

A STARTING PLACE

A Not For Profit Agency

FOUNDER: PATTI DORSEY



PARENT HANDBOOK

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Handbook Revisions

A Starting Place (ASP) reserves the right to revise, delete or supplement any provisions of this parent handbook as necessary. Policy changes will be sent out to parents via email. Any reproduction in whole or in part of this handbook is prohibited without prior written approval.

First Edition 2023/Revised 11/23

Our Mission

To concentrate on the development of the whole child through an individualized developmentally oriented program. We believe that every child is born with strengths and weaknesses and we believe that much is possible if we emphasize the positive and address the weakness.

Our Vision

To create an environment where everyone learns, feels safe and nurtured, and knows that they are important and matter. Our goal is to provide our students and their families the opportunity to develop the skills and abilities to create the foundation necessary to move forward and reach their highest potential. Families are always told we don't just take in a child, we take in the whole family.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
~ WELCOME ~	4
Front Office Staff	4
Philosophy	4
Communications	5
Family Support	5
Outside Agency Support	6
Photography	6
Supplies	6
Custody, Court Orders, and Changes of Family Status	6
Policies and Procedures	7
Food at School	7
Birthdays	7
Transportation	7
Transportation Request Forms (Bus Forms)	8
Parent Drop-Off/Pick-Up	8
Child Authorization Pick-Up Policy	9
Drop off Times:	9
Health and Safety	10
Immunization Policy	10
Napping Policy	11
Visitor's Policy	11
Exceptions:	12
Sick Day Policy	13
Playground	15
The Rationale for Sunscreen	16
Sunscreen Declination	16
Fundraisers	16
Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE)	16
Student Records	17
Retention	17
Amendments	17
Destruction Of Records	17
Discipline and Student Conduct	17
Parent Code of Conduct	18
Emergencies and Security	19
Emergency Preparedness	19
Emergency Management Terms Used	19

Emergency Notification to Parents	20
Reunification	20
Reporting Abuse, Maltreatment, or Neglect	21
Bed Bug Policy	22
Snow Day Policies - Emergency Dismissals	23
Protocol for a 2-Hour Delayed opening:	24
Protocol for Early Dismissal:	24
How to Access Gmail and Google Classroom	25
Gmail	25
Google Classroom	25
Gmail Troubleshooting	27
Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco/Weapon Free Environment	28
Emergency Evacuation	28
Notice of Privacy Practices	29
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act	29
Parents' Bill of Rights for Data Privacy & Security	29

~ WELCOME ~

We are very pleased you have chosen A Starting Place for your child's preschool experience. At A Starting Place, we strive to meet every family and child's individual needs. The folder you have received contains most of the information you will need to know to begin your child's educational journey with us.

Our staff is always able to offer support and answer questions should they arise. A Starting Place staff includes certified special education teachers, general education teachers, teachers' assistants, speech therapists and speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, social workers, a nurse, and school psychologists. All of these dynamic educators are dedicated to the support of your child along their educational path.

Front Office Staff

Karen Schragenheim - Executive Director - k.schragenheim@astartingplace.com

JoAnne DaGracaLobo - Assistant Director - j.dagractalobo@astartingplace.com

Sue Anzenberger - Office Manager - frontdesk@astartingplace.com

Melissa Laplante - Front Office Secretary - frontdesk@astartingplace.com

Miguelina DeJesus - Front Office Secretary - frontdesk@astartingplace.com

Our office is open Monday- Thursday 8am- 4pm and Fridays 8am- 3:15pm. We can be reached via email (see above), phone at 845-735-3066, or text at 845-474-2351. Please feel free to contact the office with any questions or concerns. We are always here to offer help and support. If your child is going to be absent or late please let us know. If we don't hear from you we will be calling to check-in. To allow us to contact you via text, phone, or email we request that you complete the Parental Consent to use text and email. Also, please sign up for our emergency contact system - One Call Now. In addition to snow closures, delays, and emergency information, we often send out updates as well. ***Text ALERT to 22300 to Opt-in for text messaging***

Philosophy

A Starting Place provides children with a safe, nurturing, positive, and accepting environment. We utilize a positive approach that emphasizes the performance of skills versus the areas of challenge. As the children develop in our program, they realize that reinforcement from their teachers, giving them a feeling of accomplishment and self-worth.

We will break down steps, provide models, make smaller groups, and lengthen the time the child needs to perform and complete the task but will always include the child. To help us get to know your family and child we ask you to complete the Blue Card Emergency Contact Information, Blue Registration Form, and Student Health History.

Communications

Attendance at school is very important. Please be sure to let the front office know if your child is going to miss a day at school. We also need to know why they are out of school. After your child is out for two consecutive days due to illness, we will ask you for a doctor's note. The last week of school is as important as the first week, we are aware that everyone's schedule is hectic but attendance at school is crucial. Even though graduation may occur earlier in the week, it does not mean your child's program is over. Please refer to the school calendar for more information.

Teachers and therapists will provide weekly newsletters/updates of the classroom's activities/therapy activities for the week. Additionally, look for notes in the communication notebook, worksheets, and completed projects. Feel free to contact your child's teacher or therapist via email, or if you prefer, you may call the front desk and leave a message. Please be aware that Teachers and Therapists cannot take or return parent phone calls during class time. They will return calls before and after school is in session. We appreciate your patience and understanding.

Parent Teacher Conferences are held twice a year. The first conference will be held at the beginning of October and the second conference will be right before your child's annual review meeting. Parents/Guardians or teachers may request additional conferences at any time.

IEP Progress Reports are sent out three times a year. Usually at the end of November, March and June. This progress report specifically addresses the IEP goals.

Family Support

A Starting Place has a modified open-door policy that recognizes the evident need to help support, educate, and guide each child's family. A Starting Place understands the vital role a family has in the overall development and remediation of a child. One of the building stones that A Starting Place has in its foundation is the recognition that the parent is the first and best teacher a child can ever have. To help the family reach the child's potential and meet their needs, A Starting Place has adopted several safeguard procedures.

- Open and constant communication with parents is essential. Using a notebook, emailing, or having phone calls are all available both with your classroom teacher and therapists.
- Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled in mid to late October for all students. If you would like an additional meeting please contact your child's teacher and one will be scheduled.
- Progress Reports are sent home at the end of November, March, and June.
- Family Training and Parent Counseling are part of our curriculum, if you are interested and it is not on your child's IEP please contact your child's teacher.
- If you want to observe your child in class, please call the front office and we will make arrangements with you for your visit. We ask that you self-screen before coming to the building, meaning that you have not been exposed to anyone who is displaying COVID-19 symptoms or has a positive test. Please do not bring any bags to the school. Visiting is also available virtually if you prefer. We ask that you remember that when parents visit, students may become upset and want to go home with you.

- For the health and safety of our school community, A Starting Place does not allow outside providers to perform evaluations or treatment sessions in our building. The only exception to this is for Teachers of the Deaf and Visually Impaired, or for a Classroom observation with providers of service, who are listed on the child's IEP and are employed by an organization approved by the New York State Department of Education, and hold a contract with the County of Rockland.

Outside Agency Support

A Starting Place will conference with outside therapists, medical specialists, and daycare providers at the family's request and with their permission (complete consent form)

Photography

A Starting Place does not have a social media account of any kind. Any site bearing the name A Starting Place is not endorsed by the school. We do, however, take student photographs (if you provide consent) for instructional materials, school and classroom displays, gifts for parents, and ID tags worn in school. Please complete the enclosed consent form, and if you have any questions or concerns please contact the front office.

Supplies

We ask all parents/guardians to send in a supply of:

1. Box of tissues
2. Box of disposable gloves (Vinyl on - no Latex)
3. Container/Package of Baby Wipes
4. Communication Notebook
5. Change of clothing should be kept in your child's backpack
6. All items you send in must be labeled with your child's first and last name.
7. Please do not send in anything of sentimental value/expensive as A Starting Place is not responsible for lost items.

If your child requires diapers, please send a minimum of 4 diapers daily, or you can send in a package and the teacher will let you know when they are running low.

Please label all of your child's belongings; including cups/containers.

Included in your folder, in addition to this handbook are the required forms we need you to complete and return. If you need help in completing them or have any questions please do not hesitate to call the front office.

Custody, Court Orders, and Changes of Family Status

A Starting Place encourages parents to be actively involved in their child's care and education. In providing care for a child, continuous and meaningful contact with both parents is essential. Due to this philosophy, A Starting Place will not prohibit parents from accessing records, attending events or participating in meetings pertaining to their child unless otherwise required by a court order or law.

A Starting Place can only deny a parent access to their child's information or access to their child if there is a legal document that explicitly states the need for this action. Under these circumstances, ASP requires a copy of the current court order which states the rights or restraints ordered. We are unable to accept information regarding the validity of the orders over the phone, only court-stamped and certified documents can 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.

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 the students with the highest level of care. To do so, they must maintain good relationships with both parents and should not be asked to support one parent over another.

Policies and Procedures

Food at School

A Starting Place ***does not*** supply meals or snacks. Children who attend a half-day program will need 1 snack, while children who attend a full day will need lunch and 2 snacks daily (including drinks). Please use a thermos to keep food warm and ice packs to keep food cold. The classroom staff can not heat up or refrigerate food.

A Starting Place is a **NUT-FREE** school. **NO** food containing any type of nuts or products processed in a plant that MAY contain peanuts/tree nuts may be sent into the school building due to extreme nut allergies among many students and staff.

Granola bars, cookies, and muffins are examples of snacks that may have hidden nuts in the ingredients. M&M's are another example as they are made in a peanut/tree nut facility.

****No glass container is allowed in our school due to safety reasons.***

Birthdays

If you want to send in a special snack for your child's birthday, we only allow sealed Treasure Mills - School Safe products. These can be found at Target, ShopRite, Wegmans, CTown, or Costco. While we have paper plates/napkins/utensils at school if you would like, you may send in decorative ones to use for the celebration. Please contact your child's teacher to arrange the date. ***Balloons are NOT allowed***.

Please be aware we cannot accept or send home any goody bags for birthdays and holidays.

Transportation

The Rockland County Department of Health (RCDOH) contracts with Student Bus Company Inc. to provide transportation for preschool children requiring Special Education Services. They ensure that the transportation complies with all transportation service requirements and contract specifications.

The bus company should be contacted at (845) 371-0800 about scheduling questions and concerns. Please inform them if your child is going to be absent or if you need information about late pick-ups and drop-offs.

Transportation Request Forms (Bus Forms)

A Starting Place will provide you with the transportation request form. The form must be filled out in its entirety with accurate and up-to-date information (including height, weight and date of birth, home address, drop off and pick up address if different from home, and 2 emergency contacts that are not the parents, who reside in the county) and returned to A Starting Place. Forms with whiteouts or tape over them will not be accepted by the bus company. A Starting Place will submit the form to the Bus Company. All Due Dates must be adhered to. Forms that are submitted late will result in a delay in transportation.

For changes during the school year, your transportation provider is required to provide service ***within 5 school days***. *No changes in transportation will be made in the first 10 days of a school term.*

Your transportation provider can pick up and drop off children at certified daycare centers or at a babysitter only at the times that coincide with the Provider's special education session the children are enrolled in. The pick-up/drop-off must be consistent five days a week and be accomplished within the same geographical area i.e. Same pick-up and though different drop-off, both are 5 days per week. This information must be submitted along with transportation information under the pick-up and drop-off add.

It is extremely stressful for a child to arrive and find there is no one at home to meet him/her. The bus company requires you to either be home or to have an authorized person there to meet your child. Such persons must be indicated on the Transportation Request Form, and have a photo I.D. and a valid telephone number where they can be reached. The person authorized to pick up your child must be over 14 years of age. Your child will not be given to anyone whose name is not listed on the form.

If you are not home at the drop-off time, the bus will finish its run and return to your home. **If you are still not home when the bus returns, your child will be taken to the local Police Station and Child Protective Services may be called.**

Parent Drop-Off/Pick-Up

Parent Drop-Off and Pick is a choice for families. The County, at the current authorized rate for mileage, will reimburse parents who arrange for self-transport. Reimbursement is only provided when the child is in the car. Please speak to your CPSE Chairperson to notify them of your intent or interest in transporting your child. For inquiries regarding the process of mileage reimbursement please call 845-364-3853. A Starting Place will provide you with your child's monthly attendance for submission to the County.

A Starting Place does not have early drop-off or late pick-up available. Please be on time. If you elect to self transport A Starting Place will provide you with a placard for your car. Please display it on your dashboard when on school grounds. Our security guard and staff will be in the parking lot directing traffic. Please obey the traffic pattern as it is designed for the safety of all members of our school community. Please remain in your vehicle until your child is brought to your car at pick-up time. Additionally, we ask that you please remain in the car with your child until a staff member comes to unload them from your vehicle. We often move cars up the car lane to avoid traffic jams in the parking lot, so if you are not in your car it may cause a delay in loading students.

Child Authorization Pick-Up Policy

- Parents must supply A Starting Place with a written list of authorized adults who may pick up the child. (On the Blue Registration Card)
- No unauthorized adult may **EVER** pick up a child.
- A Starting Place must have written approval from a parent before a child is released to an adult.
- A Starting Place will only release a student to an approved person with appropriate identification.

Drop off Times:

TYPE OF CLASS	CLASS TIME	DROP OFF	PICK UP
FULL DAY STUDENTS	9:00-2:00	8:45-9:10	1:50-2:00
HALF DAY MORNING	9:00-11:30	8:45-9:10	11:20-11:30
HALF DAY AFTERNOON	12:30-3:00	12:20-12:30	2:50-3:00

- Parents should remain in their car until a staff member comes to either unload or bring your child.
- Car seats should be on the passenger side or center, for safety.
- Do not pass loading cars unless directed to by the staff on duty.
- Do not back up while in line, as buses or cars could be exiting the lot.

- AM and morning session cars should not enter the parking lot until 8:45 because our staff needs access to park their vehicles.
- PM sessions cars should not enter the parking lot unit at 12:20 as the staff is returning from lunch and need access to park.

Health and Safety

An up-to-date physical form and immunization history are required for all students to attend school. Physicals are required annually and immunizations must be current. (See Physical Form) Prescriptions from a physician's office are required for occupational and physical therapy. A Starting Place will assist in obtaining all prescriptions, as there is a specific form that must be completed. Prescriptions are valid for the school year unless a change is made in the frequency of services. In some cases even though the school year starts in July, new prescriptions may be required for September.

Immunization Policy

According to PHL 2164, all students attending pre-k in New York State must receive all required doses of vaccines on the recommended schedule in order to attend or remain in school. The only exception is a medical exemption - meaning the student has a medical condition preventing them from receiving a specific vaccine. Vaccines required at the pre-k level are:

- Diphtheria and Tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine and Pertussis vaccine (DTaP or Tdap)
- Hepatitis B vaccine
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine (MMR)
- Polio vaccine
- Varicella (Chickenpox) vaccine
- Haemophilus influenzae type b (HIB)
- Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV)

Please notify the school immediately of any important changes; For example a new allergy or changes to any of your contact information. It is vital that the school be able to reach you in the event of an emergency or if your child becomes ill. If your child becomes ill while at school it is expected that you pick them up within 60 minutes of notification. Please have an emergency plan in place in case this should happen. It is not uncommon for a child to be fine when leaving for school and then become ill while in class.

While regular attendance is important, if your child is going to be absent we ask that you notify us as soon as possible, as well as notify the bus company. Please see the enclosed School Calendar for the days the school is closed. Be advised that A Starting Place follows its calendar and does not adhere to one belonging to any specific school district. Please also notify us if your family is planning a vacation and your child will miss school days.

You can call your child out by:

1. Calling the main number 845-735-3066 - you can leave a message at ext. 10, twenty-four hours a day.
2. Email - frontdesk@astartingplace.com
3. Text: 845-474-2351

Napping Policy

Please be advised that as a school we do not routinely nap the children. However, if your child asks to take a nap we have mats and designated areas where they can lie down and rest under the supervision of a staff member. You will also be notified. **Please complete the napping agreement.**

Visitor's Policy

- All Visitors to A Starting Place must be signed in upon arrival, with the date, time, and purpose of visit/who they are here to see. A sign-in Sheet is located at the office door entrance.
- All Visitors must be identified by the main office.
- All Visitors must be given a visitor's pass that shall be adhered to their clothing and visible at all times, and/or have visible identification from the agency or district they represent.
- All staff must notify the office immediately of any person who is not familiar with and does not have a visible pass to be in the building. Staff should accompany to the office any person who does not have proper authorization ie visitor pass/ID
- All visitors to the building must be accompanied by ASP Staff at all times. If they are here to meet with HR or back office staff, they must wait with an authorized staff member or be escorted to their destination.
- Only providers related to the educational process of their student (Through the LRE) are permitted to enter the building. For these visitors both parents and provider will be asked to sign OCFS-5014 Parental Consent Form. This includes but is not exclusive of:
 - Teachers of the Deaf
 - Teachers of the Visually Impaired
 - CSE/CPSE Chairpeople
 - BOCES Personnel
 - Evaluation teams from CSE, CPSE or EI for the purpose of classroom observation
 - IEE evaluator(s) sanctioned and paid for by the District/RCDOH

Video Conferencing can be made available for all other school personnel. No recording of any session or observation is permitted.

There are times when parents may request other visitors to come to the building to observe their children. These arrangements must be made with the Executive Director and these visitors must adhere to all policies of the school. It is A Starting Place's utmost priority to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff. For a visitor who does not meet the above criteria, the following terms and conditions are required:

Please note to avoid the need for any of the below requirements a virtual observation can be utilized - recording is prohibited.

1. The provider would be required to provide copies of a worker's compensation policy and liability insurance (in an amount satisfactory to ASP) that would cover any injury, damage, or claim caused by or related to any occurrence at ASP associated with the provider's appearance at ASP;
2. The provider would be required to provide ASP with a (i) statement by his physician that he/she/they is in good health, (ii) a negative tuberculosis test;
3. The provider and parents would be required to indemnify and hold ASP, its staff, and employees harmless from any injuries and/or claims related to the provider's conduct and appearance at ASP;
4. The provider would be required to provide a copy of his resume and license;
5. The provider would be finger-printed at his/her/their own expense and obtain a statement that he/she/they is fit to be around children (in essence, this is similar to the background check that is required for all ASP staff and employees by the NYS Office and Children and Family Services);
6. The provider would be required to sign a confidentiality agreement and agree to not videotape or make any audio recordings of anything or person at ASP.

Exceptions:

- If the provider is certified by NYS Office of Teaching Initiatives, fingerprinting and background check is not required, as it has been already completed.
- If the provider is an approved OCFS provider, then requirements nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5 are not required as they have already been completed, but requirements nos. 1 and 6 are still required.
- If the provider holds the credentials of an IEE provider and the requested evaluation has been approved by the LEA (meaning the LEA will be paying for the evaluation), then only requirement nos. 1 and 6 are required.
- If a licensed daycare provider (approved by OCFS) requests to come to ASP for the sole purpose of observing a student and speaking with the student's teacher then, provided

the parents or legal guardian of the student approves said request in writing, all above requirements are waived.

All providers will be asked to sign off indicating agreement with the above policies.

Sick Day Policy

It is often difficult to make a decision about whether or not your child is sick enough to stay home from school. Enclosed are some guidelines that may be helpful for you.

When there is any doubt in your mind about sending your child to school, consult your child's doctor before doing so. A phone consultation may be all that is necessary or your child's doctor may need to see your child in the office. *A child's temperature is not the only indication of illness. If your child does not appear to be themselves or their behavior is not typical- something could be brewing. If your child comes to school and they exhibit these symptoms and are not participating as they usually do, we may ask you to come and pick them up. Although this may seem like an inconvenience, please understand it is only to protect our students and keep our staff healthy to better serve the school community.*

While we regret any inconvenience that this may cause, in the long run, this means fewer lost work and school days for everyone.

If your child is absent from school due to illness for 3 or more consecutive days, we require a note from the child's physician to approve their return.

Additionally, the school must monitor patterns of absenteeism and notify the school district when necessary. Excused absences include personal illness, illness, or death in the family, impassable roads, weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, or for such reasons as may be approved by the Commissioner.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sick Children... Send to School or Keep Home?

Go to school- If your child has any of the following symptoms, they should probably go to school:

- Sniffles, runny nose, and/or a mild cough without fever.
- Vague complaints of aches, pains, or fatigue.
- Single episode of diarrhea or vomiting without any other symptoms.
- Ear infection without any other symptoms– your child does not need to be excluded but does need medical treatment.

****PLEASE KEEP THEM HOME IF FEVER OR PAIN IS PRESENT****

STAY AT HOME: If your child has any of the following symptoms, please keep your child at home. If any of these symptoms begin while your child is at school, we will call you to pick your child up.

- **FEVER**- Temperature of 100°F or higher. Remember that a child must be fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medication; e. g. Tylenol, or Motrin) for 24 hours before returning to school.
- **EYES**- With thick mucus or pus draining from the eye or pink eye. With pink eyes, you may see white or yellow discharge, matted eyelids after sleep, eye pain, and/or redness. Your child must receive 24 hours of antibiotics and/or doctor approval before returning to school.
- **SORE THROAT**- With fever or swollen glands in the neck. Your child may return to school after 24 hours of antibiotics for strep throat.
- **VOMITING**- Two (2) or more times within the past 24 hours.
- **DIARRHEA**- Three (3) or more watery stools in a 24-hour period, especially if the child acts or looks ill.
- **RASH**- With fever or itching. Heat rashes and allergic reactions are not contagious.
- **CHICKEN POX**- Children must stay at home for five (5) days after the onset of blisters, or until all pox are scabbed over and dry.
- **LICE, SCABIES**- Children may not return to school until they have been treated. Once treated students may return to school, we ask that you continue to frequently comb their hair with the Lice Comb as research has shown that combing interrupts the life cycle of the lice.
- **COVID-19** - Effective immediately, 5-day isolation if a child or family member or EI provider tests positive for COVID-19 is no longer required. Attached to this communication please find the [NYS Health Advisory – Respiratory Illnesses issued on March 7, 2024.](#)

Please Note:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated their respiratory virus recommendations on March 1, 2024 ([CDC updates and simplifies respiratory virus recommendations | CDC Online Newsroom | CDC](#)) and the New York State Department of Health updated their recommendations on March 7, 2024 (Notification_112042 (002).pdf). The updated guidance brings a unified approach to addressing risks from a range of common

respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19, flu, and RSV. This approach reflects the fact that the US is seeing far fewer hospitalizations and deaths associated with COVID-19 and that there are more tools than ever to combat flu, COVID, and RSV.

Core prevention steps and strategies include

- Staying up to date with vaccination
- Practicing good hygiene
- Taking steps for cleaner air

When people get sick with a respiratory virus, the updated guidance recommends that they stay home and away from others. They may return to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, symptoms are improving overall and, if a fever was present, it has been gone without use of a fever-reducing medication.

Once people resume normal activities, they are encouraged to take additional prevention strategies for the next 5 days to curb disease spread, such as taking more steps for cleaner air, enhancing hygiene practices, wearing a well-fitting mask, keeping a distance from others, and/or getting tested for respiratory viruses. Enhanced precautions are especially important to protect those most at risk for severe illness, including those over 65 and people with weakened immune systems.

****IF YOUR CHILD SHOWS ANY OF THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO PICK THEM UP AT SCHOOL WITHIN 60 MINUTES OF NOTIFICATION.****

Playground

Children learn through play and the use of their senses. The playground is an educational environment and an extension of the classroom. When we go outside we will apply sunscreen.

The following procedure is in place to ensure sun safety for students and staff of A Starting Place.

1. School community members may wear a hat or cap with a brim to aid in shielding their face when outside.
2. Both playground areas have a canopy that remains up from April to October (depending on snow) to aid in shielding community members.
3. Staff are responsible for putting on their own sunscreen before outside play.
4. Parents of students will be asked to provide written permission for the staff to apply sunscreen to all exposed areas at least 30 minutes before going outside. ASP's sunscreen is Avon's Skin So Soft. Parents may choose to provide their own. Note: The sunscreen ASP uses includes insect repellent as well.

The Rationale for Sunscreen

Sun exposure from ultraviolet rays (UVA and UVB) causes visible and invisible damage to skin cells. Visible damage consists of freckles early in life. Invisible damage to skin cells adds up over time creating age spots, wrinkles, and even skin cancer (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2019).

Sunscreen Declination

If a parent elects not to allow sunscreen they will be asked to sign the Declination Form for Sunscreen, and the following alternative will be offered:

Playing outside under the canopy will be allowed. The classroom's outside time will be moved to before 10 am in an attempt to be outside when the UV exposure is not as great. Additionally, when the canopy comes down during the snow season, the child will wear long sleeves and a hat during outdoor activities.

Please complete the Sunscreen form, if you prefer to use your own sunscreen or decline the use of sunscreen please call the front office so we may provide you with the correct form. Thank you for your cooperation.

Fundraisers

We may hold fundraisers during the year that involve the purchase of items or attendance at an event. Please be aware that participation is optional.

Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE)

All students who are receiving special education services with an IEP (individualized education plan) will have an annual review meeting to plan for the student's services for next year. Parent attendance at this meeting is very important. A Starting Place will write a progress report and will present data to show if your child needs summer services or not. Summer is only for those students who demonstrate significant regression after breaks, with the purpose being to maintain the level of functioning, not to work on the improvement of skills. Parents will receive an invitation to this meeting from the district indicating the date and time.

For students who are entering Kindergarten, although you registered with the district for preschool services. You will now have to register again for kindergarten. It is essential that you complete this process with your district office prior to your child's annual review meeting.

If your child receives ESY(extended school year - summer session) it is important to note that we run a 6 week session. Families must commit to attending the entire session - of course illness might occur, however, please plan vacations either before or after this session.

Student Records

Retention

All preschool records are kept in locked file cabinets. When children age out of the preschool program, records are kept in the building for 10 years.

Amendments

Parents have the right to request an amendment to their child's record when the parent believes the information contained in the records is inaccurate.

- When reports/progress notes are written a copy is sent to the parents. Teachers/therapists will call the family to review all written reports. They will ask the parent if they have any questions/concerns or disagree with any of the written material.
- If a parent has any issue with the written reports, the Director / Assistant Director will be notified.
- If A Starting Place decides to amend the record, the family and CPSE Chair will be notified and provided with newly written material.

Destruction Of Records

All children's records will be maintained for at least six years from the last day of treatment. Records are then shredded.

Discipline and Student Conduct

It is A Starting Place's mission to provide a safe and nurturing school where each child is fully accepted. Our philosophy on discipline takes a preventive approach to consistently providing children with positive role models, reinforcing appropriate behaviors, and establishing clear boundaries and expectations. The purpose of discipline within a preschool is to help children build their self-control. To give each child the necessary behavioral skills to function in the individual and group setting, a child must feel respected and have their needs acknowledged. All discipline should help the child understand why their behavior was not acceptable, be delivered with a calm voice, and be consistent. Therefore, we begin by using positive language and positive role modeling:

- We always avoid saying "don't" in favor of a positive statement instructing the child on what "to do" and reinforcing positive plans of behavior.

- We always use a calm voice and non-threatening body language while explaining to the students what is expected.
- Accentuate the positive: compliment students' appropriate or desired behavior for their children to hear about.
- Model appropriate behavior while verbally highlighting the core skill the child needs to develop. This demonstrates coping skills and shows positive alternatives.
- Role model resolution of conflicts and give the children the necessary tools and language.
- Teach children daily the necessary skills of turn-taking, waiting, and self-control to appropriately interact with other children and adults. Our classrooms are designed to break down the steps of appropriate play and social skills.
- Ignore inappropriate behavior that is not harmful while noticing good behavior and praising it.

It is A Starting Place's firm position that **no corporal punishment** (inflicted on the body) be used for any reason. Furthermore, the use of isolation is **never used and is strictly prohibited**. Any abuse or maltreatment of a child, either as an incident of discipline or otherwise is prohibited within A Starting Place. A Starting Place will not tolerate or condone any manner of abuse or neglect of a child.

Parent Code of Conduct

We expect parents to follow the same code of conduct as our students. When conferencing with any staff members we ask that there be:

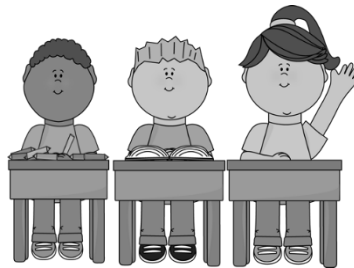
- No threatening, swearing, cursing, or foul language
- Threatening or obscene gestures

This applies to phone calls or in-person meetings. While we understand that there may be times you are very upset, this can be conveyed in an appropriate manner. We thank you in advance for your understanding in this matter.

Emergencies and Security

The safety of the students and staff is of the utmost importance to the school administration. We have a security guard from K. H. Briger Security Services. We also work closely with the Orangetown Police Department, which provides training for the staff. We run practice drills monthly, both with and without the students. All doors remain locked at all times to prevent unauthorized entrance into our building. For security reasons, we ask and instruct our staff not to hold doors open for anyone. In order to maintain the highest level of security, it is our policy to not discuss these protocols with anyone outside of ASP staff and their liaisons (e.g. OCFS, State Ed, Police Dept).

Emergency Preparedness



Student safety is a constant priority

We continually provide emergency training to our staff. To provide the utmost safety and security, we have a safety officer in our building during school hours.

All of our safety protocols are done so in conjunction with police enforcement.

Emergency Management Terms Used

LOCKOUT: Potential or actual threat outside the building. School outside activities are not permitted.

LOCK DOWN: an actual or potential threat inside the school. Staff moves students to secure areas in the building; the school is evacuated only on authorities' guidance and/or imminent risk.

SHELTER IN PLACE: In response to an emergency the school is advised to remain in the building until further notice. Students move to secure places in the school.

EVACUATION / FIRE: Fire, smoke, or an emergency involves an evacuation of the building.

Emergency Notification to Parents



An emergency alert system is in place where parents or guardians will receive an automated call or text along with an email. Therefore, please keep your child's emergency contact information current. Do Not forget to sign up for our One Call Now System.

Reunification

If an emergency requires us to relocate students, we have procedures in effect with our local community and will notify parents/ guardians when and where it is safe to reunite with your child(ren) via our emergency alert system. Our telephone greeting will also be changed and will supply you with further information.

If it is necessary for us to leave the building and seek shelter elsewhere, we have the following locations available to us:

**The Orthodox Christian Church
of the Holy Transfiguration**

35 Sickletown Road

Pearl River NY 10965

(845) 548- 3170

(This Church is located directly across the street from A Starting Place)

Pearl River Middle School

520 Gilbert Avenue

Pearl River, NY 10965

(845) 620-3870

Pearl River High School

275 East Central Avenue

Pearl River NY 10965

(845) 620- 3800

Reporting Abuse, Maltreatment, or Neglect

A Starting Place staff serve as mandated reporters. Staff receives yearly training and updates in Child Abuse/Maltreatment Identification and Prevention and Brain Injury (Shaken Baby). Any staff member who notices signs of abuse, maltreatment, or neglect will contact the Mandated Reporter hotline at 1-800-635-1522. The staff who witnesses or notices the situation will be the one to make the call. There is a criminal penalty for violation of this reporting law.

A Starting Place staff members are never allowed to be alone with a student. All staff members have cleared through the State Central Registry (SCR), Justice Center, as well as a fingerprint clearance. Staff are required to be re-cleared through the Office of Children and Family Services every five years, and are cleared through a private agency background check every three years.

**THERE ARE TWO
VICTIMS OF CHILD
ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

1. THE CHILD

2. THE PARENT

BOTH NEED HELP!

To report a case of suspected child abuse

Call toll-free:

1-800-342-3720

(For the public)

**ROCKLAND COUNTY CHILD PROTECTIVE
SERVICES**

Bed Bug Policy

Bed Bugs can be brought into the building on the personal belongings of a student or staff member. If a bug that is suspected of being a bed bug is seen, staff should place the bug in a plastic bag and immediately notify the administration.

1. Do not panic - one sighting does not necessarily mean that the entire school is infested.
2. Administration will immediately send a photo of the bug to our exterminator. For cases of Bed Bugs, A Starting Place uses a licensed extermination company, Dana Pest Control that specializes in bed bug extermination. Once it is confirmed what type of bug it is the appropriate measures will be taken.
3. If it is a bed bug:
 - a. Staff should check the surrounding areas for more bed bugs
 - b. The school nurse will be called to examine the students in the affected area
 - i. Student belongings, desks, and cubbies are to be inspected
 - c. The administration will contact the Exterminator for an immediate inspection of the facility, as well as the use of the canine team.
 - i. The exterminator will determine the appropriate treatment needed.
 - ii. The administration will follow the recommendations of bug professionals
4. Affected Student and Family
 - a. A Starting Place has purchased a Zap Bug Box at the recommendation of Dana Pest Control. Students' clothing and backpacks (without contents) can be placed in this box and disinfected from bed bugs.
 - b. Upon arrival, the student's clothes will be changed and new ones that have been disinfected will be put on. Belongings will be inspected daily
 - c. A referral will be sent to RCI from the Department of Health to assist with addressing the issue at home.
 - d. These inspections will continue until such time as the issue is resolved.
5. Administration will make all appropriate notifications, including but not limited to the Local Department of Health, OCFS - Licensor, all students in the classroom, and any other persons the Executive Director deems necessary.

Snow Day Policies - Emergency Dismissals

In the event of a Snow Day - A Starting Place will pivot to remote learning. Remote instruction is defined in the regulations as both synchronous (live) and asynchronous (worksheets/activities in the Google classroom) learning.

1. Decisions will be made as soon as possible - if weather-related and no later than 7 A.M. A Starting Place will send out a notification via our One Call Now system. Please be sure to sign up for these notifications (**Text ALERT to 22300 to Opt-in for text messaging***) as we send out important announcements using this system. The message will also be changed on our telephone answering system advising the status of school for the day.
2. Your child's teacher will send you an email address for your child at the beginning of the school year. It is important that you set up this email address right away. Do not wait until the last minute as we will not be able to help you during a remote event. If you have trouble setting up the email please contact the school office (845-735-3066) and a representative from our IT Department will help you.
3. Your child's email address is the only way you will be able to enter the Google Classroom or Google Meet for therapy.
4. Your teacher will then invite you to your child's Google classroom. You must accept this invitation and click on the area that says "Join". In this classroom will be the live learning sessions, as well as posted videos and activities that can be completed during the remote learning day.
5. Your child's teacher will also put in your child's backpack a "Snow Day" packet. Please leave it in the backpack until needed.
6. The classroom staff will also send home a "Snow Day" schedule of times for class, literacy, AI's Pals, and music.
7. If your child receives therapy, the therapist will send you a separate link for therapy. Just like in school, your therapist pulls your child for services, there may be a conflict when we are virtual for snow. *Please go to therapy at the scheduled time, your teacher will understand.*
8. If you run into technical difficulties during inclement weather you can reach us at either frontdesk@astartingplace.com or text us at 845-474-2351. Do not call the school. We will not be in the office and will not be able to pick up messages left on the school phone number (845-735-3066) until we are back in the building. We will do our best to help you, but help is limited when we are not in the building, so please set up your email right away.

It is also possible that we could have a 2-hour delay or early dismissal.

Protocol for a 2-Hour Delayed opening:

- There is NO AM session (9:00 am-11:30 am), it is canceled.
- The full-day students' session (9:00 am-2:00 pm) will begin at 11:00 am. They will be picked up by their bus 2 hours later than their normal pickup time.
- **NO EARLY DROP-OFFS**. The staff arrives 2 hours late as well.
- The PM session students (12:30 pm-3:00 pm) will begin as usual. The bus will pick them up as usual.

Protocol for Early Dismissal:

- AM session students (9:00 am-11:30 am) will be released according to the time determined on that snow day. This depends on the snowfall prediction, road conditions, or any other factors causing the dismissal. You will receive a phone call and text announcement. We will try to inform parents the night before.
- Full-day session students (9:00 am- 2:00 pm) will be released according to the time determined on that snow day. This is dependent on snowfall prediction, road conditions or any other factors causing the dismissal. You will receive a phone call and text announcement. We will try to inform parents the night before.
- There is NO PM session (12:30 pm-3:00 pm), it is canceled.

All incoming bussed students will go home on their **INCOMING BUS BACK TO THEIR PICKUP ADDRESS IF WE DISMISS BEFORE 11 AM. IF IT IS AFTER 11 AM THEN THEY ARE SENT TO THEIR DROP-OFF LOCATIONS.** Parents need to make these arrangements available. If there is no one at the address to accept the child, the child will be taken to the police station. This is the current policy for all children who do not have someone at their drop-off address.

If your child is NOT scheduled for INCOMING bus service they must be picked up by the dismissal time which is determined that day. Even if the child typically takes a bus home, **THERE IS NO BUS SERVICE FOR THESE STUDENTS.**

If your child is transported by car, in the event of an early dismissal or emergency evacuation, you must be available to return to school to pick up your child when contacted to do so.

How to Access Gmail and Google Classroom

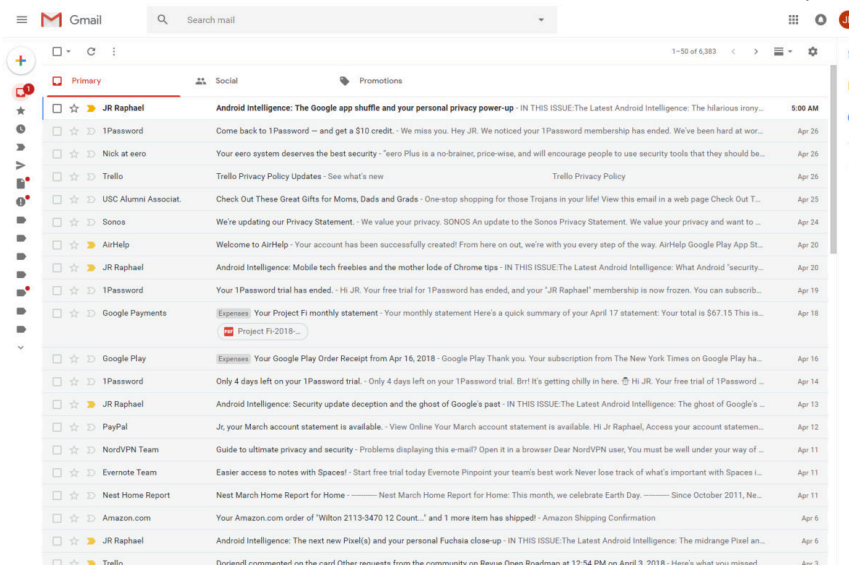
Gmail

1. Go to gmail.com
2. Input the student's email and default password. (These are provided by the Classroom Teacher.)
3. Once logged in, Google will prompt you to make a new password. **PLEASE REMEMBER THIS PASSWORD**, as A Starting Place does not have access to it once it is changed!

Google Classroom

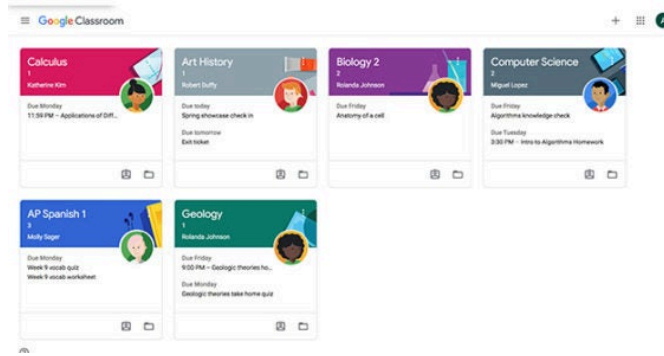
IMPORTANT: Please accept the invite to your child's class(es) that was sent to your child's ASP email address BEFORE trying to access Google Classroom. If you need another updated invite please ask your child's teacher***

1. Go to www.gmail.com
2. Sign into your child's A Starting Place email
3. Once you are signed into your email, locate the 9 tiled dots in the upper right hand corner

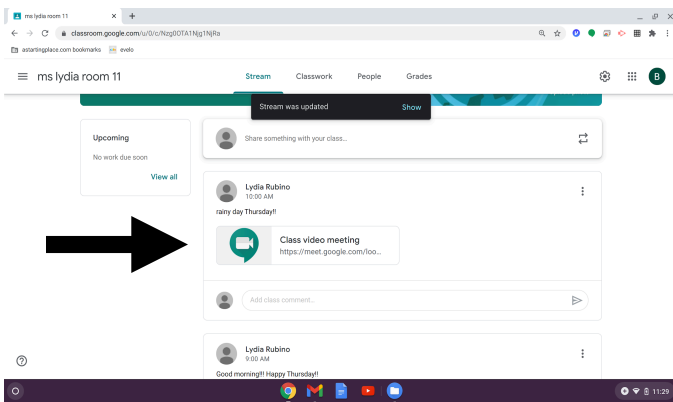


4. Click on Classroom (This will take you to Google Classroom; Remember to accept the invite to your child's classroom before completing this step.)

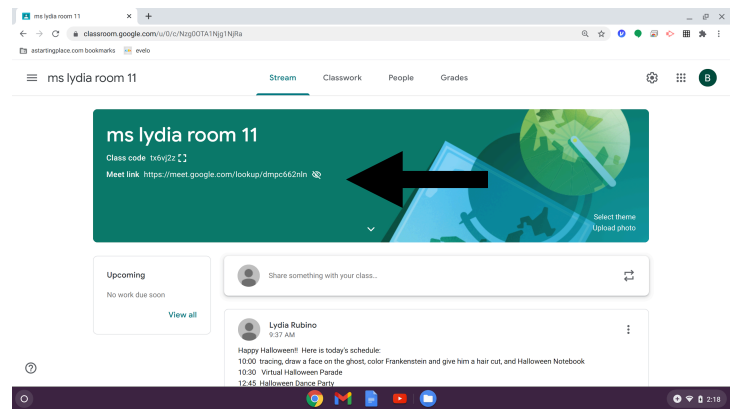
- Click on your child's class. (Please note: Your child may have multiple Google Classrooms. ie: Their Teacher's/Room X's Class, Music, AI's Pals, and Literacy.)



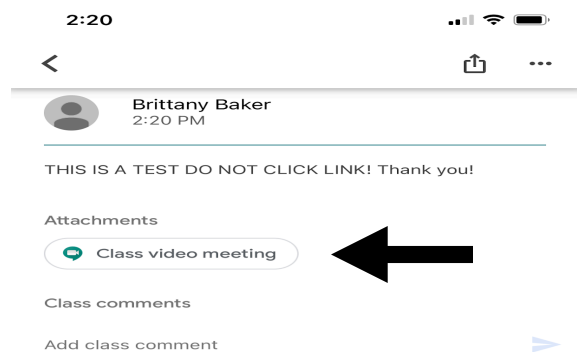
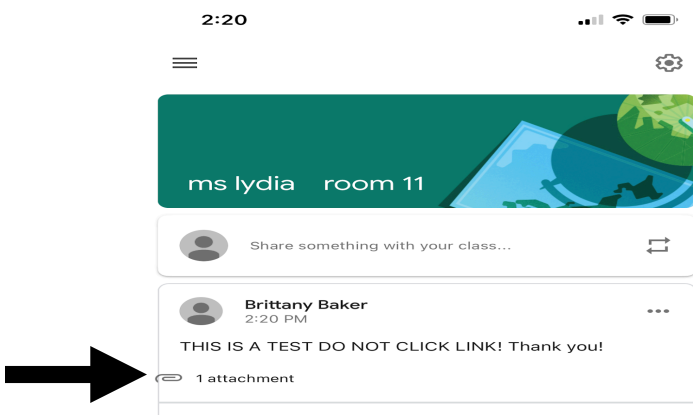
- Once you are in the desired Classroom, you'll find class materials, announcements, and links posted on the stream. *The link to get onto the virtual class may vary by teacher. Some will post the link in the stream, others will make the link visible on the top left corner of the classroom banner.



OR



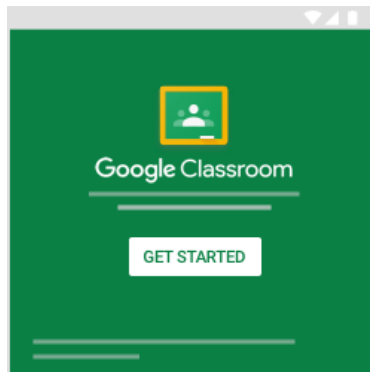
- FOR MOBILE DEVICES ONLY: When using a **mobile device**, click the **attachment link**, then click **"class video meeting"**.



NOTE: You will ONLY be able to access the Classroom at your assigned classroom/therapy time.

Gmail Troubleshooting

- If you are having trouble accessing the classroom (such as it is telling you access is denied or you are outside of the domain), make sure you are signed in under your child's ASP email account. Sometimes it will switch back to your default Gmail account.
 - To toggle back and forth to your child's email on an already existing Gmail account:
 - Locate your initial in the upper right hand corner and click
 - Click your child's ASP email account ("Add another account" if you haven't set it up on the device yet)
- You MUST download the Gmail app and sign into your child's email for the Classroom app to work. You can download the Google Classroom app onto your phone.
 - Go to app store and download
 - Once downloaded, click "get started"
 - Sign into your child's ASP email account



Drugs/Alcohol/Tobacco/Weapon Free Environment

A Starting Place is a drug, alcohol, tobacco, and weapon-free environment. The use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapor devices, and chewing tobacco is not permitted on school grounds. This also applies to the use or possession of any drugs, including marijuana/cannabis, infused items, alcohol, and weapons of any kind.

Emergency Evacuation

There are times when situations occur that are out of our control. This may force us to close the school on an emergency basis. As always, the safety and security of our students and staff are paramount. In an emergency, we will follow the same procedures as we do for an early dismissal. If we are forced to dismiss before 11 AM, all AM and full-day students will be transported to their **PICK-UP ADDRESS**. After 11 AM, the children will go to their regular drop-off address. It is vitally important that you make arrangements to have someone available to meet the bus at the designated drop-off.

In the event that school is closed while buses are transporting but children have not yet deboarded the bus, the children will be transported back to their pick-up address of origin.

If your child is transported by car, in the event of an early dismissal or emergency evacuation, you must be available to return to school to pick up your child when contacted to do so.

We thank you for your cooperation in this very important matter.

Please sign the acknowledgment of receipt of this emergency procedure and return it to the School. It is part of the registration packet (blue papers).

A Starting Place

Notice of Privacy Practices

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

Parents' Bill of Rights for Data Privacy & Security

A Starting Place is committed to ensuring student privacy in accordance with local, state, and federal regulations. As part of the Common Core Implementation Reform Act, Education Law 2-d requires educational agencies in the State of New York must develop a Parents' Bill of Rights for Data Privacy and Security. The purpose of the Parent's Bill of Rights is to inform parents (which also includes legal guardians or persons in parental relation to a student). In addition to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Education Law 2-d provides important new protections for student data, and new remedies for breaches of the responsibility to maintain the security and confidentiality of such data.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 USC 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school within 45 days after the day A Starting Place receives a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. If copies of the record are requested, A Starting Place may charge a fee for the copies.

Parents of eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records which they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR 99 31).

- School officials with legitimate educational interests
- Other schools to which a student is transferring
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school
- Accrediting organizations
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena
- Appropriate officials in case of health and safety emergencies
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law

Schools may disclose, without consent, “directory” information such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors, and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin).

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 is a federal program that requires that all medical records and other individually identifiable health information used or disclosed by us in any form, whether electronically, on paper, or orally are kept properly confidential. This Act gives you, the patient, significant new rights to understand and control how your health information is used. HIPAA provides penalties for covered entities that misuse personal health information.

As required by HIPAA, we have prepared this explanation of how we are required to maintain the privacy of your health information and how we may use and disclose your health information.

We may use and disclose your medical records only for each of the following purposes: treatment, payment, and healthcare operations. Treatment means providing, coordinating, or managing healthcare and related services by one or more healthcare providers. An example of this would include teeth cleaning services.

Payment means such activities as obtaining reimbursement for services, confirming coverage, billing or collection activities, and utilization review. An example of this would be sending a bill for your visit to your insurance company or the Rockland County Department of Health for Payment.

Healthcare operations include the business aspects of running our practice, such as conducting quality assessment and improvement activities, auditing functions, cost management analysis, and customer service. An example would be an internal quality assessment review.

We may also create and distribute de-identified health information by removing all references to individually identifiable information.

We may contact you to provide appointment reminders or information about treatment alternatives or other health-related benefits and services that may be of interest to you.

Any other uses and disclosures will be made only with your written authorization. You may revoke such authorization in writing and we are required to honor and abide by that written request, except to the extent that we have already taken actions relying on your authorization.

You have the following rights with respect to your protected health information, which you can exercise by presenting a written request to the Privacy Officer:

- The right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of protected health information, including those related to disclosure to family members, other relatives, close personal friends, or any other person identified by you. We are, however, not required to agree to a requested restriction. If we do agree to a restriction, we must abide by it unless you agree in writing to remove it.
- The right to reasonable requests to receive confidential communications of protected health information from use by alternative means or at alternative locations.
- The right to inspect and copy your protected health information. This request must be made to us in writing.
- The right to amend your protected health information.
- The right to obtain, and we have the obligation to provide you, a paper copy of this notice from us at your first service delivery date.
- The right to provide and we are obligated to receive, a written acknowledgment that you have received a copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices.
- We are required by law to maintain the privacy of your protected health information to provide you with a notice of our legal duties and privacy practices with respect to protected health information.

This notice is effective as of April 14, 2003, and we are required to abide by the terms of the Notice of Privacy Practices currently in effect. We reserve the right to change the terms of our Notice of Privacy Practices and to make the new notice provisions effective.

Parents' Bill of Rights for Data Privacy and Security

In accordance with the requirements of a new Section 2-d that was added to the New York Education Law in 2014, A Starting Place provides the following Parents' Bill of Rights with respect to maintaining the privacy and security of student data:

- 1) A student's personally identifiable information cannot be sold or released for any commercial purposes
- 2) Parents have the right to inspect and review the complete contents of their child's education record. This right of inspection is consistent with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). In addition to the right of inspection of the educational record, Education Law 2 - d provides a specific right for parents to inspect or receive copies of any data in the student's educational record. The New York State Education Department will develop policies and procedures pertaining to this right some time in the future.
- 3) State and Federal Laws protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information, and safeguards associated with industry standards and best practices, including but not limited to, encryption, firewalls, and password protection, must be in place when data is stored or transferred. Towards this end, A Starting Place has implemented the following safeguards to protect personally identifiable information about students, which is stored or transferred by A Starting Place, against unauthorized disclosure.

- 4) All databases that have student information are protected by secure passwords and are only available to the office staff.
- 5) All databases are secured behind a multilayered threat protection firewall. The firewall is monitored and kept up to date.

You have recourse if you feel that your privacy protections have been violated. You have the right to file a formal, written complaint with us at the address below, or with the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights about violations of the provisions of this notice or the policies and procedures of our office. We will not retaliate against you for filing a complaint.

Please contact us for more information:

Joshua Beauchemin, Privacy Officer
A Starting Place
664 Orangeburg Road
Pearl River, NY 10965
845-735-3066

Parents also have the right to have complaints about possible breaches of student data addressed. Complaints should be directed to:

Technology Officer
Joshua Beauchemin
664 Orangeburg Road
Pearl River, NY 10965
845-735-3066

NYSED - New York State Education Department
Chief Privacy Office
89 Washington Ave
Albany, NY 12234
CPO@mail.nysed.gov

For more information regarding the laws that govern this Parents' Bill of Rights please go to:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/docs/parents-bill-of-rights.pdf>

For information about HIPPA or FERPA or a complaint you may contact:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources
Office of Civil Rights
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20021
202-619-0257
877-696-6775