

AGBU MANOOGIAN-DEMIRDJIAN SCHOOL

**ARTEMIS NAZARIAN PRESCHOOL
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PARENT HANDBOOK

2018-2019

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Table of Contents

Forward	page 3
Program Philosophy.....	3
Program Goals.....	3
Curriculum.....	4
Daily Routine.....	5
Teaching Staff and Ratio.....	5
Admission Policy and Procedures.....	5
Fees.....	6
Licensing Required Forms.....	7
School Ground Safety.....	7
Arrival and Dismissal Procedures.....	7
Nutrition.....	8
Health.....	8
Disaster Preparedness.....	9
Clothing and Other Necessities.....	9
Field Trip and Enrichment Programs.....	9
Holiday Celebrations.....	10
Share Days.....	10
Birthdays.....	10
Social Media and Photo Posting.....	10
Parent Communication.....	11
Parent and Child Orientation.....	11
Children’s Developmental Progress.....	11
Parent Involvement.....	11
Child Abuse Reporting.....	12
Discipline Policies and Procedures.....	12
Additional Services.....	12
Termination of Services.....	13
Final Word.....	13
Acknowledgement Page.....	15

Forward

AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School was established in 1976 under the auspices of the Armenian General Benevolent Union. The Preschool program has been an integral part of the school since the day it was founded. In May 2006, in honor of Mr. & Mrs. Nazar and Artemis Nazarian, long-time benefactors of AGBU, it was renamed as the ***A.G.B.U. Artemis Nazarian Preschool***.

The program is licensed by the State of California Department of Social Services, Facility No. 191228958 and is accredited through the Accrediting Commission of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) for its high quality early childhood education and care.

The Preschool administration and teachers are committed to providing the best early childhood education in conjunction with the Armenian language and culture for 18 months to 5 year old children. ANP-2 is the youngest section with three classrooms for the 2 year olds. There are three ANP-3 classes for the 3 year olds, and two ANP-4 classes for the 4 year olds. There is a total enrollment of more than 130 children.

Program Philosophy

Young children are unique individuals who are at the stage of initiation and exploration. We believe that children will benefit most when they can explore and actively engage in learning centers in a warm, supportive and secure environment. A developmentally appropriate curriculum is implemented which focuses on the development of the "whole child". The curriculum integrates learning and growth in all domains including social and emotional, cognitive and physical as well as language. Enriched learning environments are created to support and nurture the unfolding potential of each individual child. The children are given opportunities to build a sound academic foundation, to become independent life-long learners and respectful members of society, particularly in relation to cultural diversity.

Program Goals

Our program strives to create an environment where children can gain exposure to materials and experiences that promote development of the "whole child", enabling them to achieve their full potential and acquire the knowledge and skills required for future success.

Our goal for each and every child is to:

- Develop self-awareness, self-expression, and self-control;
- Cultivate confidence, independence and a sense of responsibility;
- Acquire a sense of belonging, unity, and respect;
- Refine problem solving, decision making, and conflict resolution skills;
- Motivate knowledge acquisition through interest-based learning tools;
- Recognize each student's individual approach to growth and development;
- Teach the value of and respect towards Armenian and other cultures;
- Develop mathematical problem solving and critical thinking skills;
- Gain knowledge and make discoveries about the world;
- Acquire pre-reading and writing skills both in Armenian and English for a smooth transition to Kindergarten;
- Acquire proper language usage and expression both in Armenian and English;

- Strengthen physical and movement skills;
- Develop artistic, musical and creative abilities;
- Possess an understanding of sound health, safety and nutritional practices;
- Use age-appropriate technology to enhance learning.

A variety of learning materials, manipulatives, and activities enhance the children's growth in the following areas:

Language Arts:



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Children acquire listening and speaking, as well as literacy awareness skills in both Armenian and English.

Mathematical Skills:



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By acquiring mathematical thinking skills, children are able to think logically and solve problems by engaging in hands-on activities and manipulating concrete materials.

Science Skills:



Children acquire knowledge about the world around them by actively exploring, experimenting, discovering relationships of cause and effect and of change and growth.

Social Skills:



Children acquire skills to become socially competent and self-confident. They learn to cooperate, share, respect and become aware of others' needs and feelings. They also learn about cultural diversity.

Gross and Fine Motor Skills:



Children are provided many opportunities to develop their physical abilities by using their large and small muscles for various indoor and outdoor activities.

Creativity, Musical and Artistic Skills:



Children acquire skills in expressing themselves in musical activities and creative movements, fingerplays, drama and drawing. Through art, they are encouraged to show their creativity. The main focus is on the process rather than the product.

A Balanced Day

Group activities are alternated with self-selected activities, small group interactions and rest periods to provide for a healthy and pleasant learning environment. Open ended and structured activities are designed to provide children with academic as well as social skills. Active and quiet, indoor and outdoor activities are provided for a well-balanced and enjoyable day.

Daily Routine

Children start their day by engaging in self-selected activities in various play centers, followed by clean-up time, circle time and so forth. When events happen in the same order every day, children have a better understanding of their world, and therefore feel more secure. A regular schedule gives children a way to order and organize their lives. Routines also help children understand the concept of time, develop self-control and foster independence. It is crucial that children arrive at school on time so they can get the maximum benefit from the program.

Teaching Staff Qualifications

All teachers and assistant teachers are highly experienced and have exceeded the minimum Early Childhood Education State requirements. They are all trained in Pediatric CPR and First Aid. Every year, they attend in-service trainings and conferences to be updated with the current trends in the field of early childhood education.

Teacher - Child Ratio

The ratio is as follows:

ANP-2 (2-3) year old groups: One adult to every six students

ANP-3 (3-4) year old groups: One adult to every nine students

ANP-4 (4-5) year old groups: One adult to every nine students

Admission Policy and Procedures

- All children and families will be interviewed by the Administration prior to admission.
- A child must be 18 months or older to enroll in the 2 year old program, 3 years of age to enter the 3 year old program and 4 years of age to enter the 4 year old program on or before September 1st of that year.
- All 3 and 4 year old children must be potty trained, but this is not a requirement for the Toddlers.
- No bottles or pacifiers are allowed in school.
- Prior to enrollment, families are given an extensive tour and orientation of the program. The Director meets the child(ren) and the family, a Parent Questionnaire is completed and an interview is set with the Administration. Upon parents' request, children are welcome to spend a few hours in the classroom with their parent to become acquainted with the program.
- At the time of registration, parents must complete an application form, provide copies of their child's birth certificate and health records and pay a non-refundable registration fee.
- At the time of registration, parents must inform the school personnel of any allergies or special needs the child might have.

- In cases where administration of Epi-pens or inhalers is required, parents must complete a special medical form and submit it to the school nurse. Parents should provide two Epi-pens, one to be kept in the nurse's office and one for the classroom.
- The California School Immunization Law requires that children be up-to-date on their immunizations to attend a preschool. The requirement corresponds to The Law: Health and Safety Code, Division 105, Part 2, Chapter 1, Sections 120325-120380; California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Division 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter 8, Sections 6000-6075. Effective July 1, 2016 and in accordance to the new Law SB277, a personal beliefs exemption is no longer an option for entry into preschool. However, a valid personal beliefs exemption filed with the facility before January 1, 2016 is valid until entry into the next grade span (Kindergarten). If a licensed physician determines a vaccine should not be given to your child because of medical reasons, a written statement from the physician for a **medical exemption** for the missing shot(s), including the duration of the medical exemption, should be submitted to the school.
- According to licensing requirements, all parents must sign their children in and out daily using the classroom attendance form at the time of arrival and departure from school.
- Children will only be released to parents or adults with written authorization for pick up. Special custody situations should be discussed with the Director upon enrollment or as situations arise. Without court documentation, the school will not refuse a parent the right to pick up his/her child.
- The school hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 3:05 p.m. However, the classroom doors open at 7:50 a.m. and children should be picked up by 3:30 p.m.
- Full time and part time options are offered for 2 year olds only.
- Part time students are welcome to participate in special activities for the duration of that activity. These activities may include picture day and special events, which may occur outside of their regular schedule. If a part time enrolled child is absent or the school is closed on the assigned day, the attendance day cannot be interchanged.
- Early morning care (7:30-8:00) and extended afternoon day care is available until 5:30 p.m. for an additional charge.
- In case of absence, parents need to notify the school office by 8:30 a.m.
- Enrollment may be terminated if the child's developmental needs cannot be met and other arrangements become necessary to appropriately meet the specific needs of the individual child and/or the enrolled child compromises the health and safety of other children, staff or self.

Fees

At the time of registration, an annual fee is collected for each child to cover the following expenses:

- Educational materials for all preschool students
- One or two educational and fun field trips for ANP-3 and ANP-4 students only
- A Christmas gift from Santa
- Different educational and enrichment programs provided at school for all preschool students
- Annual Program expenses for ANP-3 and ANP-4 students only

Licensing Required Forms

As a Preschool facility licensed by the State of California Department of Social Services, the following forms are required:

1. Physician's Report - Child Care Centers
2. Child's Pre-Admission Health History
3. Personal Rights
4. Notification of Parent's Rights

Please complete and return all the forms to the teacher. All forms will be filed in each child's school folder located in the Director's office.

School Ground Safety

All parents are required to follow school entrance and parking procedures to maintain safety on campus. Parents should use the Hatillo entrance, park their cars in provided spaces in the yard and walk their child to the classroom. The procedure is the same at pick-up time. Parents are asked to refrain from taking their children to the Preschool playground or the school yard after dismissal time.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

The school hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 3:05 p.m. However, the classroom doors open at 7:50 a.m. and children should be picked up by 3:30 p.m.

Parents are asked to adhere to the established arrival and dismissal procedures for safe and smooth daily operations. All parents are asked to sign-in their child in the classroom, as they arrive in the morning and spend no more than five minutes before returning to their cars to vacate the playground. If parents enter the school premises before dismissal time, they are asked to wait outside the Preschool gates until the dismissal bell rings. They may then pick up and sign out their child from the classroom.

Every parent is asked to complete and sign a Release Authorization form to give permission to persons authorized to pick up their child from school. The School must be notified in writing immediately if there is a permanent change in the child pick-up authorization form or Emergency Release Form.

Below are detailed dismissal procedures that parents are asked to follow:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 3:05 p.m. | Preschool children's dismissal time |
| 3:30 p.m. | Children not picked up from classrooms are taken to after school daycare |
| 3:30 p.m. | School day ends and paid daycare begins |
| 5:30 p.m. | Daycare ends |
| | If a child is not signed out by 5:30 p.m., a late pick-up fee of \$10.00 for every 10 minutes will be assessed |

Nutrition

Breakfast, a well-balanced lunch and afternoon snacks are included in the monthly tuition. All children are provided food prepared by the school Cafeteria (Cafe Charles). At the time of registration, parents need to inform the school regarding any food allergies a child may have, and they should provide any special food items that the child consumes. To minimize the potential hazards in cases of allergies to certain nuts, the Preschool environment is designated as a "Nut Safe Zone."

A monthly menu is prepared which is posted on the school website as well as on each classroom's bulletin board. Necessary changes are made to the general school menu to accommodate the needs of the Preschool children.

During classroom parties, parents are strongly encouraged to send only healthy snacks and food items to instill healthy eating habits in children and the school community in general. No candy or food items high in sugar are welcomed. No food items containing nuts or food products manufactured in facilities containing nuts are welcomed either.

Health

Prior to admission, children shall be immunized against diseases and current health records must be provided, as required by State Law SB277. In special cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition, a written statement is required from the physician.

All children's health is a matter of major importance. A child must stay home if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever over 101 degree F
- Red throat or earache
- Runny nose, watery eyes or constant cough
- Vomiting, diarrhea
- Unexplained rash or skin eruption
- Contagious diseases
- If the child acts listless, drowsy, has a headache, flushed face, is lacking in appetite or shows any behavior that is out of the ordinary

The school's policy regarding children who are ill is as follows:

- A child with a contagious illness will be excluded from the school until no longer contagious.
- A physician's note or the school nurse's approval is needed before a child with a contagious disease may return to school.
- The school nurse will dispense medication in case of need to finish the prescribed medication. Parents must sign a consent form at the nurse's office.
- Children's accidental injuries will be documented on the Injury Form and a copy will be provided to the parents.
- A child with symptoms of possible illness will be sent to the nurse's office.
- Parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their child.
- A child must be 24 hour fever-free before returning to school.
- If your child contracts a contagious illness, please notify the school in order to inform the other parents.

More health-related requirements:

- Children's hair will periodically be checked for lice.
- The nurse will inspect the children for cleanliness and good health on a monthly basis.
- Parents may provide sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher to be applied to skin for hot and sunny days. A signed permission slip will be required.
- Parents of toddlers who are not potty trained are asked to provide only disposable diapers or pull-ups. Diaper changing procedures are in accordance with the Cleaning and Sanitation Procedures required from the American Academy of Pediatrics for the safety of each child.

All of these procedures are implemented for the protection of all children.

Disaster Preparedness

The school has an emergency plan and the procedures are to be followed at the time of an earthquake or other emergency. Written emergency procedures are posted in each classroom. Fire and earthquake drills are practiced periodically.

Parents need to keep the emergency information card with the school office up to date, so that prompt and appropriate care is given to the children should an emergency occur.

Clothing and Other Necessities

All children are required to wear their school uniform on a daily basis except on Free Dress days, of which parents will be notified. The school uniforms may be purchased directly from American School Uniform at (323) 666-9337 or the school office.

Children need to be able to freely run around and participate in outdoor games and sand and water play (weather permitting). Therefore, it is very important for them to wear sneakers or comfortable and sturdy Velcro shoes. They also need to bring an extra set of clothing (non-uniform) in a zippered bag labeled with their name, to be used whenever necessary. Children are not allowed to come to school wearing colorful sweaters, jewelry, accessories or nail polish.

Each child should bring a sleeping bag with an attached pillow and blanket for naptime. The bedding will be sent home weekly to be washed. Preschool children must bring a leak-free bottle with closed top either with squirt or straw for drinking water. For toddlers, please provide a sippy cup and a weekly supply of diapers. All items must be labeled with your child's name.

Each child needs to bring two boxes of tissue, three boxes of baby wipes and two boxes of Clorox wipes twice a year.

Field Trips and Enrichment Programs

Preschool children participate in educational field trips to enhance their learning. Parents will be informed in advance about each field trip and will be asked to sign a consent form. They will also be informed about emergency procedures for each field trip. Parents may assist the teachers with field trip supervision.

Additionally, a few times a year, amusing entertainers, storytellers, educational and interactive programs are scheduled to come to our school. The toddlers will not go on field trips, but they will enjoy the entertainment programs brought to campus.

Holiday Celebrations

Parents are asked to refer to the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School General Calendar as well as the Preschool Annual Calendar for holiday closures and special events. Parents will be informed in advance of any additional events or programs.

Holiday celebrations are incorporated into the curriculum. Throughout the year, a number of holiday classroom parties are held. Party sign-up sheets are provided for parents who wish to bring necessary items for each party. Additionally, when providing food for the class, we all need to take extreme caution as the number of children with food allergies is on the rise and climbing.

We ask every parent to adhere to our NO GOODY BAG, NO CANDY, NO NUTS AND NO BALLOON policy for all occasions. Balloons are a choking hazard, whether they are inflated or deflated.

Share Days

Children are given the opportunity to bring a toy from home to share with their classmates and talk about it to the class, on Fridays only. Sharing is an ongoing learning experience and teachers are instrumental in helping with this process. It enables them to develop social skills such as: cooperation, taking turns, negotiation much more. Toys that pose an obvious or imaginary danger to other children, such as replica guns, weapons, war or violence related toys and scary toys, are not permitted. Please note that toys brought to school are subject to being damaged or lost. Children are allowed to bring toys to school only on Fridays. However, if they wish to bring a soft cuddly toy for naptime, they may do so.

Birthdays

A child's birthday is very important. Therefore, every child will be recognized on his/her actual day of birth. The celebrations will be on the second and/or last Friday of each month. For this special day, the children will bake cupcakes with their classmates and enjoy them with their friends. (Special recipes are used where food allergies are of concern.) If you wish, you may donate a popular book to your child's classroom library in your child's name on this joyful occasion.

In the event of an out-of-school birthday celebration, party invitations may be placed in the children's cubbies if the entire class is invited. Otherwise, alternate arrangements should be considered to distribute invitations.

Social Media and Photo Posting

The school regularly uses photos/images of students on the school website (www.agbumds.org) and its social media pages (Facebook and Twitter). If a parent would like to opt-out of posting their child's photo and/or name on the website, the parent should inform the school administration in writing.

Parent Communication

We believe in open communication between the school and families is in the best interest of each child. Parents may obtain information about the program or their child's classroom activities through a variety of channels, including:

- The school website for information pertaining to the preschool program
- Annual Open House where all classes are open and teachers are present
- Parent Handbook with detailed general information
- Informative Back-to-School night held before the start of school
- Continuous communication with the teachers via email, phone calls, daily in-person encounters, flyers and posted information on bulletin boards, etc.
- Parent-teacher meetings/conferences and class visits
- Community resources that are shared with parents that support the child's/family's needs and interests

It is very important that parents read all the information provided, so that they will be aware of any plans, activities, events and changes in their child's routine. By the same token, it is important to keep the teachers informed of any changes at home that might affect your child such as separation, moving, death of a pet, extended house guest, etc. The teachers will use the provided information to support the child and proactively give the attention needed.

Parent and Child Orientation and Transition

Prior to enrollment, parents and children are given a tour of the campus and orientation to the school operation. For transitioning purposes, parents are given the choice to register their child in a four to five week summer program as well as attend a "Meet your Teacher Day" before the start of the school year to meet the teacher, see the classroom and place the necessary items in their cubbies.

Children's Developmental Progress

Children's development and growth are closely monitored by the teachers throughout the year. They interact, observe, take notes and document the children's strengths, interests and areas that need more attention. Parents' input is also a vital component in understanding the child's developmental level. The "Ages and Stages Questionnaire" is completed by parents at the beginning of the year. The information provided is combined with teacher observations and is shared with families during conferences with the goal of meeting each child's individual needs.

Parent-teacher conferences are held in November and March. All documentation is confidential and is kept in a locked cabinet and shared with parents during meetings or whenever necessary. The teacher, the Director and parents may request a special meeting to be scheduled if the need arises. Parents are encouraged to address any questions or concerns to the teacher or to the Director. Any issues that arise may be resolved by consulting with the Director, the Principal and ultimately, the Board of Trustees.

Parent Involvement

The school encourages parent participation and involvement in a variety of ways:

- Participating in programs and activities for children
- Participating in school events and programs
- Sharing their talents with children and teachers
- Participating in “Reading and Story Time” a parent volunteer program and read to the class
- Volunteering in the classrooms, assisting teachers with special projects and activities
- Joining class field trips and assisting teachers with supervision
- Becoming a homeroom parent to assist the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)
- Joining different school committees and sub-committees
- Participating in the annual evaluation of the school and Preschool program.

Child Abuse Reporting

Children need protection since they are vulnerable and may not be able to speak for themselves. Under state law, all staff members are legally mandated to report any suspected child abuse or neglect cases to Child Protective Services.

Discipline Policies & Procedures

The goal of the Preschool is to provide the guidance necessary for children to increase their self-control, be respectful to themselves and others, be able to express their feelings using words rather than physical strength, listen attentively and learn to follow directions. Teachers guide and direct children’s inappropriate behaviors to more acceptable choices, using positive and rewarding approaches. They assist the child in meeting his/her need(s) through the use of proactive social skills lessons, positive reinforcement, modeling, prompting, and structured behavioral modification systems within the classroom environment.

The teachers, the administration and the families establish and maintain regular, ongoing open communication on discipline issues. The school Counselor is also instrumental in assisting teachers in and outside the classroom to help facilitate a healthy and productive classroom environment.

Should any conflict arise between your child and another child on school grounds in your presence, you should direct the issue to the teacher’s and/or the Director’s attention. The staff will help facilitate all conflicts between children. Parents are asked not to discipline and/or facilitate children’s conflicts on campus.

Any form of discipline which violates a child’s personal rights is not permitted in our school. No child is denied food, rest or toileting as a result of inappropriate behavior.

Additional Services

If a child’s presentation requires additional attention, intervention, assessment, accommodation and/or is excessively disruptive or harmful to an individual child or the group, or should the teacher or Director conclude that additional support and expertise is needed for the child’s developmental needs, some or all of the following steps will be required:

- Additional Parent/Teacher conferences: The purpose of the conferences is to clarify the issues of concern, re-examine the causes and brainstorm any changes or modifications that can be implemented by either the family or the staff.

- Involvement of the school counselor for professional support and guidance to both the staff and the family.
- Implementation of a Tier-Based approach to modify the behavior with the guidance of the school counselor and Student Support personnel.
- Formal referral for comprehensive assessment. The school counselor will assist with the process.
- The staff will provide accommodations to meet the child's specific needs within the scope of the program.

Termination of Services

The school reserves the right to admit and/or dis-enroll any child at its sole discretion. The objective is to ensure that all children enrolled benefit from the program, but there may be times that the program may not be the best fit for a child and/or family. Therefore, termination will result. The following are examples of termination circumstances:

- Family fails to abide by the provisions of the school policies and agreements of the registration terms and conditions.
- The school is unable to meet the child's behavioral and/or developmental needs.
- The child becomes harmful to self, other children or staff.
- The child is extremely unhappy and unable to participate and adjust to the program.
- The child's behavior requires more attention than our adult/child ratio allows.
- The parents' disruptive behavior compromises the health and safety of the children or staff.

The child's continued enrollment at AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School will be assessed based on the parents' cooperation with the process and the timely progress the child shows in improving the behavior of concern and/or the developmental progress of the area of concern.

A Final Word

It is an honor and a great pleasure to welcome you to AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School. The ***Artemis Nazarian Preschool*** teaching team is here to provide the highest quality of education in a safe and nurturing environment and to be an integral part of your child's early childhood experience.

Acknowledgement Page

This Handbook may be amended by the school at any time and any such amendment shall be binding upon all AGBU Artemis Nazarian Preschool parents, staff, Administration and School Board of Trustees.

I/we acknowledge that I/we have received and read the 2018-2019 school year Parent Handbook and will abide by its policies and procedures.

Print Name

Signature

Date

Print Name

Signature

Date