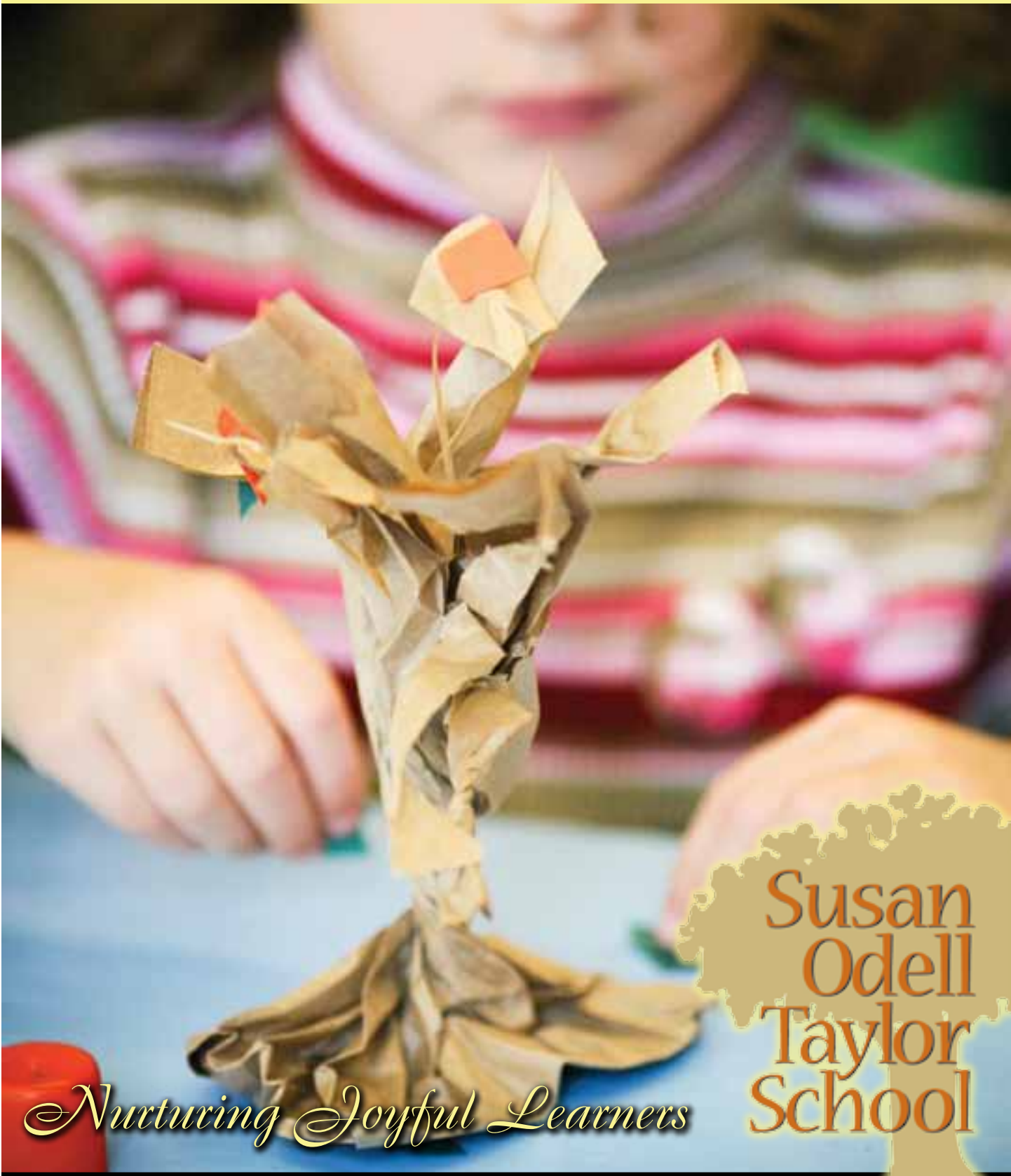


susan odell Taylor school for Children



*Nurturing Joyful Learners*

Susan  
Odell  
Taylor  
School

2009/10 student Handbook

## Contact information

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**3/4 Literacy/Math**  
Heather Koleszar

**5/6 Teacher**  
Lianne Adams

**Art Teacher**  
Ellen Crane

**Music Teacher**  
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**Creative Movement Director**  
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## Educational Philosophy

### “Nurturing Joyful Learners”

The following principles serve as the philosophical foundation for the Susan Odell Taylor School. In embracing these ideas, those affiliated with the Taylor School form a community that supports and enriches children’s lives.

- The development of a steadfast sense of self is paramount to each child’s educational experience. Through their experiences, the children will come to know and understand themselves in ways that are personal and unique. Each child will be encouraged to develop a sense of trust, a sense of competence, and a sense of initiative. Positive self-esteem and self-confidence will be nurtured within each student.
- How the children learn is as important as what they learn. The process of learning holds as much value as the specific content being learned. It is through the learning process that children develop strategies and skills that can be applied to understanding new content and gaining new knowledge.
- Knowing the children we teach individually, culturally and developmentally is as important as knowing the content we teach. We will strive to understand the children individually, recognizing that all have personal strengths, challenges, and circumstances that affect who they are and how they learn. The better we know the children, the more we can do to support them in their daily lives.
- Each child will have the opportunity to reach her/his highest potential within a safe and nurturing environment. Each child will be guided socially, emotionally and academically toward greater accomplishments. The learning environment will foster a sense of security and support as the children take the risks necessary for the development of new understandings about themselves and the world in which they live.
- The learning environment will be experiential - fostering curiosity and creativity, while instilling a love of learning. Children will be actively engaged in learning, with an emphasis on hands-on experiences, mentally stimulating situations and collaborative learning. Learning will be purposeful, exciting, enjoyable and satisfying.
- Emphasis will be placed on academic rigor within the friendly atmosphere of a caring community of learners. Our emphasis is on fostering children’s creativity and curiosity while enabling them to become highly literate students with strong mathematical, scientific, and social understandings that will give them the ability to pursue any future course of study. An important goal of our curriculum is to work on deeper understandings within subject areas rather than attempting to cover a large amount of content in a superficial manner.
- Parental and community interaction will be an integral part of the school’s success. The school will value parents and the community, recognizing that cultivating partnerships with each will serve to enrich our students’ lives. We will welcome parents and community members into our school environment and strive to reach out and be a part of the community at large. Because learning can and should occur beyond the academic walls, we believe the children will benefit in many ways from their experiences outside of the school environment.

## Diversity statement

The Susan Odell Taylor School for Children values diversity. We are committed to reflecting the diversity of our community. We believe a culturally diverse community of people displays a range of origins, thought processes, talents, experiences, and abilities that, like diversity itself, is always changing.

## Our School Day

8:30 am  
3:20 pm

School Day Begins  
Dismissal

- All classrooms will open at 8:30 am
- Teachers are in their rooms to welcome students and families at 8:30 am
- The keypad will work prior to 8:30 am. Prior to 8:30 am children must be supervised by the adults who brought them to school. Members of our community are welcome to visit with each other in the entrance hall or at the cubbies while waiting for classrooms to open at 8:30 am
- Children who ride the bus and arrive before 8:30 am can go to beforecare without a fee. All other children who go to beforecare prior to 8:30 am will be charged. The Common Room will only be open to those children who are in beforecare.
- Children in kindergarten through sixth grade who arrive after 8:40 am are considered tardy and should go to the office accompanied by the adult who brought them to school. The adult will provide a written reason for the late arrival. Forms will be provided. This will be forwarded to the classroom teacher to ensure an accurate attendance record.
- Families of children who are absent or tardy from school more than 10 days will receive a letter regarding attendance from the Head of School. Parents may be required to meet with the Head of School to address their child's attendance.

## Parent Communication

An all-school e-newsletter will be sent out monthly. Included in the newsletter are letters from each classroom teacher, notes from the Head of School and the Academic Director, a monthly calendar and other information. The newsletter will also be posted on the website.

"School News" E-Communications are emailed weekly and include information on school news and events for the week as well as reminders of upcoming events and deadlines.

We like to use email to communicate with you. Please be sure to provide us with your email address. Please use the Taylor School website to access information.

**Please note:** Please do not use parent email list for anything other than school business.

Memos, reminders and announcements will also be placed in your child's home folder and put into her/his backpack. We ask that you review in the home folder every night as sometimes notices are time sensitive and request a reply. Youngest siblings will get notices in an effort to save paper.

Teachers can be reached by phone during the day or by a note in your child's "home" folder. If a teacher is unavailable when you call, leave a message with Mariann and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

## The PTO

The Susan Odell Taylor School for Children Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a volunteer organization which adds to the excellence of our school through positive actions supporting students, faculty, curriculum and the administration. We are dedicated to strengthening the school community, promoting school spirit, and advocating for families.

## PTO Volunteer Philosophy

We are a volunteer driven organization focused on encouraging each person in the community to become involved by matching available time and talents with jobs that need to be done.

## Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are very important to young children. Your child is welcome to bring a birthday snack to share with her/his class during snack or lunchtime. Peanut-free finger foods such as cookies or cupcakes are most appropriate. Cakes, candles, or birthday favors may not be brought into school. Please discuss your plans with your child's teacher ahead of time to ensure that any dietary restrictions are considered.

The Taylor School has a tradition in which the birthday child may give a book to the library in honor of her/his birthday. The book is introduced to your child's classroom and circulated to all other classes. Children enjoy choosing the "perfect book" to share with their peers and are proud to have it inscribed with their name.

**Please note:** Young children are very aware of impending parties. Please mail invitations rather than deliver them in school. You can help allay hurt feelings by encouraging your child not to discuss party plans at school.

## Enrichment

We believe in enriching the children's learning with art, music, movement, and athletics as much as possible. This is especially powerful when these activities are linked with current themes in which the children are involved in. If you have a connection to someone in the community who can enrich our learning, please let us know. In addition to these opportunities, we have adjunct teachers who will regularly teach Spanish, Music, Art and Physical Education.

**Please note:** After school enrichment will be offered for students grade 2 through grade 6. A schedule for the year will be sent out in the fall.

## Before and Aftercare

Beforecare and aftercare are available whenever school is in session. You can use these services daily or on an as needed basis. Beforecare is available from 7:15 – 8:30 am. The cost is \$6 each time you use beforecare. Aftercare is available to families from dismissal to 5:30 pm. The cost is \$8 each time you use aftercare. Aftercare/Beforecare bills are sent out at the end of each month. Failure to pay an aftercare or before care bill within 30 days will result in no longer being able to access this service for your child and a late payment charge of \$25.00. If you do not pick up your child by 5:30, a late fee of \$15 per family will be charged. This fee will be due with your aftercare bill each month.

## Progress Reports

Progress reports present a comprehensive picture of your child at certain points during the school year. Progress reports are sent out according to the following schedule:

**Kindergarten–6th grade: November, March and June**

**Pre Kindergarten: January and June**

**Preschool: June**

**Please note:** The school will only release student records to other schools when the final tuition balance is paid.

## Conferences

Communication between home and school is an important element of a child's education. Parents with concerns are encouraged to contact their child's teacher by phone or email. Additionally, the following formal conference days have been planned:

**Tuesday, November 10 from 4:00 pm–7:00 pm/  
Wednesday, November 11 from 8:00 am–noon**

**Thursday, March 11 from 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm/  
Friday March 12 from 8:00 am - noon**

**Please note:** Childcare is provided while you are in your conference. There is no school on 11/11 or 3/12. Every effort to provide childcare (for a fee) will be made on these dates.

## Homework

Students in kindergarten through sixth grade will be given homework on a regular basis. Homework can fulfill a variety of purposes, such as: reinforcement of skills, extension of classroom learning, enrichment of academics, and the development of productive study habits. The number and type of assignments will be influenced by the curriculum and the needs of the students, and will vary at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

Homework also provides a structure for regular teacher, parent, and student dialogue. Parents should review homework assignments with their children, giving support and guidance as needed.

It is important that your child's homework experience be a positive one. If you have concerns about your child's homework, please contact her/his teacher.

## Lunch

Each child needs to bring in a lunch that includes a drink (if not ordering milk). We ask that you try to send in containers and/or packaging that your child can manage independently. We are now offering a hot lunch option provided by Anthony's Lunch. Monthly menus will be sent home with students for lunch options. If a child arrives at school without a lunch, they will be given cherrios and milk for lunch.

## Toys at school

Young children are learning to share their belongings and sometimes have difficulty in this area. It is also very upsetting if something is lost or broken at school. We ask that children refrain from bringing personal items (toys, jewelry, computer hand held toys) to school. Individual teachers will set their own policies for "show & tell" items. No guns or weapons of any kind are allowed in school.

## snacks and Food in school

We feel it is important for the children to take a nutritional break each morning to fuel their minds and bodies. We strongly encourage all students in kindergarten through sixth grade to bring a snack from home each day. This will ensure that each student has a snack that matches her/his needs. Students who do not have a snack from home will be given pretzels or goldfish.

Please respect the following guidelines regarding snacks from home:

- Snacks must be peanut-free.
- Snacks must be healthy.
- Snacks may not be shared or traded.
- Snacks must be easy to eat and clean up.
- If snack food is packed with lunch food, some children may need to be told what food is to be eaten at snack.

**Acceptable Snacks:** fruit, whole-grain bread with jam, cheese, granola bars, dried fruit, vegetables & dip, half of a sandwich.

**Unacceptable Snacks:** foods that contain peanut products, cookies, candy, pudding, donuts, fruit roll-ups, potato chips.

**Please note:** The school will provide snack for our preschool and prekindergarten students. Children who attend aftercare will be given an afternoon snack and do not need a snack sent from home.

## School Care Plan for Peanut Allergy

The following outlines the responsibilities that the Susan Odell Taylor School will accept on behalf of a student with a life-threatening allergy to peanuts. It should be understood that while every possible attempt will be made to follow these guidelines, it may be impossible for the school to control the environment to the extent that it is "peanut-free". However, the school is committed to providing a "peanut-controlled" environment.

- The Susan Odell Taylor School will educate its community regarding peanut allergies and the seriousness of this condition. Additionally, the faculty and staff will participate in yearly training about the ways to treat reactions to severe/life-threatening allergies.
- The student's care plan will be posted in her/his classroom, the Common Room, the Aftercare notebook, and in the kitchen.
- There will be a peanut-controlled table in the cafeteria. The lunchroom staff will check the lunches of all children who sit at this table for peanut products and ask any children who do have these products in their lunches to sit elsewhere.
- The children who are in the 5/6 class will be asked to wash their hands with soap and water at the end of snack and lunch each day.
- There will be a strongly enforced rule that there will be no food-sharing amongst the children.
- The school will not knowingly purchase any foods containing peanuts or peanut by-products. In aftercare, before care and childcare, the only snacks allowed will be those provided by the school.
- The 5/6 classroom will be peanut-controlled. The children will not be allowed to eat snacks containing peanuts or peanut by-products in the classroom. All treats that are sent in from home to be shared in the classroom must be free of peanuts and peanut by-products. Additionally, any meetings held in the 5/6 classroom will offer food that is free of peanuts and peanut by-products.
- School-wide functions will be peanut-controlled. Any request for foods from home will state that the food should be free of peanuts and peanut by-products.

## Field Trips

In order to enrich classroom studies, each class takes several trips a year. Occasionally, we take all-school field trips to local museums or performances. A release form must be signed before your child goes on a field trip. This form was sent home with all summer mailings. All release forms will be kept in the office and parents will be notified in advance of specific field trip plans.

We occasionally ask parents to help volunteer for field trips and help with transportation.

## Clothing/Backpacks

In our active, hands-on environment, the children will be engaging in daily experiences with art, music, science experiments, the playground, and gym. They need to be free to paint, dance, and run without being confined by the clothes they wear to school. The children will do best in comfortable, functional clothing and sturdy shoes. "Party" shoes and sandals are discouraged, as they are not safe for active outdoor play. We go outside at least once every day – more if we can! Your child should be equipped for changes in the weather. Sometimes a beautiful, warm morning can turn into a chilly afternoon.

Each child needs to have a labeled shoebox containing a complete change of clothes. Parents need to replace clothing that is sent home, as well as make seasonal changes. Additional hats and mittens can be kept in the child's cubby. All outerwear should be marked with the child's name. Please, no umbrellas or scarves for safety reasons.

Your child will need a backpack or canvas bag every day even if there is nothing to pack in the morning. Frequently there are things to send home at the end of the day and it is difficult for the children to manage loose items. Please be sure to check your child's backpack or home folder every night for communications from teacher or school.

## Health Regulations

It is mandatory that each child has on file a current and complete health record signed by a physician and parent. New York State law requires that the immunization record be completed and on file within two weeks of the start of school. Health forms were included in the summer mailing.

Please keep children home from school if they are not able to play outside, have a cold or fever, or a communicable disease. We cannot guarantee that there will be an adult available to supervise a recuperating child during recess. If your child does have something contagious, please notify us immediately.

Please call school if your child is absent. We will call to check on children who normally take the bus if we haven't heard from you by 9:30. In the event that your child becomes sick at school, we will telephone and request that you pick up your child.

## Medications

If you are planning on the school dispensing prescription medication, please ask your doctor to order medication in separate labeled containers for home and school.

Children cannot self administer medication. All medication (over the counter or prescribed) should be labeled with your child's name & specific dosage instructions. Medications should be delivered by the parent to the office. The school will need a doctor's note in order to administer any medication, including over the counter medication.

## Transportation

The children arrive and depart using a variety of transportation systems. Please be sure to send a note with your child if her/his transportation will be different than normal.

If something unexpected arises, please contact the office before 1:00 pm. Also, please notify your transportation department if your child is not taking the bus to or from school so the bus is not waiting for your child.

If you frequently have other people picking up your child, please supply the office with a letter, giving the school permission to release your child to them.

## Snow Days

When the weather is stormy or the roads are treacherous, we sometimes close school. Information on school closings can be obtained by listening to local radio and TV stations as early as 6:30 am.

**Television: WRGB – Channel 6**

**WNYT – Channel 13**

**WTEN - Channel 10**

**Channel 9 News**

**Radio: WTRY, WROW**

**WGY (99.5 River)**

You may also call the school answering machine after 6:30 am. If school is closed or delayed, there will be a message on the answering machine at school – 274-4994.

## Fundraising for our school

Tuition does not pay the entire costs of running a small, independent school like the Susan Odell Taylor School.

It is not a requirement that families help us to raise additional funds, however, it is something we hope every family will help with as best they can. This is not simply about giving money to the school. Our goal is to provide families with a variety of ways they can contribute depending on their resources, time and energy. Here are some of the ways that your extended family and friends can help raise money for the school.

### **Annual Appeal**

Kicked off in October and lasting until February. Donors have a choice to give to general operating, library fund, financial aid or our endowment fund.

### **BoxTops for Education**

Save those box tops from General Mills and we can turn them in for cash. There is a can in the office or just send them in with your child's folder.

### **Bottle Return**

The PTO collects returnable bottles in the large black bins by the pool. This money goes towards the transportation fund.

### **Target Education Fund**

This store will give the school a small percentage of your purchases with the store credit card. You simply need to designate the school as the recipient of these funds. Our ID # is 115-551.

### **PriceChopper Tools for Schools**

Every year from September to December this company counts your purchases towards points that the school can pool to get supplies for the school. Just sign up your Advantage card at a local store or online. This does not need to be done every year and automatically gets carried onto the next school year.

### **Hannaford Stores**

These stores have a similar system but you receive coupons with your receipt when you buy certain products. They can be turned into the office anytime before the end of the year (December).

### **Campbell Soup Labels**

Please turn in your soup labels for redemption towards art supplies.

### **PTO fundraising**

The PTO has periodic fund raisers such as mum/pumpkin/wreath sales, SCRIP, Montessori catalogue sales, and Italian night. The funds raised are for specific targets that the school has requested for the students such as science or playground equipment.

**Thank you to ALL parents and community friends  
who help make our fundraising efforts a success!**

## Thank you!

Thank you for the opportunity to teach your children. Please call, email or schedule a meeting with us anytime to discuss your child's needs, planning for next year or simply to share your thoughts and ideas.