly knowledgeable about child development.
- If needed, to redirect a child to a different activity/center, particularly for our younger children.
- Provide for periods of activity alternated with periods of rest and quiet.
- Be consistent and fair as possible with clear age appropriate expectations from the children.
- Always speak to the behavior, not the child – such as: “Hitting hurts. Let’s find another way to solve the problem.”
- Do nothing to humiliate or shame the child.
- Prevent a child from hurting himself or others, or from doing damage to equipment. If necessary, a teacher will calmly but firmly hold a child to prevent such harm. The child will be held lovingly with a helpful attitude, rather than a punishing or admonishing one.
- When necessary, to remove a child from an activity, not as a punishment, but as a way for the child to relax, think about his/her behavior and to discuss it in private.

To discuss our school’s behavior management policy in depth, please see the Director.

## **Biting**

Biting can be a form of expression in children who have limited verbal skills. There are many reasons why a young child may bite. Some children may bite when they are teething or to express what they cannot verbalize– such as feeling frustrated or excited. While it may be considered typical behavior for Toddlers, our teachers are prepared to help children with this behavior and to create a plan to prevent it from occurring again. The Director and teachers will try to determine the cause of consistent biting, and develop a plan which we share with parents. The safety and well being of our children is priority.

Biting Procedures:

1. If a bite does occur, teachers immediately help and reassure the child who was bitten. Affected area will be washed with soap and water.
2. After a child bites one time, the families (of the child who bit and of the child bitten) will be contacted by the teacher or director.
3. If repeated biting incidents occur, the director will meet with the teachers and parents in order to implement a plan that would prevent further incidents from taking place. These may include a “shadow” at the parents’ own expense. The safety of our children is of utmost importance to us.

## **Weekly Enrichment Programs**

Music Musings, Yoga, Gym, Baking/Cooking, Library Story-time, Ivrit B’Ivrit (Classic Hebrew Songs, movement and interactive stories in Hebrew), Shabbat sing-a-long and Shabbat Party are some of the programs the children enjoy

every week. The MakerSpace Room is also available for all classes for STEAM related activities.

Afternoon enrichment programs for our Pre-K will include: Science Enrichment, Art Enrichment and 'Ivrit B'Ivrit' (Hebrew songs, movement and interactive stories).

\*At this time, enrichment classes will be modified, take place outdoors, or some may be put on hold until we feel we can include them in the program in a safe manner.

### **Outdoor Play**

All children go outside to play every day, weather permitting. Children do not go outside if it is raining, icy, or extremely windy. We follow state guidelines regarding the temperature and amount of time children play outside. Please send in shoes when your child wears boots to school.

Please send your child in appropriate outdoor clothing:

- Cold weather: hat, mittens, warm jacket
- Snowy weather: hat, mittens, boots, snow pants, extra change of clothes, shoes, warm jacket

Please label all items!

### **Inclement Weather**

In the event of a school cancellation, you will receive a school message with any information regarding cancellations and delayed openings at your preferred contact method, either phone or text message. This includes early dismissal, which may be due to an unexpected storm or occurrences such as heat loss, etc. You may also get information on TV channels or [wtnh.com](http://wtnh.com).

## **Indoor Gym**

In the event that the children are unable to go outside and play, they can enjoy playing in the indoor gym. The space allows the children to engage in gross motor play by using various equipment and toys. This space will be disinfected between class uses.

## **Suggestions For Helping Your Child**

1. Set a reasonable bedtime for your child.
2. Allow sufficient time for breakfast and morning routines so that your child will arrive at school feeling relaxed and secure.
3. When saying good-bye to your child, Keep It Short and Sweet (the KISS method). When you say good-bye to your child, it is best that you go.
4. Coming to school on time is most beneficial for your child.
5. Inform the teacher if there is something at home (illness of a family member, extended absence of a parent, etc.) that might affect your child.

## **To Our Parents**

- We want you to know, to understand, and to discuss with us our goals.
- We want you to look often into our busy, happy, noisy, creative classrooms and see your child at play.
- We want you to realize the validity of that play and the importance of what is being learned.
- Parents and teacher together can help your child develop his or her full human potential.

**We look forward to a great year!**