

**GORHAM COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL, INC.**  
**28 Ballpark Rd**  
**Gorham, ME 04038**  
**BYLAWS**  
**(Updated December 6,2016)**

**ARTICLE I**  
**Name**

The Gorham Cooperative Preschool (hereinafter referred to as the “Preschool”) is located in Gorham, Maine. The Preschool is a cooperative non-profit, non-sectarian, non-discriminatory organization licensed by the state of Maine.

**ARTICLE II**  
**Definition of a Cooperative**

A cooperative preschool is organized and administered by parents who:

- Hire qualified professional teachers who develop, review and adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the children.
- Assist the teachers in the classroom.
- Operate the Preschool on a non-profit basis keeping costs to a minimum by the parents doing much of the work themselves, raising funds, holding offices, working on committees and maintaining the school and equipment.

The Preschool provides opportunities for the children to:

- Try new activities.
- Develop their independence.
- Acquire pre-academic concepts and skills.
- Make life-long friends and learn the importance of sharing.
- Listen and follow directions.
- Enjoy the learning experience.

The Preschool provides opportunities for the parents to:

- Play an active role in their child’s first organized learning experience.
- Enhance parenting and leadership skills.
- Gain a deeper understanding of how children develop.
- Share ideas, interests and resources as well as create family friendships.

**ARTICLE III**  
**Purpose Philosophy**

The mission of the Preschool is to provide each child an opportunity for social and emotional growth which will help individual growth. The program will nourish each child intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially. The Preschool philosophy is to provide developmentally appropriate activities that nurture the whole child through a play-based curriculum. Skills that help children adjust to the structured school environment are introduced.

## **ARTICLE IV**

### **Membership**

Parents of children enrolled in the cooperative and having submitted their May tuition deposit for the upcoming academic year are eligible Members (hereinafter referred to as "Members").

Membership will be open to all persons according to the provisions set forth in the Bylaws regardless of race, religion, national origin or gender. Members will:

- A. Elect an Executive Board. Each member is entitled to one vote regardless of the number of children enrolled.
- B. Sign a confidentiality agreement and a Criminal Conviction Disclosure Statement. If a criminal incident has been noted on the disclosure or occurs during the school year, Members are required to report such incident to the chairperson(s) immediately and complete additional documentation. A Member's right to volunteer in the preschool may be suspended by a vote of the Executive Board.
- C. Participate as a Parent Helper on a rotating daily schedule. Members with more than one child enrolled will be required to participate as a Parent Helper twice as many days as a Member with one child. For specific duties, see Parent Handbook.
- D. Attend every Parent Meeting. The Members are the governing body of our school, therefore attendance is mandatory.
- E. Hold a minimum of one position as either an Executive Board member or a committee member.
- F. Provide transportation to and from school and for field trips as shall be reasonably requested.
- G. Participate in all official school fundraisers. In order to keep the cost of tuition affordable, participation in official fundraising events is imperative.
- H. Satisfy all financial responsibilities.
- I. Provide up to date immunization records for each child enrolled in the Preschool. (or a medical exempt form if applicable) Inform teacher(s) of any allergy or infectious disease information.
- J. Conduct themselves in a professional and rational manner at all times while on Preschool property or while attending a Preschool function.
- K. Be familiar with school Bylaws and contents of the Parent Handbook.
- L. Voice any issues or concerns to an Executive Board member.

Membership responsibilities include but are not limited to the aforementioned. Failure to meet the membership requirements as stated above, without approval from the Executive Board, will result in the Member receiving an email from the Executive Board as a reminder of membership responsibilities.

Loss of "good standing" will occur upon receipt of a second notification and the Member will be required to meet Executive Board and or Chairperson(s) to discuss membership responsibilities.

Membership may be terminated without a refund of paid tuition due on affirmation of majority.

A majority of Members voting at a Parent Meeting or special meeting provided said Member(s) is informed in writing at least ten (10) days in advance of the meeting in

which expulsion is to be considered; and such member shall have an opportunity to be heard in person at such meeting. All tuition due upon termination will remain due and outstanding after termination.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Parent Meetings**

Parent Meetings shall be held at least twice each calendar year. Dates of the Parent Meetings will be determined by the Executive Board and posted before the beginning of the school year. The incoming Executive Board will determine the number of Parent Meetings each year and may amend the dates of scheduled Parent Meetings in its sole discretion. Special Parent Meetings may be demanded by majority vote of the Executive Board or by written petition of at least 3/10 of Members. In which case, the Chairperson(s) shall call such meeting to take place within 14 days of such demand.

A simple majority of Members constitutes a quorum. A quorum is the minimum number of persons of any body that is required to be present in order to legally transact business. The Members may repeal a decision by the Executive Board with a 2/3 majority vote of those present at the meeting. There is one vote per enrolled family. A simple majority of the votes cast is sufficient to carry a motion.

An agenda will be distributed in advance of each Parent Meeting.

Parent Meetings provide an opportunity for Members to openly discuss Preschool business. After one unexcused absence, the Member will receive a letter from the Secretary as a reminder of membership responsibilities.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Executive Board**

The Executive Board consists of the Lead Teacher, Assistant Teacher (non voting member), Chairperson(s), Treasurer (non-voting member), a Class Coordinator for each session, Secretary, Registrar and Fundraising Chair.

Treasurer position may be a member or non-member, in the event the Treasurer is a member he/she will have a voting interest as a Parent Body Member not as an Executive Board Member.

A simple majority of the voting members of Executive Board constitutes a quorum. A majority vote is a simple majority of votes cast at a meeting.

Executive Board Meetings are open to all Members of the Preschool, debate of school business between 3 or more Executive Board members should be reserved for planned meetings of the Executive Board. The Executive Board reserves the right to call an executive session to discuss matters of a personal nature.

The Executive Board will:

A. Consider the work, welfare, current and future issues of the Preschool.

- B. Hold meetings monthly. Changes to or additional Executive Board Meetings may be called at the discretion of the Executive Board.
- C. Be familiar with the Bylaws.
- D. Propose amount of tuition and present for vote at a Parent Meeting annually.
- E. Review Treasurer's financial reports monthly.
- F. Vote on teacher(s) and Treasurer salaries annually.
- G. Keep matters of a personal nature in the strictest of confidence and sign a confidentiality agreement to that effect.
- H. Perform an annual performance review of the Teachers and Treasurer.
- I. Establish dates for the Governing Calendar prior to the commencement of the academic year. Changes to the Governing Calendar may be made at the discretion of the Executive Board. The Governing Calendar ("Governing Calendar") is a timeline of governing events throughout the academic year, which shall include but not be limited to: Executive Board elections, teachers contract negotiation and annual budget submittal by Treasurer.

Executive Board responsibilities include but are not limited to the aforementioned.

An Executive Board member or committee chairperson may resign at any time by providing notice to the Executive Board. Notice of resignation is effective immediately or at a later time agreed upon by the resigning member and the Executive Board Members.

An elected Executive Board member or Committee Chairperson may be removed from his/her position by a majority vote of the Executive Board or Membership.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Elections**

The Chairperson(s) will invite and the Secretary will accept all volunteers for a slate of officers. The nominees are presented to Members by the Secretary. In the event that there are no volunteers, the Executive Board has the power to select a slate of officers to be presented to Members. By ballot, a separate vote will be held for each office at a Parent Meeting. It is recommended that the offices of the Executive Board be filled with experienced Members whenever possible. The newly elected Executive Board is required to attend the remaining Executive Board Meetings through the academic year. All duties and responsibilities of the Executive Board will be transferred to the newly elected Executive Board at the end of the academic year.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Duties and Requirements of Officers Chairperson(s)**

- A. Assumes responsibility on June 1st of the current year.
- B. The term continues through May 31st of the following year.
- C. Preside at Executive Board Meetings and Parent Meetings.

- D. Set up Preschool calendar with input from the teachers, and Executive Board.
- E. Initiate election process.
- F. Appoint Executive Board members and chairpersons to fill vacancies during the year until a Member vote can be held.
- G. Review annual budget presented by the Treasurer.
- H. Conduct an audit of books submitted by Treasurer and present findings to Executive Board.
- I. Create, distribute, receive and review annual program evaluations and present synopsis to Members.
- J. Negotiate teacher and treasurer contracts and salaries and present to Executive Board for vote.
- K. Obtain list of eligible emergency substitutes (from currently enrolled Members) for Teachers
- L. Coordinate with Treasurer to Renew Preschool license and ensure Preschool is operating in accordance with Maine Department of Health and Human Services Rules for the Licensing of Nursery Schools.
- M. Oversee all Standing Committees.
- N. Collect all medical forms and file in students' confidential file (i.e. immunization, medical or allergy).
- O. Keep Members informed of relevant medical information.
- P. Prepare student files and teacher files for new academic year.
- Q. Administer an annual performance review of teachers with input provided by the members of the Executive Board.
- R. Responsible for meeting annually with the chairpersons to review the Bylaws and Parent Handbook.
- S. Present a written report (in chronological order) to the incoming Chairperson(s). Such report will detail all activities in which Chairperson(s) was involved during the term. This report will be kept in the Preschool's permanent record.

### **Class Coordinators**

- A. Attend and participate in all meetings of the Executive Board.
- B. Provide a brief report at Parent Meetings.
- C. Preside at Executive Board and Parent Meetings in absence of Chairperson(s).
- D. Serve as a liaison between Members and the Executive Board.
- E. Set up and distribute Parent Helper Day schedule for the academic year prior to the first day of school. F. Set up and initiate class phone tree, email, and or mass text when necessary.
- G. Collect fees for all class field trips.
- H. Post sign up sheets on school bulletin board for special events and parties.
- I. Obtain list of eligible emergency substitutes (from currently enrolled Members) for Parent Helpers.
- J. Familiarize new Members, who enroll after the start of the academic year, with the classroom and general procedures. Address any questions pertaining to the Bylaws.
- K. Disseminate pertinent Preschool information, as needed
- L. Present a written report (in chronological order) to the incoming Class Coordinator. Such report will detail all activities in which the Class Coordinator was involved during the term. This report will be kept in the Preschool's permanent record.

## **Secretary**

- A. Keep detailed minutes of business transacted at Parent and Executive Board Meetings and maintain attendance records. A copy of the meeting minutes signed and dated by the Secretary, will be available for review in the Meeting Minutes Notebook in the Preschool and electronically distributed to the membership within 5 days.
- B. Prepare and type all necessary materials and correspondence.
- C. Update Parent Handbook and all parent folders for the new academic year.
- D. Oversee the annual election including creating nomination and ballot forms.
- E. Periodically review and update Disability Policy and maintain copy at the Preschool.
- F. Present a written report (in chronological order) to the incoming Secretary. Such report will detail all activities in which Secretary was involved during the term. This report will be kept in the Preschool's permanent record.

## **Treasurer**

- A. Is a paid member or non-member, with a rate of pay to be determined by the Executive Board
- B. Coordinates with Chairpersons in ensuring separation of duties with regards to financial transactions, in order to prevent fraud.
- C. Responsible for filing Secretary of State Annual Report.
- D. Responsible for the annual review and update of all insurance policies.
- E. Responsible for calling in payroll amounts to the contracted payroll company.
- F. Negotiate lease and handle issues.
- G. Coordinate with Chairperson(s) to Renew Preschool license and ensure Preschool is operating in accordance with Maine Department of Health and Human Services Rules for the Licensing of Nursery Schools.
- H. Attend and participate in all meetings of the Executive Board and submit financial reports at each meeting.
- I. Provide a financial report at Parent Meetings and make available to Members by email and at the school.
- J. Prepare annual budget for review by the Executive Board for the upcoming school year.
- K. Receive and process monthly tuition and miscellaneous monies throughout the year (e.g. registration, fundraisers, donations, reimbursements, etc.).
- L. Catalog donations and issue receipts upon request.
- M. Pay all monthly expenses.
- N. Deposit checks at bank and reconciles account monthly in a timely fashion.
- O. Pick up mail weekly and disseminate.
- P. Correspond with accountant as needed.
- Q. Work with accountant and payroll service to ensure all tax related and new hire forms are completed and filed in a timely manner.
- R. Submit financial reports to Chairperson(s) for auditing.
- S. Correspond with Members regarding account activity.
- T. Present end-of-year synopsis to the Executive Board and Members.
- U. Have working knowledge of Quickbooks Online.
- V. Present a written report (in chronological order) to the incoming Treasurer. Such report will detail all activities in which Treasurer was involved during the term. This report will be kept in the Preschool's permanent record.

## **Registrar**

- A. Attend and participate in all meetings of the Executive Board.
- B. Provide a brief report at Parent Meetings.
- C. Talk with all interested parents about the details of the Preschool program.
- D. Keep a wait list call log for calls that come in for prospective enrollment.
- E. Outline a marketing/public relations plan for upcoming registration to the community, collaboratively with the Marketing committee.
- F. Send out applications for enrollment to all interested families.
- G. Send out confirmation letters and Standing Committee choice sheet.
- H. Assign volunteers to the Standing Committees and brief the volunteers of their duties. Standing Committees are:
  1. Resource & Curriculum
  2. Fundraising
  3. Building and Maintenance
  4. Cleaning
  5. Finance
  6. Photobook
  7. Event Planning
  8. Marketing
- I. Update and distribute a current Preschool contact list to Members.
- J. Present a written report (in chronological order) to the incoming Registrar. Such report will detail all activities in which Registrar was involved during the term. This report will be kept in the Preschool's permanent record.

## **Fundraising Chair**

- A. Attend and participate in all meetings of the Executive Board.
- B. Provide a brief report at Parent Meetings.
- C. Develop ideas and recommendations for fundraising events to be presented to the Executive Board for review and approval.
- D. Plan and coordinate official fundraising activities and present to the Members.
- E. Outline a marketing/public relations plan for each fundraising event which may include radio, television, newspaper, website advertising, local signage and marketing materials (i.e., tickets, flyers, posters and programs). With the help from the Marketing Committee
- F. Collaborate with and delegate duties to Members of the Fundraising Committee.
- G. Maintain a list of current, past and possible future sponsors including contact information, monetary donations as well as other donation information.
- H. Complete a written cost/income summary after each fundraiser and present to Executive Board.
- I. Present a written report (in chronological order) to the incoming Fundraising Chair. Such report will detail all activities in which Fundraising Chair was involved during the term. This report will be kept in the Preschool's permanent record.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Registration and Fees**

Annual student enrollment will commence on October 15th for the following school year. At that time, enrollment is open to current Members, past Members and families on previous years' wait list, applications to be post marked by November 1st. Annual

student enrollment for the community at large will start on November 1st. Applications are obtained from and returned upon completion to the Registrar. Upon receipt of the mailed completed application and nonrefundable registration fee, the application will be dated for further use.

In the spring, if there is not full enrollment, the Registrar and the Executive Board will set an open house date for the community at large. At that time applications will be accepted until all openings are filled.

Openings will be filled in the following manner starting on October 15th:

1. Current Members: by postmark date or time of registration online of all current Member applications.
2. Past Members: by postmark date or time of registration online of all past Member applications.
3. Past Waitlist: by postmark date or time of registration online of all waitlist that are eligible for class program.
4. Community at Large: by postmark or time of registration online date of all applications.

In the event that many applications are received on the same date, the order will be determined by the time it was received. It is recommended that all postmarked applications have the post office employee write the time it was dropped off on the envelope. Online applications will automatically be timed upon submission. If a family is registering more than one child (i.e. twins) the first child's registration time will count for both, taking up to two openings in the registration. If necessary, membership can be increased by one by a vote of the Executive Board in order to accommodate twins.

When a class is full, a waitlist will be formed according to the order received by postmark. No special accommodations will be given to prior Members, etc. past the November 1st due date.

Prior to filling the classes, the Registrar will request from teachers a recommendation on the number of spaces to be left open for children who may need to repeat a year. A decision to repeat a year must occur by March 30th. Should a Member decide after March 30th to repeat a year, the Member will be placed on the waitlist.

Registration and tuition policies include, but are not limited, to the following:

A. The maximum number of children to attend the 2-day class in any year will be 10. The maximum number of children to attend the 3-day class in any year will be 14. In accordance with the desire of the Members, the Executive Board will strive to maintain low class size. If a situation arises where the Executive Board finds it necessary to increase or decrease this number for a particular year, they may do so by a majority vote of the Executive Board.

B. Students in the 2-day classes must be three (3) by October 15th of the school year they are entering. Students in the 3-day class must be four (4) by October 15th of the school year they are entering. The teachers must approve any exceptions to the age qualifications listed above in writing after an evaluation of the student is conducted. All students in the preschool must be toilet trained.



- C. The non-refundable registration is subject to change the Executive Board and voted on by the Members.
- D. For every child who is registered in the Preschool, a deposit of one month's tuition must be paid by May 1st and will be counted as May tuition. Any Member not complying with this deadline risks forfeiting his/her space in the Preschool with no refund of the registration fee and said space will be offered to the next waiting list application.
- E. A new Member entering after the first week of the month will pay a pro-rated tuition for the month.
- F. Monthly tuition is payable on the first of each month, to be mailed to the school, deposited in the tuition envelope in the classroom, or online.
- G. Monthly tuition not received by the 10th of each month will be assessed a late fee of \$10 or an amount to be determined by the Executive Board.
- H. If tuition is not paid by the 10th of the month, a warning will be given by the Treasurer. If tuition is not paid by the 20th of the month, as a second warning, a written notification will be sent by the Treasurer. Failure to pay tuition within the 30-day delinquency period, without approval of the Executive Board, may be grounds for expulsion.
- I. In extenuating circumstances, families experiencing financial hardship may appeal to the Executive Board for special tuition arrangements. Families must complete a Scholarship Application to apply for special tuition arrangements.
- J. There is no reduced tuition for Members with multiple children enrolled in the Preschool.
- K. Any charges incurred by the Preschool due to check(s) being returned "non- payable for insufficient funds" will be paid by the Member.
- L. All accounts should be settled by April 1st of the year enrolled. On April 10th a late fee of \$10 will be assessed.

Members of the 3-day class who have not fulfilled their financial commitment by May 1st may not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony. Members of the 2-day class who have not fulfilled their financial commitment by May 1st will no longer be members in "good standing" and may forfeit their position in the preschool for the following year.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Leave of Absence**

- A. Birth/Adoption: A Member may be excused from participation in the group (parent helper duties) for six weeks after the birth/adoption of their child provided they are a Member in "good standing" and tuition remains current. In cases of complications, the term may be extended, at the discretion of the Executive Board, provided tuition remains current.
- B. Serious Illness: In case of serious illness, the Parent Helper may be excused from participation in the group for two weeks. Extended absence may be approved by the Executive Board.
- C. Personal Leave: One week's notice should be provided on a Personal Leave of Absence if possible. The Personal Leave should not exceed three weeks and tuition must remain current. The Member must arrange coverage for her/his own Parent Helper Day, which must be repaid after return.

D. Child Leave: A child who is enrolled in the Preschool but had to take a leave of absence can re-enter as long as tuition remains current.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **Referral Policy**

Should a situation arise where the Preschool is unable to meet the needs of a child, the teacher(s) and Member involved will evaluate and determine whether the Preschool is an appropriate setting for the child. Any unresolved issues or concerns arising from this meeting can be brought before the Executive Board with the knowledge of both the teacher(s) and Member.

In the event that a student or family needs assistance that the Preschool cannot provide, the Executive Board, and teachers will make every possible attempt to make the necessary referrals. The referrals will be within the student's and family's community whenever possible. If appropriate referrals cannot be found within the home community, every attempt will be made to find assistance in surrounding communities. The Preschool reserves the right to refer any party to an appropriate agency outside of the school when the Executive Board, and teachers cannot provide a needed or recommended service.

Should a child be requested to leave the Preschool, tuition will be refunded for the days paid and not attended.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **Withdrawal**

If a Member withdraws from the Preschool voluntarily before the commencement of the school year, the deposit will be refunded if the vacancy is filled before the commencement of the school year.

If a Member withdraws from the Preschool voluntarily after the commencement of the school year, the Member is responsible for paying the tuition until the end of the school year or until the vacancy is filled. A vote of the majority Members at a Parent Meeting or Special Meeting may order the Executive Board to waive tuition.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **Procurement of the Teachers and Salary**

The Chairperson(s) will negotiate teacher contracts and salary. A vote of the Executive Board to accept negotiated contracts and salary will be taken. The contract must be signed by the teacher within two weeks of the receipt.

When a vacancy in the position of teacher occurs a Hiring Committee will be formed. The Hiring Committee will consist any interested Members, at least one Member of the Executive Board. The Hiring Committee will advertise for the position, interview qualified candidates and present a candidate to the Members for a vote. The interview process will consist of no more than 7 members.

In the event a substitute teacher is required, the Executive Board will determine the rate of pay.

The Executive Board may vote to terminate a teachers' contract.

#### **ARTICLE XIV School Hours**

The Preschool will be in session:

8:30 – 11:00 a.m. Tuesday/Thursday 2-Day AM Class

12:00 – 2:30 p.m. Tuesday/Thursday 2-Day PM Class

8:30 – 11:00 a.m. Monday/Wednesday/Friday 3-Day AM Class

12:00 – 2:30 p.m. Monday/Wednesday/Friday 3-Day PM Class

The Preschool generally follows the same holiday schedule as the Gorham Public Schools system and are guided by their “no school” announcements.

#### **ARTICLE XV Snow Policy**

Preschool sessions may be canceled due to inclement weather. In such event, the Preschool will follow the closing of the Gorham Public School system. If Gorham Public Schools are closed, the Preschool will be closed. A “one hour delay” of school means a “one hour delay” for the AM Class (we shall open at 9:30 a.m. for the day) and the PM session will meet at its scheduled time.

A “two hour delay” of school means the AM session will be canceled and PM session will meet at its scheduled time. If there is a delay of “more than two hours”, Preschool will be closed for the day. If there is an early release of the Gorham Public Schools, prior to 12:00 p.m., the PM session will be cancelled. Snow days will be made up after the third occurrence, per session, at a date and time to be determined by the Executive Board and teachers. There shall be no more than three make up sessions per class in any school year.

#### **ARTICLE XVI Amendments to the Bylaws**

The Bylaws may be amended by a simple majority vote of the Members acting on the recommendation of the Bylaws Committee, the Executive Board or the motion of any Member.

The proposed Bylaw amendment(s) will be published and distributed to Members. The proposed amendment(s) will be read and voted on at a Parent Meeting.

#### **ARTICLE XVII Parliamentary Procedure**

In all matters not covered by its Bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order will govern this Preschool.