



Parent Handbook 2025-2026

Dolores Kavanaugh, Director

Pejepscot Day School

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WELCOME

Pejepscot Day School is a privately owned preschool located in Topsham, Maine. It was built and opened in 1989 by founder Stephanie Bernier and has been serving families in the greater Topsham, Brunswick, Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Lisbon Falls, Durham, and Harpswell areas ever since. Our program serves preschool children aged 3 years to school-age and offers multiple class options and enrolls up to 22 children per class.

Before opening her first childcare business “Dolly’s Daycare” in September 2008, Pejepscot Day School Director Dolores Kavanaugh grew up right here in Topsham, attending Williams Cone, Woodside and Mt. Ararat High School. She graduated from New England College in Henniker, NH, majoring in Sociology with emphasis in Early Child Education. She then worked as a pre-school teacher at the McKeen Street Learning Center in Brunswick for five years. Dolly fulfilled her dream when she purchased a split-level home on Barbara Street in Topsham and turned the entire bottom floor into a child care facility. After over a decade of operating Dolly’s Daycare, and her own kids Anthony (age 14) and Marleigh (11) in school, Dolly agreed to continue Miss Stephanie’s tradition at PDS and took over the business in 2020. Dolly takes great pride that she’s been caring and educating children in this community for over 20 years!

PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy is based on the premise that all children can and will learn through experience and increased confidence. By providing an environment that is safe, consistent, nurturing, and interesting, children will become independent learners involved in the world around them. As teachers, we strive to provide an environment that will help children develop new interests and become self-reliant. Through our schedule and classroom materials we encourage children to take risks with new tasks as well as to become more proficient in familiar activities. We hope that through modeling by the teachers, as well as through practice, children will learn to solve problems in the classroom, as well as to advocate for themselves. All children at the preschool level have something “exceptional” about them, and we are pleased to work closely with any family receiving support services from outside agencies. We believe that it is imperative to work closely every family since they are the first and most important teachers/coaches for their children.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum at Pejepscot Day School is an eclectic one, mostly developed on site using a variety of materials and methods. Our themes vary from year to year even though we are addressing the same basic goals. Many resources are used to plan and write our themes and curriculum. We incorporate many early childhood practices while addressing the philosophy of our own program. Included in our program are goals for gross and fine motor development, receptive and expressive language acquisition, healthy social/emotional growth, exposure to creative arts, and cognitive expansion. Our program is based on developmental growth and ability so that the goals chosen for each child in each classroom take into account the age-related capacity of that child. Our activities are geared to be process-oriented, utilizing a combination of open-ended experiential opportunities as well as teacher directed projects focusing on direction following. We believe that in order to have a relevant curriculum, which is developmentally appropriate, we need to constantly be assessing our goals for the program, classrooms and children. We use a wide variety of measures to evaluate whether or not we are meeting the needs of children, as well as if the children are progressing along the expected continuum. Some of these tools include checklists, observations, parent-teacher conferences, and outside screenings and observations.

BEHAVIOR

We believe that children's behavior serves as communication for them. Much of their behavior is a function of typical development and often a lack of experience or language skills. Sometimes a child's behavior can be indicative of other issues and needs. As teachers at Pejepscot Day School it is our responsibility to monitor social situations so that we can facilitate children in their experiences before the experiences become negative. By "coaching" children in their behavioral skills and avoiding negative situations, most children will acquire proficiency in school behavior within a few months. For those children who for one reason or another do not learn age-appropriate behavior skills, more analysis of their behavior must be made, including convening with parents and developing a behavior plan. Typical ways for dealing with behavior problems at Pejepscot Day School will include: verbal explanation, distraction, re-direction, consistency and logical consequences. The staff will remain calm and respectful at all times to all children.

TERMINATION POLICY

As stated above, Pejepscot Day School will work closely with families to try and work through behavior issues in hopes that it can be resolved. In the event that these issues cannot be resolved, and the child's behavior continues to disrupt PDS class time, we do reserve the right to terminate enrollment.

HEALTH and SAFETY GUIDELINES

All children upon entering Pejepscot Day School must present immunization records, or a signed letter stating why a particular child is not up to date with these immunizations. It is also required that children at PDS be "potty-trained" as we are not set up for changing diapers for this age group. Children with specialized medical conditions such as diabetes, food allergies, epilepsy, etc. are always welcome at our school as long as it is deemed possible by parents, physicians, and staff that our program can meet their needs. We do not have a nurse on hand at our site, so if we need to have specific training about a child's condition by outside professionals, this would be the parent's responsibility to arrange.

Almost all children will have many colds during their preschool years. We will help children learn to cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and how to blow or wipe their nose and wash their hands. However, if a child is coughing constantly due to an illness it is recommended that he/she stay home so as not to spread the germs to other children and the environment. Also, stomach viruses spread very quickly, so if your daughter/son has a stomach issue going on upon waking in the morning, she/he should not attend school that day. Likewise, a fever the night before usually means that the child will not be functioning well that day, so an extra day is recommended until the child is free from fever for 24 hours. There are other contagious conditions, such as conjunctivitis, which can pass easily from child to child, so please check with your child's doctor as to a recommendation of whether he/she should attend school. If your child has any medical infection requiring antibiotics, it is a good idea at the time of the doctor visit to ask when the child can return to school without the possibility of infecting the other children. **We would very much appreciate a call if your child is not coming to school that day.**

Pejepscot Day School closes school due to inclement weather when RSU #75 closes. If in doubt, there should be a message on the school's Facebook page. If we need to cancel for a reason unique to the school, we will message families directly.

MEDICATION

We can only dispense medication to your child with a consent form signed by you (the parent or legal guardian). Medications must be given to us to keep in a childproof location, and it must be in an original container with the prescription from the pharmacy on the label.

INCIDENT REPORTING

If a child gets injured or another type of incident occurs at Pejepscot Day School, an incident report will be filled out by appropriate PDS staff and will be sent home with the child for parents to sign and return as acknowledged. Any incident at Pejepscot Day School that results in serious injury or child death will be reported to the Maine DHHS/Child Care Licensing.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In case of an emergency or fire, PDS conducts routine fire drills in which we practice evacuating the building and proceeding to our designated meeting place (the neighbor's white garage which faces our property, the neighbor's address is 690 River Road, Topsham). In the event of a real fire or emergency, families would be contacted as soon as possible to arrange pick-up if necessary.

REPORTING ABUSE OR NEGLECT (MANDATED)

If a PDS employee suspects a child is being abused or neglected they must follow a procedure that includes reporting suspicions to the Director, filling out a mandated reporter worksheet, and contacting the Department of Health & Human Services.

RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN IN CHILD CARE

Children receiving Childcare from Child Care Facilities have the following rights:

- 1.** Children must be free from emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- 2.** Each Child has the right to freedom from harmful actions or practices that are detrimental to the Child's welfare, and to practices that are potentially harmful to the Child.
- 3.** Each Child has a right to an environment that meets the health and safety standards in this rule.
- 4.** Each Child must be provided Childcare services without discrimination to race, age, national origin, religion, disability, sex or family composition.
- 5.** Children must be treated with dignity, consideration and respect in full recognition of their individuality. This includes the use of developmentally appropriate practices by the Child Care Facility.
- 6.** Each Child has the right to the implementation of any plan of service that has been developed for that Child in conjunction with community or state agencies by the Child Care Facility.
- 7.** Each Child has the right to Developmentally Appropriate activities, materials, and equipment.
- 8.** Children with disabilities have the right to reasonable modifications to Child Care Facility policies and practices.

From Maine 10-148-32 Me. Code R. § 10

DAILY ROUTINE

We are very pleased to be working and playing with your child at Pejepscot Day School. There are some simple practices that will make daily life at preschool safe, organized and more fun. One of these procedures is that there is a sign in/out sheet for when you drop your child off or pick him/her up at school. This is the method we use for keeping attendance as well as making sure that each child is accounted for at the end of the day. Only those people named on the “emergency card” will be allowed to pick your child up from school. If a person needs to pick your child up and that person is not named on the “emergency card,” then we need a written note that is dated and signed by you.

Another request we have is that each child comes to school with a bag or backpack clearly marked with her/his name. In this backpack we suggest you include a complete set of extra clothing (including socks and underwear). This allows your child to have personal items to put on if clothing becomes wet or dirty. These items in the backpack should also be labeled with your child’s name. It is also helpful to have rain boots for the wetter weather of the fall and spring, but please also send inside shoes in the backpack. We like children to keep shoes on at preschool because our floor is often wet or dirty, and we also practice fire drills. Boots also need to be labeled. Please make sure that your child wears clothes to school that you are not worried about. We make every effort to give your child a smock for messy activities, but much of what we do every day can leave some hint of what we did. All of our art materials are labeled “washable,” but that does not always mean that it will totally come out of every type of material. We will provide a daily snack for your child. We try to expose the children to different types of snacks and we encourage them to “take one bite,” but we never will make it mandatory that they eat the snack. We will offer one alternative such as crackers or pretzels for those who do not wish to eat what is being offered. If your child has dietary restraints or food allergies we will need to work together to make sure that snack is suitable and safe for him/her. In the case of an allergy, we will ask you to read the ingredients every school day and sign that it is safe for your child.

If you would like to bring in a snack for your child’s birthday, you are welcome to do so. We ask that you try to let us know a week ahead of time so that we can plan our snacks accordingly and also make sure we have alternatives for those with food allergies.

Children are encouraged to leave toys from home in their backpacks. If a child brings a toy to school, it must be appropriate for the school setting. A child must be willing to share the toy or it should be put away. It is usually easier for parents to encourage their child to leave toys at home or in the car since this is typically the way the kindergarten will be.

An adult must accompany all children into the parking lot at any time of the day. It is preferred that the adult picking a child up hold the child’s hand until the child gets into the car. The drivers, especially in vans and SUVs, cannot see children this age through any of the mirrors.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are welcome to visit or volunteer in the classroom any time and any day. We also offer Parent/Teacher conferences in March, but we are always available to make a time to meet with parents about questions or concerns. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to help organize certain activities like a fundraiser and community service projects for the school. We will send home a daily summary (almost every day) including what our snack was, which book we read, some of our projects and circle time activities, as well as any reminders to parents. It is important to check your child’s backpack at the end of

the day and to make sure that there are no important messages included on the daily summary or on another note to parents. There could be information about health issues in your child’s classroom as well as reminders of events coming up.

We also will offer Scholastic Book Orders several times during the school year. This is totally optional if you wish to order from these catalogs – it is just a service that we can offer to you for a fun and economical way to build your child’s library.

CHILD SCREENING RESOURCES

Developmental Screenings take a closer look at how your child is developing. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends conducting developmental screenings as follows:

- At least at 9, 18, and 30 months
- When a child begins a new program, like Early HeadStart or HeadStart
- Any time you or your doctor are concerned

More info regarding Child Developmental Screening can be found at:

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-development/developmental-screening>

CALENDAR, PROGRAM SCHEDULES & FEES

Pejepscot Day School closely follows the local public school calendar. Pejepscot Day School will cancel school only on days when S.A.D. #75 cancels school due to storm/snow.

DAY SCHOOL PROGRAM

•School days run from 8:30 to 11:30 AM, except for Wednesdays (9:30 AM to 12:30 PM)

Tuition Cost – Day School Program

	<u>Three Days/Week</u>	<u>Two Days/ Week</u>
Application Fee (new students only)	\$25	\$25
Two-week tuition deposit (non-refundable)	\$175.00	\$140.00
Nine monthly payments (Due Sept 8-May 8)	\$350/month	\$280/month
Final monthly payment (Due June 1, 2026)	\$175.00	\$140.00

BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

•Drop-off time runs from 7:00 to 8:00 AM, except for Wednesdays (7:00 to 9:00 AM)

•Pick-up time runs from 4:00 to 5:00 PM every day

Tuition Cost – Before & After School Program

	<u>2-3 Days/Week</u>	<u>4-5 Days/Week</u>
Application Fee (new students only)	\$25	\$25
Two-week tuition deposit (non-refundable)	\$125.00	\$200.00
Nine monthly payments (Due Sept 1-May 1)	\$250/month	\$400/month
Final monthly payment (Due June 1, 2021)	\$125.00	\$200.00

•Special payment schedules may be arranged in advance.

Pejepscot Day School now accepts Venmo! (@Dolores-Kavanaugh)

TUITION and PAYMENT

Tuition payments are spread over ten months throughout the school year, from September through June. A tuition deposit equal to one-half of one monthly tuition payment is required upon enrollment of your child. The tuition deposit is non-refundable, but can be applied towards your child's last monthly tuition payment for children who withdraw during the school year. For students enrolled for the entire school year, the tuition deposit amount is applied towards their June tuition payment, making the balance due for June equal to one-half the normal amount.

Tuition payments for September through May are due by the 10th of the month. The June tuition payment is due June 1st. Tuition payments can be dropped off at the school in the payment box". If paying by personal check, be sure to write your child's name on the memo line of the check to ensure that your child's account is properly credited. If paying by cash, please place the cash in a sealed envelope with your child's name clearly written on the outside.

Alternate payment schedules can be arranged in advance as needed. Tuition accounts that are two months delinquent will cause the child to be un-enrolled and their space will be offered to those children on the waiting list.

A one-time application fee is collected from any student applying to Pejepscoot Day School. This application fee is to cover clerical costs incurred in enrolling the student. Those students applying for enrollment in filled sections will be charged the application fee in order to be placed on the waiting list. Any enrolled student who is returning to Pejepscoot Day School will have their application fee waived.

VACATION POLICY

Considering Pejepscoot Day School enrollment is based on a typical "school year" and tuition is paid monthly, any vacations taken by families during the PDS school year is at your discretion. Missing school days for any reason does not any discounted rate on tuition as it covers your child's slot and not their attendance. We do ask that you let us know if your child will be away for any significant amount of time to help us with lesson planning, purchasing snacks, etc.

Parent Contract

I, _____, have read and understand the
Print Name

Parent Handbook for Pejepscoot Day School.

Parent Signature

Date