



**ALCOTT SCHOOL**

**SCIS**

# **Parent Booklet**

## **2021-2022**

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[www.alcottschool.org](http://www.alcottschool.org)

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Phone: 914-472-4404  
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Dobbs Ferry, New York 10522  
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## **Mission Statement**

The Alcott School's objective is to provide all children with the opportunity to develop independence, an awareness of their own abilities and a feeling of self-worth. These objectives are met by providing developmentally appropriate, multi-cultural learning environments. Alcott School recognizes the important role parent education and support for the family plays in the development of young children. Alcott School is dedicated to helping support the families enrolled in its programs.

## **Regulatory Oversight**

The Alcott School is affiliated with the American Montessori Society and is voluntarily registered with the New York State Department of Education. Alcott is a not-for-profit corporation chartered under the New York State Board of Regents. Both our Scarsdale and Dobbs Ferry sites are licensed as day care centers with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. The Alcott School has oversight from the New York State Department of Education and the Westchester County Department of Health.

**A copy of the Office of Children and Family (OCFS) regulations can be found in the lobbies of our locations.**

**Our licensor, Andrea Shako (Dobbs Ferry) – Tel: 914-801-3253**

**Our licensor, Monika Bischoff (Scarsdale) –Tel: 914-801-3240**

**New York State OCFS**

**Westchester Regional Office**

**117 East Stevens Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl.**

**Valhalla, NY 10595**

**Tel: (845) 708- 2400**

**The OCFS Child Care Complaint Line is 1-800-732-5207**

## **Board of Directors**

Alcott School is governed by its Board of Directors:

Co-Presidents – Melinda Trovini and Barbara Klein

Secretary – Laurette Olson

Simrun Galleonardo

Debra Dalal

Debbie Mumford

Arlene Donegan

## School Policy Information

### **Arrival & Dismissal**

**Dobbs Ferry Site:**

**SCIS hours: Half Day**

**8:45 AM-11:30 PM**

**Scarsdale Site:**

**SCIS hours: Full Day**

**8:45 AM-3:00 PM**

The bus companies will notify parents as to pick up and delivery times. All transportation arrangements **must** be made with the bus companies **directly**, not through the school. If normal transportation arrangements are not to be followed on a given day, notify your child's bus company directly, and notify the school as well.

Please post the Alcott School calendar in a conspicuous place. You will need to refer to it frequently during the year. The calendar is also available on the school website at [www.alcottschool.org](http://www.alcottschool.org).

## **Forms**

We are required by law to have certain forms and information in your child's file. The list of required forms is as follows:

- Day Care Registration (Blue card – front and back)
- Emergency Release (front and back)
- Photo Policy/Consent Form
- Class List Release Form
- Emergency Alert Contact Form
- Summary of School Policy
- Email Consent Form
- Transportation Consent Form
- Consent for Medical/Rx Release
- Authorization to share information with Alcott School
- Individual Health Care Plan for a Child with Special Health Care Needs
- Rest/Nap Policy
- Medical Statement
- Prescription/Allergy forms if applicable
- Dental Form
- Vision Form
- COVID Attestation

Each medical form is valid for one year from the date of your child's physical.

***Forms must be completed and returned to school before your child's first day of school. The medical and immunizations record must be filled out and returned before your child can attend school.***

***Copies of government-issued photo IDs are required for all adults listed on the child's emergency release form/blue card.***

## **Safety/Emergency Plans**

Your children's safety is very important to us. Children are supervised at all times during program hours.

### **Emergency Drills**

In order to be prepared for emergencies, we conduct monthly fire drills and two shelter in place drills per year. Our One Call Now Alert system will be utilized in the event of an emergency to inform you of events and student collection locations.

### **Evacuation Plans**

Relocation may be necessary if the staff and students are unable to safely remain in the school building.

#### **Dobbs Ferry Site:**

**Primary evacuation site:** Mercy College. Staff and children will proceed to 565 Broadway (formerly Our Lady of Victory Academy, now part of the Mercy College Campus) and into the school gym.

**Secondary evacuation site:** Sacred Heart Church hall. Staff and children will safely walk down Broadway and enter the church which is at the intersection of Broadway and Ashford Avenue.

#### **Scarsdale Site:**

**Primary evacuation site:** The Trinity Lutheran Church. The children and staff will walk around the Crane Road parking lot and enter the church.

**Secondary evacuation site:** Scarsdale Village Post Office, 29 Chase Road, Scarsdale

#### **Safe Sheltering in Place:**

At all of our locations, we have systems in place to immediately notify the staff and children of the need to shelter in place. **All plans are available for review in each location's front office, however for obvious reasons we will not make public where our students and staff will safely shelter should the need arise. Please note:** although we hope emergency situations will not arise, should one occur the safety and well-being of your children are of utmost concern to us. The children will believe that we are going on an adventure. The staff will bring food, water and other necessary supplies with them.

## **Child Injuries/Accidents**

In the event that your child is injured on the school premises, a staff person will inform you in person (at pick up time) or write in the notebook about minor scrapes. You will be informed about bumps to the head, large or small, by telephone after the incident occurs. You will either be asked to read and sign an accident report at pick-up time on the day the accident occurs or a copy of the form will be sent home for your signature.

## **Clothing**

Children should be dressed in washable play clothes. They should be dressed, as much as possible, in clothes they can handle themselves to facilitate independence. Sweaters, jackets and hats must be labeled with your child's name.

### **What Your Child Will Need on the First Day of School**

Send your child on the first day of school with a change of clothes in a shoe box labeled with their name. If your child requires diapers, please send a box with them and label it with their name. When the teacher runs out, they will let you know. Please send a labeled backpack each day with your child.

You will receive labels for your child's first few days of school. Please write your child's name on the label, and place on back of their shirt. This will aid in the identification process.

## **Rest**

We believe that preschool children who follow a full day schedule require a daily rest/nap period during their school day. It's a way for the children to "re-charge their batteries" since their minds and bodies are busy working hard at practicing and learning new skills. Learning how to relax your body in this fast-paced world is a life skill that plays a part in our overall health.

All children enrolled in the full-day program at Alcott School have a daily rest/nap period in their classroom after lunch. Each child brings a bedroll from home along with their rest shoes. These items stay at school during the week, **and the bedroll goes home for laundering on the weekends.** Each child has their own labeled rest cot which the school provides. These cots are cleaned and sanitized by the classroom staff. During rest/nap time, the lights are dimmed, the

blinds are closed, and the teachers help children relax and feel comfortable. Children are placed on cots on a head to toe pattern to maximize social distancing. Sometimes soft music is played.

## **Rest Shoes**

We require shoes for rest time. To maintain a clean cot, please send your child to school with **rest shoes**. These are shoes that have not and will not be used for outdoor activities. They must have **solid soles for emergency evacuation, in any kind of weather, in order for the children to walk out safely. Shoes should not light up or make noise.**

During rest/nap time, all the children are expected to rest their minds and bodies for a reasonable amount of time while lying down on their mat. Many children will sleep each day, but those children who don't fall asleep after an acceptable amount of time will be able to engage in quiet work while the rest of the class naps. The length of time that each child sleeps varies depending upon multiple factors such as: when did the child fall asleep, did the child have a poor night's sleep, how the child is feeling, etc. The classroom staff will share with you your child's rest/nap patterns at school and we ask that you please do the same in regard to sleep at home.

## **Food Allergy Guidelines**

Our staff strives to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children. We follow these guidelines to the extent possible, but do not guarantee that we can keep our environment completely free of food or other allergens that might cause a severe reaction.

- All children's allergies that require treatment must be documented by a medical professional, including symptoms that indicate a reaction is occurring and instructions for administering medication. Appropriate Alcott School documentation must be completed and turned in before the start of school.
- A written emergency action plan is prepared for all students with a life-threatening allergy to insure prompt recognition and treatment.
- We talk to the children about the importance of keeping the classroom safe and healthy for fellow classmates.
- We encourage frequent hand washing, especially before and after snack.
- We clean tables and other work surfaces several times a day, including before school begins and after lunch.
- We do not permit the sharing of food.
- We post lists of children's allergies in every classroom. The teachers and assistants are required to be familiar with every child's allergies.
- We make every effort to avoid serving foods that contain peanuts or tree nuts or may contain traces of such foods.
- Other foods such as shellfish, eggs, or milk may be served on a classroom by classroom basis, depending on the food allergies present in that classroom.
- If children have life-threatening allergies to food, they must provide an acceptable non-perishable snack to be kept at school and served as an alternative, as needed.
- We ask that parents speak with their child's classroom teacher regarding children allergies in the classroom before sending in special snacks or treats.
- Our guidelines apply to all functions in the school building in areas where children would be present.

## **Keeping Your Child Healthy**

Our goal is for all of the children enrolled at Alcott School to have a healthy, productive school year. We are asking for your help in achieving this goal. The following guidelines will minimize the chances of your child contracting an illness during the course of the school year.

- Teach your child to wash his or her hands frequently especially, before eating, after toileting, before coming to school, and after leaving school.
- Teach your child to blow his or her own nose and to wash hands afterwards.
- Teach your child to cover his or her mouth when he or she coughs.
- Be sure your child gets 10-12 hours of sleep each night.
- Encourage healthy food choices with an emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Keep your child home if he or she is sick or looks like they may become sick during the day. You will be asked to come to Alcott and pick up your child immediately if he/she shows symptoms of illness while at school.
- Be sure to notify the school if your child has a contagious illness so that we can take necessary precautions.

## **Promoting Healthy Living Habits**

The following is to share information with you about healthy food and beverage choices and the prevention of childhood obesity.

The foods children eat and lifestyle habits they learn have a lasting effect on their health. There are ways that Alcott School is promoting healthy habits while your child is in our care:

- We offer a fresh fruit and vegetable snack program.
- We engage in daily physical activity.
- Our staff sits with the children at meal times and models appropriate table manners and conversation.

The following are ideas, in partnership with us, to help your child set healthy living habits:

- Offer the fruits and vegetables you see served in your child's classroom at home.
- Sometimes new foods take time. Offer new fruits and vegetables several times.
- Ask us about our policy on celebrations.
- Share your child's favorite healthy recipes with us.
- Allow your children to help with food preparation, table setting and food planning at home.
- Cook and bake together.
- Chart how many different fruits and vegetables the family eats each week using stickers or drawings.
- Eat together.
- Talk about the healthy foods that you eat as a family.
- Stay active together. Going for walks or bike rides, or playing in a local park are great ways to enjoy activity with your children.
- Limit screen time. Physical activity helps children's bones and muscles grow strong and lowers the risk of weight gain.

For more information about healthy eating and exercise, visit:

Choose My Plate

[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

Eat Smart New York

[www.otda.ny.gov/programs/nutrition](http://www.otda.ny.gov/programs/nutrition)

Core Nutrition Messages for Healthier Food Choices

[www.fns.usda.gov/fns/core-nutritionmessages/default.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/core-nutritionmessages/default.htm)

Physical Activity Guidelines for Children

[www.nrckids.org/default/index.cfm/parentsguardians/](http://www.nrckids.org/default/index.cfm/parentsguardians/)

## **Lunch – full-day students**

As parents and staff, we all share a basic desire that our children eat nutritious food in a pleasant atmosphere. Good nutrition is important and something that we are all concerned about. We feel strongly that, to be consistent with our interest and concerns, we need to do our best to insure that each child in our school is provided with wholesome, healthy foods.

Please read carefully our policy regarding lunch:

Please send your child's lunch in a soft sided lunch box with handles, with his/her first and last name clearly marked on it. Handles are necessary so that children can carry their lunch independently.

If at all possible, send foods that need to be consumed warm in a thermos. That will eliminate the need to microwave lunches.

Lunches will be kept in the refrigerator until lunchtime.

When packing your child's lunch, consider using some of your child's favorites from this list:

- strips or chunks of fresh raw vegetables like: carrots, string beans, celery, whole peas in pod, peppers, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes
- cut up cheese, sliced egg, yogurt, cottage cheese, cereal, leftovers from dinner
- fruit, tuna fish sandwiches, cream cheese on raisin bread, etc.
- whole grain breads or crackers

To avoid choking hazards with food such as hot dogs, grapes, carrots, etc., please cut them into small bite-size pieces.

**Please do not send any of the following for lunch:**

Soda, Cracker Jacks, candy, gum, lollipops, any junk food, nor any of the cake and cookie type items such as Twinkies, Ring Dings, etc.

**Additional Suggestions:**

Remember to choose foods your child enjoys eating. Preparing lunch with your child the night before often leads to a more leisurely morning routine.

***Due to the increased incidence of allergies and asthma, we request that you DO NOT send peanut or nut products to school. We are a nut restricted environment.***

## **Illness Policy**

If your child will be absent, please call the school office. Children who are absent **3 or more days** must have a doctor's note before returning to school. A note from your child's health provider is required upon returning to school if your child has been hospitalized or seen in the emergency room.

### **General Sickness Guidelines**

**Please assess your child for signs and symptoms of illness before the start of the school day.**

**If your child presents with any symptoms of illness, please keep them at home.**

As per new guidelines children will have their temperatures taken and be given a health check before they are allowed to enter the building. Children will be screened for any signs of fever 100.0 or higher, chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, nasal congestion, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, lethargy, irritability, eye irritation, rash or skin color changes, headache, new loss of taste or smell. Any indication that your child is exhibiting any of these symptoms will exempt your child from attending the program, and a doctor's note will be required upon their return to school. New policy is that if a child has any of the above symptoms, the child may not return to school until they are symptom free without medication for 72 hours. If your child was diagnosed with COVID-19, the child may not return until all symptoms have resolved and any further directives from the Office of Children and Family Services, the Westchester County Department of Health, and the CDC will be followed. If your child has been exposed to COVID-19, a 10-day quarantine is required. If your child is exhibiting symptoms of an allergy or a chronic medical condition, it is not our place to diagnose the child's symptoms. Your child may not attend the program without written documentation from your healthcare provider that these symptoms are specific to the child's underlying condition.

Should your child develop symptoms of illness throughout the course of the school day, PLEASE provide CURRENT EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS so the child may be picked up from school as soon as possible. We advise you to have a support system in place to pick up your child IMMEDIATELY. We will do our best to isolate the child in the interim in order to monitor the child more closely. This is done in an effort to protect your child from a worsening condition as no over the counter medications will be administered to mitigate symptoms. It is also intended to protect other students and staff from a contagious and communicable situation.

If a child's symptoms become severe and we cannot reach the parent or designated emergency contact, we will call 911.

If you have a caregiver who makes the decision on whether to send your child to school, please discuss our policy with them. We understand how difficult it is for all parents when their child is ill. The staff appreciates your cooperation.

## **School Absences:**

### **If your child will not be attending school for any reason:**

- If your child attends the **Dobbs Ferry** location, call the school at 914-693-7677, and call Astra Transportation at 914-965-9006
- If your child attends the **Scarsdale location**, call the school at 914-472-4404, and call All County Bus Co. at 914-963-9600.

If the bus arrives at school and your child is not on it, and no "absence message" has been received, Alcott is required by Westchester County Department of Health to call you to ascertain your child's whereabouts. In order to be proactive, a quick voice message from you will avoid any further investigation. An absence note explaining your child's absence is required if you do not alert the school office as to the reason prior to his/her return.

If your child is placed on temporary medication after illness, please inform your child's teacher so they can be alerted to any medication side effects or changes in your child's behavior. Please time the dosage of any medication so that they can be given at home during non-school hours (See "Medications" section in this booklet).

In the event of a medical emergency, children at the Dobbs Ferry site are transported to **St. John's Riverside Hospital Dobbs Ferry Pavillion**. Children at our Scarsdale site are transported to **White Plains Hospital Center**.

Parent alerts regarding school illnesses will be emailed to you and posted on the Alcott School's website. The purpose of this information is to alert parents as to any contagious illness or condition (such as "pink eye") which may be occurring at school. This will help parents to be alerted to similar symptoms in their child so that necessary precautions can be taken. Any questions or concerns regarding a particular illness or health concern should be referred to the Director of Health Services.

## **Emergency Medications**

Alcott does not routinely administer medication in school except for life threatening emergencies.

**The following conditions must be met before emergency medication can be dispensed:**

- The parent must provide the student's medication and must deliver the student's medication to the school in a properly labeled original container. Students should never carry medication in their back pack.
- All prescription medication must be labeled, including:
  - Child's name
  - Name of medication
  - Dosage, timing and route of administration of medication
  - Length of time order is in effect
  - Prescriber's name, title, signature and telephone number
- A Written Medication Consent Form must be completed. Part A is completed by your child's health care provider and Part B is completed by the parent.
- If your doctor requires your child to take an OTC medication, a Written Medication Consent Form must be completed.
- All OTC medications must be in an original, unopened container labeled with the child's name.
- Medication kept at school must be in an original, unopened box.
- The name of the medication on the container must match the name your doctor writes on the Written Medication Consent Form.

If the parent anticipates that a child may require medication which is not for a life-threatening emergency, please see the site director as to the specific procedure to follow in this situation.

## **Hearing and Vision Screening**

If you suspect that your child has a hearing or vision problem, please inform your child's teacher so that an appropriate referral can be made. The earlier a problem is identified, the more favorable the outlook for correction which will impact on your child's education and development. Do not hesitate to utilize the school resources or your child's health provider for assistance.

## **Parking**

Do not pass school buses with flashing lights.  
Do not leave children in your car unattended.  
Do not leave your car running.  
Do not park, wait for, or drop off passengers in the fire lane.

### **Scarsdale Parking:**

- Make a right turn at the STOP sign as you enter the parking lot.
- The traffic flow is one way in a clockwise direction. Drive slowly and with caution.
- **Park in the lot in an unnumbered spot and escort your child to his/her classroom designated health screening area (TO BE ANNOUNCED).**

Please do not:

- Send your child to the health screening area unescorted. Do not leave before health screening process is completed.
- Park blocking the front entrance of the building or alongside the playground.
- Park in any numbered parking spots (along the church building).

### **Dobbs Ferry Parking:**

- Park in designated spots only and escort your child to his/her classroom designated health screening area (TO BE ANNOUNCED). Drive slowly and with caution.
- Be prepared to wait for a parking spot to become available.
- Be considerate of others and leave yourself plenty of time.
- During drop-off and pick-up, you may park behind cars facing Broadway in the lower lot. Those cars belong to staff members.

Please do not...

- Send your child to the health screening area unescorted. Do not leave before the process is completed.
- Park in the circle in front of the building where buses pull up.
- Leave your car parked in the middle of the parking lot, blocking other cars from pulling out.
- Leave your car running.

## **Personal Belongings**

Due to COVID19 restrictions, children may not bring any personal belongings to school such as toys, stuffed animals, and books.

## **Snow/Emergency Closings**

Inclement weather may sometimes necessitate closing school. School closings will be announced via a variety of methods, including Alcott's website at <http://www.alcottschool.org>. Please return the Communication Form promptly in order to receive a text, email or voicemail message via One Call Now in the event of any emergency closing. Closings will also be posted on Optimum Channel 12 in Westchester. If you are in doubt, call the school to listen for our message on the voice mail:

**Dobbs Ferry: 914-693-7677**

**Scarsdale: 914-472-4404**

You may also call the Bus Company:

**Astra Transportation: 914-965-9006**

**All County Bus: 914-963-9600**

Please understand that delaying and/or closing school is not something done without a great deal of thought. Our primary concern is the safety of your children.

## **Therapy**

### Speech and Occupational Therapy

Speech and Occupational Therapy may be provided using a “push-in” model. This means that individual and group therapy is provided in the classroom to facilitate a child’s use of language and fine motor skills among peers and teachers. “Pull out” services are also provided as needed to meet each child’s individual needs.

Children who require a sensory integration approach for occupational therapy may receive “pull-out” services. This means they will be taken out of the class for all or part of the session.

### Physical Therapy

Physical therapy is provided in our gym, playground and/or classrooms. Physical therapy focuses on improving gross motor skills which include balance coordination, strengthening and age appropriate motor skills.

## Counseling

Counseling is a mandated related service which some children receive as part of their school program. Play therapy, behavioral support and improving peer interactions are the focus of this service. Counseling services are provided in the therapist's office (pull-out) or in the classroom (push-in) based on the child's clinical needs.

## **TEACCH**

(Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication handicapped Children)  
TEACCH is an approach to help children learn the beginning and end of an activity and to help them organize and structure their time. The children are assisted to follow "a schedule" which is set up for them to check to find out what activity comes next. In this model, visual cues such as real objects or photographs are used to assist with transitions.

## **Notebooks**

Each child will be given a notebook, marked with their name. Several times weekly, the teacher or a therapist will write in the book about activities done at school.

We encourage parents write back about things that go on at home - simple things like "I took Johnny to the park today. He enjoyed the slide," or important things, "Grandma is coming for the weekend." The therapists also may write in this book to share with the parents some of the remediation activities they are doing with the child. Sometimes the therapist may make suggestions for things parents and children can do together at home.

## **Pocket Treasures**

From time to time, every child takes home something from school, either inadvertently or by plan. Often these items are very small in size like a tiny block or miniature toy, but frequently they represent the smallest part of a set. If any unidentifiable objects turn up at your home, please return them to the school. We can tell you at a glance if they are important pieces of apparatus or random objects picked up from a friend.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Conferences are scheduled twice a year (Fall & Spring). An updated calendar will be sent home with exact conference dates once the school year begins. At this time, conferences will be conducted via a remote platform such as Zoom or Google Meet. During these conferences, IEP (Individualized Education Plan) updates and reports, written by the child's teacher, are presented to parents. Parental input is requested. Issues/concerns about the child are discussed. Both parents are strongly encouraged to attend. More specific information as to the content of parent conferences is provided closer to the date of the first scheduled meeting.

If questions arise in between conference times, please feel free to call the SCIS Coordinator, Debra Frank, or the teacher at 914-693-7677 (Dobbs Ferry) or (914) 472-4404 (Scarsdale). Additional conferences may be scheduled if needed at the request of a parent or an Alcott staff member. Alcott's therapy staff are also available to conference with parents upon request at any time during the year.

## **Class Placement**

Although it is unlikely that your child will change classes, class placements are considered temporary until October 30th. The staff forms class groupings based on Alcott's evaluations of children new to the program and our knowledge of the continuing children. Such information is limited, and sometimes a child is asked to change groups if staff feels that his or her needs would be better served in another group. At that time, a child may be asked to change classes.

## **Birthday Observance in Class**

Children will be recognized in class on their birthdays. If parents wish to send refreshments, please discuss with your child's teacher. Teachers will advise parents if there are any dietary problems among members of their child's class. **Please note that Alcott maintains a nut restricted environment. Fresh fruits and vegetables are the only snacks permitted.** Alcott's Birthday Book Program is a fun and easy way to celebrate your child's special day. Ask your child to pick a favorite book. Due to COVID19, parents will be restricted from in-person visiting on your child's birthday. Instead, a member of the classroom staff will read your child's special book.

## **Confidentiality of Records**

Confidentiality of your child's records is guaranteed by law (the Buckley Amendment or Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act) and by Alcott policy. No records may be released without parental written permission, except to funding sources such as County of Westchester and the State Education Department. Parents of three and four-year-old children who are being placed at Alcott via their school district Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) have signed a CPSE consent form. No other permission is required to allow Alcott to forward your child's records to your school district in these cases.

Further information on this subject is available from the Director of Special Education. A parent has the right, by making an appointment with the Director of Special Education or the SCISClass Coordinator to review records in their child's file at any time, and to obtain a copy of the records. A full copy of Alcott's policy on record access and confidentiality is available upon request.

### **Insurance / Medicaid Information**

At some point, parents may be asked information about their insurance coverage by Alcott staff. This is done to comply with County or State policy. Both the County and the State are investigating alternate means to fund some services to preschoolers with special needs. Bureaucratic systems for utilizing private insurance are not yet in place. If and when they do become operative, parents will be informed as to all the particulars. Please note that services will continue to be available to children at no cost to parents.

Similarly, if a child is a Medicaid recipient, information as to accessing this coverage for some services will be requested to comply with State and County policies.

### **Child Abuse – Mandatory Reporters**

All employees of the Alcott School are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse and / or neglect according to New York State law. If any school employee has a reasonable basis to suspect that a child may be the subject of child abuse, maltreatment or neglect, the school employee MUST make a phone call to the Child Protective Services Hotline and provide them with enough information that the government may conduct an investigation to determine if the child is being neglected, abused or maltreated. A written report must also be submitted. It is not within the authority of Alcott employees to investigate suspected situations of abuse, but it is an illegal act to fail to report the suspicion.

### **Bus Information**

If your child's location is Dobbs Ferry: **Astra Transportation 914-965-9006**

If your child's location is Scarsdale: **All County Bus 914-963-9600**

The Bus Company will be contacting you directly to arrange your child's pick-up and drop-off time. Alcott has no direct responsibility in arranging pick up or drop off. The bus companies and the school which service your child are **independent** organizations. So, if you have any questions or concerns regarding the bus company, please call them directly.

If your **child does not require transportation on any given day, please call the bus company** and report this fact to them so that they do not send out a bus unnecessarily. If your child's transportation plans are changed for any given day please:

- Call the bus company and alert them to the change.
- Send an email or make a note in your child's notebook stating what the changed plans are (e.g. Do not put Johnny on the bus at noon, I will pick him up myself) so that the teacher knows what to expect.

Please have your child ready and waiting when the bus arrives. If your child delays the bus, often the whole school program for that day is delayed.

### **Please Note:**

Westchester County Department of Health policy states that if no one is home to receive the child from the school bus, (and the emergency contacts are also unavailable), the child is to be taken to **Child Protective Services**. Please make sure someone is always at home to receive your child, and that your emergency contacts are current.

### **Parent/Guardian/Foster Parent Involvement**

In addition to serving the needs of the children, the staff is also concerned about the parents of our children. We try to meet their needs in formal and informal ways.

The following is an outline of parent involvement activities offered during the school year.

### **Parent Support Groups**

- Parent Support groups are held throughout the year. Emotional implications of rearing a child with special needs as well as productive ways of dealing with children are the focus of these discussions. We are hoping to provide remote parent support groups this year. Your participation is encouraged. More information will follow.

### **Educational/Information Workshops**

These workshops are held throughout the year. They provide an opportunity for Alcott staff or outside speakers to offer parents workshops and/or discussion groups on topics of interest. For example, once a year, we have a "*Transition from CPSE to CSE*" meeting with parents to discuss the process for students entering kindergarten. Due to COVID19, these workshops will be provided remotely.

### **Class Parents**

The SCIS program needs parents from each classroom to serve as "*Class Parents*" during the coming school year. Your main responsibility will be as a link between the classroom teacher and the other parents in your child's class. Duties will include, planning for special activities, fund-raisers, making phone calls and special classroom projects. The parents who volunteer would share each of these responsibilities so that no one parent is overwhelmed by them. Class

Parents would meet with the Program Coordinator throughout the year as a core parent group. Class parents would then share this information with the other parents, keeping everyone informed of the school activities.

Finally, on rare occasions, the Alcott administrators may need your help in calling parents in your child's class regarding any emergency school closing, some legislative action affecting SCIS, or some other unforeseen circumstances.

Class parents are a valued resource, so we hope you will consider volunteering.

## **Student Behavior Management Plan**

Preschool children and toddlers are inherently working on and refining their social skills. At the Alcott School, we help children to develop internal self-control, independence and empathy for others. At times it becomes necessary to intervene in a child's behavior and therefore, we have developed and implemented a behavior management plan.

Alcott School's behavior management plan consists of the following techniques to pre-empt instances where behavior management is necessary and to intervene in a child's behavior as needed:

We redirect, i.e. in a conflict we provide choices and alternatives. For example, "You can either sit on a rug or at a table for story time."

- We focus on "Do" rather than "Don't." For example, "We walk inside," instead of "Stop running inside!"
- We encourage children to use friendly words rather than physical acts. For example, "This is my work."
- We praise positive behavior. For example, "I like the way you used your words."
- We model desired behaviors in order for the children to learn by example.
- We arrange the classroom space to positively impact children's behavior. For example, avoid large open spaces that might encourage children to run indoors.
- The classroom is the children's place. We listen to the children and respond to their needs proactively to achieve their goals. We aim to keep the children engaged with activities thus helping to prevent conflict.
- We involve the children in the development of the classroom rules.

The Alcott School adheres to the following guidelines when implementing behavior management techniques with a child enrolled in the program:

- Children may only be disciplined by the director, head teacher, Program Coordinator, Program Supervisor, classroom therapist or assistant teacher.
- The Alcott School applies all rules consistently and appropriately to the ages of the children and their developmental level and abilities.
- Any behavior management used will relate to the child's actions and be handled without prolonged delay.
- A child may be briefly separated from the group, but only long enough to gain self-control and will be in view of, supervised, and supported by the director, head teacher, Program Coordinator, Program Supervisor, classroom therapist or assistant teacher.
- We do not use corporal punishment.
- We do not use methods of interaction that punish, demean or humiliate children, nor do we physically restrain children, other than to keep them safe.
- Any abuse or maltreatment of a child, either as an incident of discipline or otherwise, is prohibited.

Please note that we do not tolerate or in any manner condone an act of abuse or neglect of a child by an employee, volunteer, or any person under the program's control.

## **Summer Program**

As a continuation of the school year SCIS program, Alcott offers a six-week summer school experience. This program begins approximately July 1<sup>st</sup> and continues for six weeks. State and County funds pay tuition and transportation expenses. For three and four-year-old children, there are specific criteria for summer program eligibility which some Alcott students will not meet. Students who do not meet summer eligibility criteria will need to find alternative summer programs.

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible for a summer program, a child must meet the "substantial regression" criteria. This means that their skills will substantially regress over the summer without continuous schooling. Regression & eligibility for summer services will be discussed at your child's spring parent teacher conference.

State Education Department (the department which approves summer school placements) policy is that only those children who will attend the **full six weeks** of summer school are eligible although exceptions are made in rare instances.

Rationale for this policy is that children whose parents wish to send the children for only a portion of the six weeks because of family vacation or similar plans do not consider their child truly at risk for substantial regression.

Essentially, the summer program follows that of the school year. Similar IEP goals are worked on in both the school year and the summer sessions. Similar services (educational, speech, motor, and counseling) are maintained as per IEP mandates. However, the summer program is different in that it offers additional gross motor and outdoor activities. Teachers set up sprinklers on the playground. There is much emphasis on dressing skills, as youngsters have to dress and undress to use the sprinklers. Student teachers or junior counselors may join our staff for the summer which is helpful with so many children to help dress and undress in a short time.

## **Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE) Annual Reviews**

If your child attends Alcott School, you have already had an initial CPSE (school district) meeting and are familiar with the procedures and personnel involved.

If your child will graduate from Alcott this year, please skip to the next section entitled **Kindergarten Placement**. If your child will not graduate from Alcott this year and is eligible to return next September, please be aware that in order to re-enroll your child in Alcott, the following procedure will be necessary in the spring semester.

School districts will hold an annual review, which is a meeting similar to your initial CPSE. However, at this meeting, no formal evaluations other than your child's updated IEP and progress reports are required. The exception to this is the child who has had updated formal testing; e.g., a new psychological evaluation done since the initial CPSE. In this case, the new information would be presented.

### **The CPSE has three choices at Annual Reviews:**

- The child is benefitting from their current program and it should be continued for the coming school year.
- The child should continue in their present program, but the program should be modified in some way (e.g., the number of therapy sessions should be increased or decreased).
- The child's educational plan requires some modifications. They may need a more intensive (e.g., full day) special education program or may be ready for a less intensive approach (e.g., a mainstream preschool program with special education or therapy services delivered in that setting).

The purpose of the annual review is to review the child's placement and progress to make sure they are benefitting from their program. Decisions about programs and services for the new school year are made by the CPSE, and a new IEP is written with parental input. The parent/guardian must agree to the new IEP and the program, services, goals and objectives it lists. If parents/guardians do not agree with decisions made at the annual review, due process is available. Details as to what due process is and how it works are available from your school district.

Alcott personnel will assist in preparing reports for your child's annual review to ensure that service plans for the coming year as agreed to by parent and CPSE members, proceed smoothly. As the spring semester begins, parents will receive notices and information regarding annual reviews from both their school districts and Alcott. Personnel from both organizations will be available to answer any questions or assist in any way. Parents are notified of the date and time of their CPSE meeting and are expected to attend. Any reports sent by Alcott to school districts are discussed with parents so that parents can participate meaningfully in the annual review meeting.

## **Kindergarten Placement CSE (Committee on Special Education) Procedures**

The CSE places children with special needs aged 5-21 (i.e., from kindergarten through high school), in appropriate programs.

A child graduates from the SCIS program the June before they are ready to enter kindergarten.

The Alcott staff helps parents/guardians to find a suitable kindergarten placement in the following ways:

- Alcott, working with the school district, informs parents of procedures for having children placed in public school general or special education classes. (These procedures are described briefly on the next page.)
- Alcott staff writes reports as required by your child's school district. ALL reports sent to the Committee on Special Education are also discussed with parents.

It is important to understand that Alcott's role in the CSE process is that of a resource person to the parents and Committee. In the CPSE process, the Alcott representative is a member of the Committee. In the CSE process, however, they are not a Committee member. Their role, therefore, in the CSE decision-making process is limited.

Of course, if our staff can be of assistance in ways other than those being described, they are always available to parents.

In January, a "*Transition from CPSE to CSE*" informational workshop is held for parents, advising them of the formal procedures and legal rights involved in placing children with special needs.

## **Procedures for Accessing Special Education Classes and/or Services in your Public School**

1. The Committee (usually consisting of a Chairperson, a psychologist, a special education teacher, a general education teacher, and possibly some other professionals) meet with you to discuss the reports they have received. Some members of the Committee **may** have seen or evaluated your child prior to this meeting. Some **may** have visited Alcott to observe him or her in class. After discussing the reports and their own impressions on seeing or evaluating your child, the Committee decides whether or not your child continues to qualify for special education services, and is therefore eligible for services in kindergarten. If your child no longer qualifies, he or she is "declassified," and will be placed in a mainstream kindergarten class. If your child continues to be eligible for services, the CSE must decide which handicapping condition best describes your child's difficulties. Although preschool children are designated with the general term "preschool child with a disability," CSE Committees are mandated to describe the child more specifically. They choose from 13 classifications, such as speech impaired, other health impaired, etc.

For eligible children, the Committee on Special Education outlines possible placements for the following year. Placement options include special classes or mainstream classes with special services. The parent is expected to be an active participant in discussions about choice of handicapping condition, placement and services as parental input must be factored into these decisions. A new IEP, with goals and objectives for the coming year, is written.

2. After the meeting, parents are allowed to visit the potential placement sites.
3. After the meeting, and after parents/guardians have agreed to the IEP, formal papers are signed stating what your child's placement will be and what special services (e.g., speech therapy) they will receive.
4. If there is any disagreement between the CSE and the parent/guardians "due process" procedures are available. Copies of due process rights are furnished to parents by their school district.

**Note**

If Alcott or your school district suggest that your child is ready for a general education kindergarten class, and you agree, it may not be necessary to go through the above described procedures. However, some parents whose children are scheduled for general education kindergarten choose to make use of the CSE process to alert their school system to the fact that their child has had educational services in the past, and request that his or her progress be monitored or special support services (e.g., speech therapy) be given on a regular basis.