

The Art of Wisdom Parent Handbook

2018/2019

Revised September, 2018

The Art of Wisdom

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**Handbook Revision**

The Art of Wisdom Inc. (“The Art of Wisdom, TAOW”) reserves the right to revise, delete, or supplement any provisions of this parent handbook (“Handbook”) as necessary. Policies and procedures cannot all be predicted and listed here. Policy changes will be posted on the website for 30 days. Any reproduction in whole or in part of this handbook is prohibited without prior written approval. We thank you in advance for your understanding.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

*The Art of Wisdom is an equal opportunity employer and provider.*

*The Art of Wisdom*

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Welcome to The Art of Wisdom!

This handbook was developed for families of The Art of Wisdom to provide information about the policies and procedures governing the operation of The Art of Wisdom. Each new family is asked to read the handbook in its entirety and submit an acknowledgement of receipt at the time of enrollment. Your family’s involvement directly affects the success of our community school. To demonstrate the importance of families, we share with you a brief history of our school. We hope your experience with us will be rich and rewarding to both your child and your family.

We are a non-profit art-based, mindful community school whose philosophy is based on the Tao Te Ching. The *simplicity of mindfulness, being kind to others, empathy and imagination* is weaved into everything we do.

*​​*

**This is where *Creativity Comes Alive.***

Welcome

# Mission Statement

*The Art of Wisdom (TAOW) is a nonprofit community-based school in East Quogue, New York whose mission is to empower and educate children through a focus on art, imagination, and communication. With an art-based curriculum and lessons grounded in the Tao Te Ching philosophy, TAOW offers a variety of programs, including preschool, summer art camp, after school program and special event workshops.*

# Vision Statement

To serve as a place of belonging and empowerment for children, where they can make loving and compassionate choices, and reach their full potential in becoming caring and responsible adults.

#

# Curriculum

We follow the most current practices in Early Childhood Education: we embrace and nurture the ‘Whole Child,’ and allow each child to learn at his or her own pace.  We believe an environment that provides children with the elements listed above is best suited for every child.  Any person feels good in an environment that empowers them. Most importantly, we believe that each child is born with at least one special gift, and as teachers it is our job to recognize that gift and help the child to recognize and develop their gift as it emerges. Entering the child’s world right where they are and making learning exciting and fun.

Our curriculum is Art based, encouraging our children to explore the many mediums that art has to offer. We have also found that through art children open up. Our school makes beautiful unique pieces of art from recycled trash. This teaches the child to be conscious of the world we live in, while encouraging the child’s imagination and showing them that you can create from anything. Our program includes music, so our children can embrace their inner soul and express their joy for life through dancing, singing and instruments. Our curriculum includes gardening, so our children can learn about the cycle of nature. Our school makes salt dough from scratch, creating the whole alphabet. We believe that every moment is a lesson, so we are always fully aware of the words we use and the energy we bring to the classroom. To sum it up we teach our children that we never touch anyone so lightly that we don’t leave a trace.

# Registration

Our 2018/2019 school year begins on Tuesday, September 9, 2018. We are open from 9AM-3PM. We currently offer toddler, preschool, and youth programs.

## Registration Requirements

TAOW and NYS policy requires that the parent complete and submit the following forms to TAOW prior to your child’s first day at the center.

1.Identification and Emergency Information

2. Physician’s Report (child’s pre-admission health evaluation)

3. Consent for Emergency Treatment

4. Parent’s Report (child’s pre-admission health history)

5. Immunization Record

6. Permission to Participate (program activities)

7. Enrollment Contract

Failure to provide the required forms may result in delaying your child’s participation in the program.

## Hours/Tuition/Late Fees/Scholarships

### Hours

TAOW is open from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. TAOW does not allow parents and children into the school prior to 9:00 a.m. and parents must pick up children by 3:00 p.m., or at the end of their scheduled class time. Parents and children are not allowed into the school until their scheduled class time. Parents must notify staff if they expect to be late for pick-up. Failure to pick up your child by 4 p.m. without notification may result in staff calling local police. Prior to such a call, TAOW staff will call the child’s emergency contacts.

### Late Fees

Tuition is due the first of each month. Each family will receive a grace period of five (5) days. If you are unable to make this date, please contact as soon as possible to make arrangements, or your account will begin to accrue late fees at the rate of $5 per day that tuition is overdue. If payment is not received by the 10th business day of the month, your child will be dropped from the program. Siblings receive a 10% discount. If tuition is paid in full for your child for the regular school year by August 31, 2018 (that is, excluding any extracurricular programming), you will receive 10% off your total rate if paying with cash or check, 7% if paying with a credit card.

### Scholarships

When extra funds become available from fundraising or grants, we will let our enrolled families first of the opportunity to apply for scholarships. Scholarships are awarded based on financial need. They may pay partial or all tuition for the child’s year. Any family that receives a full or partial scholarship will be made aware when their tuition will end, and the amount due on the first of the month following the month that the scholarship has ended (i.e scholarship runs out in May, monthly tuition payment starts June 1.) If scholarship funds are available, previous recipients will be encouraged to reapply, and will be considered for funds in the order their application was received and/or need.

### Rates

Toddler Rates

**All classes run two hours**

2 days a week ~ $190.00 month

3 days a week ~ $280.00 month

4 days a week ~ $380.00 a month

5 days a week ~ $480.00 a month

Nursery & Preschool Rates

**All classes run three hours**

2 days a week ~ $240.00 month

3 days a week ~ $325.00 month

4 days a week ~ $430.00 a month

5 days a week ~ $540.00 a month

3 hour extended day add $25 each day

6 hour extended day add $40 each day

**As a reminder, there is a discount for siblings and for paying your child’s year in full (no refunds).**

# Dropping Your Child Off at School

 An adult must accompany the children into the welcome area of the preschool, where a member of the teaching staff will greet them and escort the children into the classroom. The person who drops-off the child/children must sign the child/children in every day with a complete (full legal) signature and time of arrival. That person should also share with the teacher’s information on any changes in daily routine that may affect the child/children’s experience in school. If such information requires a lengthy conversation, we encourage you to set up a personal conference with the classroom teachers during office hours, so as not to interfere with the teachers’ ability to meet and greet other students during drop-off times.

 Once your child is greeted by the teachers and escorted into the classroom, we ask that parents take their leave promptly, so as not to interfere with classroom activities. Please be mindful that extended goodbyes may prolong children’s separation anxiety and will impede the children from immersing themselves in classroom activities.

# Family

## Parent Involvement

We welcome and encourage family involvement in a variety of ways. The Art of Wisdom as a non-profit organization relies heavily on parent involvement in the administration of, fundraising for, and maintenance of The Art of Wisdom. Parents in their involvement help defray operating costs, provide us with invaluable resources, and can influence the direction and purpose of TAOW.

Parents are invited and encouraged to the call the school anytime with any questions or concerns that they may have. While we also invite the parents to plan a visit to the school anytime, we ask that parents are mindful of the children’s schedules and conduct their visits at appropriately scheduled times, as to not interfere with the children’s learning process or other extracurricular activities.

Families are encouraged to participate in the learning process by discussing and expanding on their children’s preschool experience at home.

# Child Health and Safety

**In accordance with the NYS OCFS Regulations, parents are responsible to implement immediate pick-up arrangements in the event their child is sick.**

* This includes signs and symptoms of fever, vomiting, head lice and other infectious diseases. Parents will be notified immediately in the event of an illness or serious injury. The completed blue emergency card provides TAOW with parent permission for emergency medical treatment for their child. This includes providing first aid and calling 911 for medical assistance in the event the illness or injury is severe. In the event a child is taken directly to a hospital, a staff member will accompany the child.
* If a child resides in two separate households with their custodial parents, TAOW will require that each parent complete their own emergency pick-up form.
* It is important for parents to inform TAOW of any special health care needs his/her child may have.
* It is a license regulation to inform all parents, in writing, in the event a child has a communicable disease. (Child’s name will not be disclosed.)
* It is a license regulation for the Program Supervisor to teach children about
* health and safety.
* Outdoor play is a regulatory requirement unless it is extremely cold or raining. Please ensure your child’s comfort by dressing your child appropriately. Exclusions to keeping a child inside during outdoor play time require a doctor’s written statement and our ability to cover staff to child ratios.
* Children are required to wear sneakers or closed toe rubber sole shoes to use the playground equipment or to engage in active play.
* Children in long dresses and skirts, or a dress/skirt without shorts, may be restricted from using the playground equipment for safety reasons.
* Children must remove dangling necklaces and earrings before engaging in active play.

## Transportation Safety

Per NY State Motor Vehicle Safety Restraint laws for children, every child released from our custody must be in a child safety seat. NYS requires:

* all children under the age of 4 ride in child safety seats
* all children ride in child restraint systems until their 8th birthday

Safety seats and child restraint systems must be certified according to Federal Motor Vehicles Safety Standard 213. Follow the instructions of the manufacturer of the seat or system, and make sure you install and use the seat or system correctly. The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee website has a [list of permanent child safety seat fitting stations in NY State](http://www.safeny.ny.gov/seat-per.htm). (NYSDMV, 2018)

## Child Abuse

* As mandated reporters, all TAOW staff is required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect and can be held criminally liable if they fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect.
* Report any actions by TAOW staff that you deem inappropriate to the Director. If these actions involve suspected child abuse, contact the Child Abuse Hotline immediately at 1-800-342-3720.
* TAOW will not release a child to a parent or designated pick up person if, in the judgment of the staff, the person is acting in a way that is consistent with the inappropriate use of drugs or alcohol. While we cannot hold a child against his/her parents will, TAOW staff will be required to contact the local police and CPS.

## Child Release

Per OCFS regulations, no child can be released from the child day care center to any person other than his or her parent, a person(s) currently designated in writing by such parent to receive the child, or another person authorized by law to take custody of a child.

Upon enrollment, verification of identity is required for at least one parent and the child. For identity of a parent or court-appointed legal guardian, one of the following items is required:

 a. Driver’s License (or government ID card)

 b. Current Passport or Permanent Resident Card

For identity of a child, one of the following items is required:

 a. Official or Certified Copy of Birth Certificate

 b. Current Passport or Permanent Resident Card

 A child may not start without verification of identification from at least one parent. If none of the child’s documents are available by the start date, the child may start, and enrollment will be considered “provisional” for a period of 90 days. If after 90 days we have not received verification of the child’s identity, the child will be immediately withdrawn. Please note that a hospital “Record of Birth” is not an acceptable means of identification for the child.

## Permission to Pick Up

We maintain a strict policy regarding the individuals to whom we will release a child. Enrollment forms require a parent to specify individuals to whom the child may be released. Advance authorization is required for a child to be released to an individual other than those already listed. It is recommended that parents name everyone who might pick-up their child when enrolling and update this information regularly. Only in cases of necessity or emergency should a change be made over the telephone. When notified by telephone, we may request that certain family information be confirmed for verification. The person picking up the child will be required to present identification when arriving at school.

Should a person other than the child’s parent(s) or those indicated on the application arrive to pick-up the child, a parent and/or the first available person on the emergency contact list will be notified and the child will not be released until proper authorization is received. Should an unauthorized person become confrontational or uncooperative with our staff, we will immediately notify the police. We will not release a child to any parent, relative or other authorized adult who appears to our staff to be impaired by the use of drugs or alcohol. In the event this situation occurs, a telephone call will be made to the parent, emergency contact person and/or police.

## Custody, Court Orders and Changes of Family Status

TAOW encourages parents to be actively involved in their child’s care and education. In providing care for a child, continuing and meaningful contact with both parents is required. Therefore, the school will not prohibit parents from accessing records, attending activities or participating in conferences pertaining to their child unless otherwise required by court order or law. The school denies a parent access to their child only if there is a legal document which addresses that denial. In these circumstances, we require (1) a certified copy of the current court order which mandates the rights or restraints, (2) a letter from the custodial parent stating that the non-custodial parent is not allowed to pick up the child, and (3) a photo of the non-custodial parent to help us with identification. We cannot accept information regarding the validity of orders over the phone; only written information will be accepted.

Visitation schedules and parenting plans are agreements made between parents and are not binding to the school. The school will release a child to either parent in accordance with school policy unless otherwise directed by a valid court order. Visitation with the non-custodial parent will not be permitted to take place at school.

The school discourages parents from involving school staff in disputes over custody, visitation schedules, child support and other related issues. Staff members must stay focused on providing children with the highest level of instruction and care. To do so, they must maintain good relationships with both parents and should not be asked to support one parent over another. Staff will not testify or otherwise participate in a custody dispute in their capacities as school employees unless served with a subpoena. Often, child records can provide the same information as the testimony of a staff member, and parents have access to child records by law. Parents are encouraged to use records rather than staff testimony in resolving these types of disputes.

## Parent Code of Conduct

We expect parents to observe a certain standard of conduct. The following items are not acceptable in the preschool:

• Physical or verbal punishment of their children

• Physical or verbal punishment of other children

• Threatening, harassing or otherwise disrespecting staff, other parents or other children

• Swearing/cursing or threatening/obscene gestures

• Quarreling with other parents or staff

• Making negative or disparaging comments regarding the school to staff, parents or anyone other than Administration (including outside of school)

• Not following policies designated to protect the safety and security of everyone at the School

Any violation of this policy will result in the immediate withdrawal of the child from TAOW.

## Meals and Snacks

Keeping our children safe is our number one priority. We currently do not offer meals or snacks so that allergy sensitive children can bring healthy snacks for themselves. We also ask that other families be aware that we may have allergy sensitive children in our program, and do not send in any meal or snack that contains nuts. We also ask that each family sends their child in with a spill-proof cup that we will use to give them filtered water during snack and meal times instead of juice boxes or the like. Please do not send in any food item that can be regarded as a choking hazard such as grapes.

# Dress Code

## Clothing

Your child’s clothing should be weather appropriate, washable and suitable for ACTIVE play. Clothing may become stained by paint, markers, dirt, etc so please do not send your child in any clothing that is unsuitable for preschool activities. LABEL ALL CLOTHING! THERE SHOULD BE AT LEAST ONE SET OF SPARE CLOTHES IN CASE OF ACCIDENTS OR SPILLS FOR ALL CHILDREN, TODDLERS SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST TWO SETS OF SPARE CLOTHES. Clothing needs to be easily accessible in the cubby. For the preschool children, TAOW staff may request the child to retrieve their own clothing. As such, if clothing is stored in a bag, the child should be able to access the bag without assistance. TAOW staff will bag all wet or soiled clothing and place in your child’s cubby to go home. TAOW staff requests that parents check their child’s cubby daily for any soiled clothing.

## Shoes

TAOW does not allow open toed shoes such as Thongs or “Jelly shoes,” ballet slippers or slick bottomed party shoes on the play yard. These types of shoes are not safe in the play yard and can create a danger to the child. TAOW recommends sneakers or closed toed shoes as they are the most comfortable and safe and allow for uninhibited outdoor active play. If your child cannot tie shoes, it is recommended that they wear sneakers with Velcro or slip on shoes (slip on shoes must have a full back).

# Parent Statement of Handbook

# Acknowledgement/Preschool Policies

I have received a copy of The Art of Wisdom’s Handbook. I understand that it provides guidelines and summary information about our preschool policies and procedures at The Art of Wisdom.

I also understand it is my responsibility to read, understand, become more familiar with and comply with the guidelines established by The Art of Wisdom. I further understand that The Art of Wisdom reserves the right to modify, supplement, or revise any provision or policy, with or without notice, as it deems necessary or appropriate.

Please sign below:

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, parent of

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have read the The Art of Wisdom Handbook and understand all the policies and procedures detailed in it. If I did not understand part of the The Art of Wisdom Handbook, I have asked the policy director and clarified the matter. I now stand in full knowledge of the policies and procedures outlined in the The Art of Wisdom Handbook.

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Signature

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Date