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PHILOSOPHY

The Dillon Child Study Center provides a play-based, child-centered environment that is committed to the child development approach in the education of young children.

The above statement implies that each child’s development is fostered in all areas — physical, social, intellectual, emotional and moral — as he or she follows a unique pattern in the predictable sequence of growth. During the critical early childhood years, children need to become secure, confident, self-directed persons who can understand their world through activities involving focused attention, observation, exploration, problem-solving and cooperative action.

In keeping with this belief, early childhood specialists who plan the curriculum to meet the needs of each individual appreciate the uniqueness of each child, and take cues from each child. The child will explore the world through play, literature, creative arts, observation and the manipulation of a wide range of materials. It is by “doing” the ordinary that children will be exposed to the extraordinary wonder of learning, as opposed to rote or drill activities. In an atmosphere in which children are free to express their feelings and ideas, the child will develop a sense of self-awareness and an understanding of interpersonal relations, while expanding concepts, language and motor skills.

FOUNDATION AND HISTORY

The preschool of St. Joseph’s College was established in 1934 by then-president of the College, Monsignor William T. Dillon. As one of the first campus laboratory preschools on the East Coast, it affirmed the importance of the early childhood years in a young child’s development. To this day, it serves as a model and demonstration program for St. Joseph’s College students and others interested in the field of early childhood education.

Aware of the evolving needs of children, parents and professionals, the Dillon Child Study Center opened a program to serve young children with developmental delays in 1981. Approved by the New York State Department of Education, the program supported the unique needs of young children as they integrated into the early childhood special education classroom. In 1998, the Dillon Child Study Center opened a state-approved preschool inclusion class that serves both typically and atypically developing children within the same classroom.

Valuing the family as the center of a young child’s life, a toddler program was formed in 1986 to give 18- to 30-month-old children an early play experience and to provide information and support for parents. The toddler and his or her parent or alternative caregiver participate in a weekly two-hour play session and parent discussion. This program is generally offered in the fall, winter and spring terms for 10 weeks at a time, and in the summer term for three weeks at a time, although this is subject to change without notice.
From 1934 through the present day, Dillon teachers are New York State certified and serve as adjunct faculty for St. Joseph’s College, working with college students who are preparing to teach. In addition, they serve the community as models and consultants for other professionals in private and public schools.

**POLICIES, ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES**

**Enrollment**
Each child’s continued enrollment as a student at the Dillon Center is contingent upon his or her adjustment to the program. Early in the school year, parents, teachers and the director will observe a child’s adjustment, and if concerns are evident, there will be active attempts to remediate the situation in order to help the child to feel more comfortable. We reserve the right to ask families to engage in further evaluation to determine the appropriateness of the program for the child, and in extremely rare situations, to dialogue with families about whether in fact Dillon is the correct environment for the child.

**Arrival/Departure**
Being on time is an important skill that children will need throughout their lives. The Dillon Child Study Center school day runs from 8:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. for full-day children, and either 8:30 a.m. until 11:15 a.m. or 12:15 p.m. until 3 p.m. for half-day children. A small number of 3-year-olds attend from 8:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. Children should arrive as close to the beginning of the time of their program as possible, but no later than 60 minutes late, and must always be supervised by an adult until dropped off at the classroom.
When the child is settled in the classroom, parents and alternative caregivers should leave the room so that the child can get involved in the activities. Adults are welcome to stay in the observation booth for as long as they desire.

It is **VERY** important that children are picked up on time. Not only is it unfair to the teacher (who may have professional or personal obligations) to stay late with a child, but often children feel anxious when they are not picked up on time. We ask that parents or caregivers call the school if they are going to be more than five minutes late picking up their child. **NOTE:** If a parent or caregiver is more than five minutes late, a fee of $1 per minute will be charged. It must be paid on the day of the event, in cash, to the director or the administrative assistant at Dillon.

Once a child is picked up, we ask that the parent or caregiver alert a teacher that he or she is taking the child. We also request that families do not stay on the school grounds, as **children are not allowed to be in the yard or on the playground equipment except during their school hours.**

**Attendance**

It is important that your child attend school consistently. However, for any child to benefit from the Dillon experience, he or she needs to feel well. If your child has been ill or is unusually tired, please keep him or her home. Please notify the school of your family’s plan to be away for any extended period of time.

**Lateness**

As noted previously, it is important that your child arrive at school at the designated time. When children arrive late, they often have a difficult time entering activities that are already in progress. They may also miss engaging in activities that are important learning experiences for them. Teachers cannot extend an activity simply to allow a child who is late to participate. In addition, a late arrival may disrupt activities that are in progress in the classroom, since teachers naturally want to welcome a child who has entered the classroom.

The Dillon Center’s policy is that parents not bring children to school more than 60 minutes late, after a doctor’s visit or another appointment. In the event that a child will be later than 60 minutes, we suggest that parents alternatively plan a special activity for themselves and the child, such as going out to lunch or to the park.

**Authorization to Pick Up Child**

It is very important that your child’s teachers know who is authorized to pick up your child on a daily basis. Please inform your child’s teacher if there is a change on any particular day. If you have forgotten to tell your child’s teacher either in person or in writing about a pick up change, you will need to telephone the school. **No child will be released to an unidentified adult.**

**Child Care Providers**

Many families rely on responsible alternative caregivers to bring their child to and from school. If you have a child care provider, please make sure that he or
she has been introduced to your child’s teachers as someone who is authorized to pick up your child, and please make sure that he or she is aware of the Dillon Center’s guidelines and school calendar.

All child care providers must be noted on the Emergency Contact Form, as will be discussed in the next section.

**Emergency Contact Form**

It is **EXTREMELY** important that we have an up-to-date Emergency Contact Form for each family, in case a child becomes ill while at school or if some other emergency occurs. It includes home, work and cell phone numbers and email addresses for parents, child care providers and a person to contact in the event that the parents are not available. In addition, it notes who is authorized to pick the child up from Dillon if a parent is unable to do so.

If there are changes to this information during the course of the school year, please go to the Main Office to fill out a new form.

**Lunch**

If your child stays at the Dillon Center for lunch, please provide healthy foods that he or she enjoys that do not require refrigeration or heating. Please make portions reasonable, as the teachers will encourage children to finish what their families have sent to school. In addition, please make wrappings manageable, since children will be encouraged to be independent in their eating. Uneaten food will be returned in the lunch box so that families can get a sense of their child’s eating patterns. Please avoid the use of glass containers and be sure to label your child’s lunch box with his or her name.

**Observation Booths**

The Dillon Child Study Center is the laboratory preschool of St. Joseph’s College, and each classroom has an observation booth designed to allow College students as well as Dillon families to observe the play of all of the children. Please be assured that College students and other professionals have obtained permission from the director before they are allowed into the observation booth of your child’s classroom.

We encourage parents to use the observation booth to observe their child’s interaction in a large group of children. During the child’s initial adjustment to school, we encourage parents to leave the classroom as soon as the child demonstrates a sense of security. The observation booth is a good place to wait and watch, and your child will know that you are nearby. We ask that persons within the booths remain quiet, as they are not soundproof. We also ask that persons within the booth do not converse with children or teachers from the booth, and do not talk on their cell phones. Of course, we also ask that cell phones are set to vibrate while parents and caregivers are in the booth.
Outdoor Equipment
Children may only use the outdoor area and equipment when under the supervision of a Dillon Center staff member. For both safety and legal reasons, we ask that parents and caregivers do not permit children to use the outdoor space and equipment before or after the program hours. Please remember that, although your child may be a half-day child, other children attend full day. The outdoor area and equipment must be reserved for them.

Parent-Teacher Contact
Communication with parents is valued at Dillon and is an important part of your child’s early school experience. We ask that you contact the teacher directly if you have any questions, concerns or comments. Simple matters can be addressed when you bring your child to school. Please be sensitive to the fact that the teacher’s primary responsibility is to be with the children at the beginning of their school day. If you need more time to talk, you are most welcome to make an appointment with the teacher.

Times for mid-year and end-of-year conferences will be posted so that you can have an opportunity to discuss your child’s growth in school. These will be opportunities for teachers and parents to discuss both areas of strength and those that need improvement.

It is also important for teachers to know of any changes or variations in home routines that may affect your child. This is not meant to invade privacy but to maximize our ability to help your child cope with events that may disrupt his or her routine and/or be a cause of anxiety. Please be assured that any information shared with the teachers will be held in the strictest confidence.
**Parental Involvement**

We have an open door policy at the Dillon Center. Parents are always welcome to visit the observation booth of the classroom, and they can do so without a prior appointment. Parents are also very welcome in the Dillon classrooms, although we do ask that parents speak to their child’s teachers about this in advance. Young children are learning to distinguish between home and school as separate places, and your involvement and the child’s progress are likely to be more positive if your child can separate from you and continue to participate in the school routines. This being said, we very much encourage parents to share a special skill, a simple activity (music, art, cooking, story, etc.), a cultural or religious event or a foreign language activity. If you would like to do this during the year, please discuss it with your child’s teachers.

Each classroom will have at least one class parent, who will support the classroom and school activities, serve as a liaison between the parents, teachers and director, and to build community in the classroom. The Dillon Center also welcomes parent involvement in the form of helping to plan fundraising activities at the school.

**Parking**

We do not have a parking lot for parents, or spots designated for parents who are dropping off or picking up their children. Please do not park in the College faculty parking lot at any time.

The 88th Police Precinct has given us permission to tell parents that they can stop on Vanderbilt Avenue for no more than five minutes while dropping off or picking up children. If you do this, leave your emergency flashers on and display the Dillon parking sign (available in the Main Office) in your front windshield. **Do not double park or park by a hydrant**, as both are violations.

**Calendar**

One school calendar per family is distributed each year. It lists holidays, school closing dates and other important information such as parent-teacher conferences and fundraising events. Please keep this calendar handy for reference, although you should know that we also post it on the Dillon Center website. Dates are subject to change, but we try very hard to avoid this.

**School Closings**

If the Dillon Center is closed due to weather or another emergency situation, parents will be notified by email and telephone. For this reason, it is imperative that the home telephone number on the Emergency Contact Form is correct. The Dillon Center will always be closed if the New York City Public Schools and/or St. Joseph’s College are closed, and both of these closings will be announced on the radio (WINS 1010 AM).

If the Dillon Center closes during the course of a school day, parents will be telephoned. Again, this means that the telephone number(s) on the Emergency Contact form must be up to date. It is important that families have a plan in place to care for their children should Dillon be closed.
Clothing
Comfortable play clothes are encouraged, as well as shoes with sturdy soles that are best for climbing and active play. Because children will be engaged in many art and cooking activities, they should wear clothing that can be stained.

We ask that children be sent to school with clothing that is appropriate for the weather conditions, since classes go outdoors in all but the most inclement weather. Parents should be aware that the clothes children wear to school (i.e., a hat and gloves) are the same clothes that they will wear during outdoor time. However, if it is felt that a child is not dressed appropriately for the weather, he or she will remain indoors.

Snacks
A light snack will be provided to all children, including natural juice or water, crackers, pretzels, plain cookies, fruit or raw vegetables. Families are welcome to bring in snacks for the class at any time, although we ask that they confer with their child’s teacher in advance. All classes engage in cooking projects on a regular basis.

Please notify your child’s teachers both verbally and in writing if your child has any dietary restrictions or allergies. The Dillon Center will of course comply with these situations. However, it may be necessary at times for families in this situation to send in special snacks.

Toileting
Children must be toilet trained before they can attend the Dillon program (with the exception of the toddler program). Teachers will assist children with clothing and be present to encourage their toileting efforts, if necessary, but all children should be virtually independent in their toileting.

The Dillon Center does not permit children to attend school in diapers or pull-ups. We feel that it is a much better message for the child to wear underwear, even if there are accidents. A complete set of extra clothing (labeled with your child’s name) should be kept in school in a plastic zip-lock bag or shoe box. If a child has an accident in school, he or she will be assisted in changing, and given encouragement to remember to use the bathroom in the future. All children are taken to the bathroom on a regular basis.

Birthday Celebrations
Families are welcome to bring in a simple treat to celebrate their child’s birthday, as long as they arrange this in advance with the teachers in the classroom. We ask that no elaborate birthday celebrations be planned, including balloons, party favors or goody bags.

In light of the allergies or dietary restrictions that children may have, we ask that families check with their child’s teachers as to what would be appropriate for the class.
**Toys**
The Dillon Child Study Center is very well equipped. We ask that children **do not** bring toys or special items from home, because they may be misplaced, broken or cause difficulties with sharing. It is understood that some children may need a transitional object to help them feel comfortable in school, and this can be arranged with the child’s teachers.

On special occasions, teachers may ask that an item be brought from home to be shared with the class (i.e., “Show and Tell”), but in this case, the teachers will send home a letter informing families of all pertinent information.

We ask that large items, such as strollers, bikes and wheel toys, not be brought and left at school. We cannot be responsible for these items, nor do we have the room to store them indoors until the end of the school day. There is a stroller rack on the side of the building, and parents and caregivers may leave folded up strollers, scooters and bicycles hanging from it, at their own risk.

**Field Trips**
Typically, individual classes go on a few educational and fun field trips during the school year. Notification of each trip will be sent home in advance to allow ample time for parents to give their children written permission to participate. Transportation will be provided via either the St. Joseph’s College vans or a rented school bus.

All parents are asked to sign a Walking Field Trip form at the beginning of the school year so that the children can visit places in the neighborhood such as the grocery store, or go across the street to St. Joseph’s main building for various events.

**Fire Drills and Evacuation**
Periodically the school will engage in fire drills. The children will be prepared so that they are not frightened by the event. Emergency evacuation procedures are in place and posted in each classroom.

**Staff**
At the Dillon Center, we follow a team-based approach to education, where head and assistant teachers work together to provide quality education for your child. Each classroom has at least one head teacher and at least one assistant teacher. All teachers meet the New York State Education Department and/or Department of Health requirements.

Because the Dillon Center is a laboratory preschool for St. Joseph’s College, sophomore year child study students work alongside the classroom teachers to provide extra support for the children. The College students’ work in the Dillon Center allows them to learn from the master teachers and demonstrate lessons for the children. These College students are directly supervised by the head teachers and indirectly supervised by Susan Straut Collard, the associate chairperson of the Department of Child Study and director of the Dillon Center.
Non-Discriminatory Policy
The Dillon Child Study Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, nationality and/or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies or any school-administered programs. It is a secular environment that embraces diversity in all forms.

Tuition
In addition to the non-refundable deposit that is due upon registration for the program, there are four tuition payments each year, typically due in June, September, November and January. Tuition payments must be received in a timely fashion for your child to remain in the program. Payments must be made by check, money order or credit card. Cash payments cannot be accepted at the preschool, but can be made at the Business Office of St. Joseph’s College, which is located at 245 Clinton Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11205. Payments can be mailed to this same address.

After-School Program
The Dillon Center offers an optional after-school program in which families can register their children to take classes from 2-3 p.m. or 3-4 p.m. Classes that have been offered include City Kids Dance, Gymstars, Super Soccer Stars, Private Picassos, Asase Yaa Drumming, Lango Spanish and Kids Clay.

HEALTH ISSUES

Health Records
According to the Department of Health, each child is required to have a record of immunization and medication history, along with an annual health form that includes a physician’s signature on file at the Dillon Center. This form must be dated **no earlier than the year that the child is entering** and **MUST** be submitted before the child can be admitted to school.

Medication Policy
Although the teachers and staff members at the Dillon Child Study Center are CPR and first-aid certified, the school is not licensed by the Department of Health to dispense medicine. School personnel are therefore not permitted to dispense medication nor are they permitted to supervise a child taking medication. The only two exceptions to this policy involve the rare circumstances in which a child is in a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction, or a child is having an acute respiratory problem due to asthma. In these circumstances, a staff member will administer a dosage of medicine with an EpiPen or a dosage from an inhaler.

Families **MUST** file a form signed by their pediatrician with the Dillon nurse and supply the EpiPen or inhaler in order for these exceptions to take effect.

Allergies
When a family alerts us that a child has allergies, we want to be as accommodating as possible in order to keep that child safe. As noted above, it is our policy to utilize an EpiPen in a life-threatening situation, and we need families for whom
this is relevant to fill out the necessary paperwork and to supply our school with **at least one** dosage.

However, prevention of allergic reactions is even more paramount in our minds. We ask that the family of a child with allergies supply us with a detailed list that contains both foods that must be avoided, as well as foods that are acceptable. This will be posted in the classroom, as well as in the nurse’s office. Because teachers have so many other responsibilities, they are not able to read every list of ingredients, and we need to ask families of children with allergies to assist us in this task. If a child has many or extremely serious allergies, it may be necessary for a family to provide his or her teachers with daily snacks.

Cooking is an important developmentally appropriate activity in which all of the classes engage. When a child with allergies cannot take part because of the ingredients, we will do our best to present him or her with an alternative activity so that he or she does not feel left out. In addition, we welcome parents to provide us with recipes that are appropriate for the child with allergies.

It is our policy to set up lunch tables for children with allergies so that they will not be exposed to foods that are dangerous for them, and we adhere strictly to a hand- and table-washing regimen to further lessen the chances of exposure.

Finally, with a family’s permission, we will alert the families of the peers of the child with the allergy so that when special snacks are sent in (i.e., classroom birthday celebrations), this child can be included. In the event of something unexpected, however, we ask the family of a child with an allergy to provide us with a bag of special snacks that we can access without advance notice.
**Illness Policy**

Children need to be well and rested to attend school. If a child has a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or over and/or is demonstrating diarrhea or vomiting, he or she **cannot** attend. If such symptoms occur during the night but are not evident in the morning, this does not mean that the virus or infection has left the child’s system. It is recommended that the child stay out of school for 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided and return with a **doctor’s note** indicating that the child is not contagious.

Children who become ill during the school day may not remain at school. A child suspected of having a communicable disease will be isolated from other children. Parents will be contacted and are expected to remove their child from the Dillon Center as soon as possible. Please see the above statement with regard to the child not returning to school until he or she is symptom-free for 24 hours, with a doctor’s note.

Please understand that our health policies are in place to protect **ALL** of our students because young children tend to infect one another more readily than do older children. The following subsections represent illnesses that are particularly communicable:

**Chicken Pox**

There are two issues to address when discussing chicken pox: the child who visually has chicken pox and the child who has been exposed to chicken pox (i.e., through a sibling). A child with active chicken pox will demonstrate small, pimple-like eruptions, especially under the arms, on the chest and in the groin area. The Dillon Center’s policy requires that a child with active chicken pox remain at home until all blistering spots have developed completely dry scabs (usually 7-10 days).

If a child has been directly exposed to chicken pox, the child will most likely come down with the disease on day 13-17 after exposure. The child is only contagious for part of this time. Therefore, the Dillon Center requires that exposed children stay home on days 13-15 after direct exposure to reduce the risk of transmitting chicken pox to the other children at the school.

**Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)**

There are two types of conjunctivitis: bacterial and viral. Viral conjunctivitis presents the same health concerns regarding spreading as does the common cold. However, bacterial conjunctivitis **MUST be treated**. If a child’s eye appears red with drainage, it is recommended that a pediatrician be contacted for advice. If the drainage becomes thick and yellowish, the possibility of bacterial conjunctivitis exists. In this case, **24 hours of antibiotic treatment is required before the child may return to school**. The yellowish discharge from the eye must be absent before the child can return to school.
**Strep Throat**
Strep throat is communicable until medication has been administered for 24 hours. Children complaining of sore throats should be checked by their pediatricians for small, white patches in the back area of the throat.

**Lice**
The head louse is a tiny, wingless parasitic insect that lives among human hairs and feeds on extremely small amounts of blood drawn from the scalp. Although they may sound gross, lice are a very common problem, especially for children between the ages of 3-12 years. Lice aren't dangerous and they don't spread disease, but they are **highly contagious and can spread quickly from person to person**, especially in group settings (schools, child-care centers, slumber parties, sports activities, camps and even playgrounds).

Lice eggs (called nits) look like tiny yellow, tan or brown dots before they hatch. After hatching, the remaining shell looks white or clear. Lice lay nits on hair shafts close to the skin's surface, where the temperature is perfect for keeping warm until they hatch. Lice eggs hatch within one to two weeks after they are laid. Nits resemble dandruff; brushing or shaking them off can’t remove them.

Your child’s pediatrician can recommend a medicated shampoo, cream or lotion to kill the lice. These may be over-the-counter or prescription medications, depending on which treatments have already been tried. Medicated lice treatments can usually kill the lice and nits, but it may take a few days for the itching to stop. Your child’s pediatrician may recommend repeating treatment in seven to 10 days to make sure all the nits have been killed, because even one nit left behind can lead to a reinfection. Your child cannot return to the Dillon Child Study Center until he or she is nit-free. Please bring your child to the school nurse for a recheck to be cleared for readmission to class.

**FUNDRAISING**
The Dillon Child Study Center depends on fundraising activities in order to meet its financial responsibilities, and hopes that all families will participate in these activities. Each year we hold several different events so as to maximize the potential for involvement as well as the revenue generated. Some examples of events that have been held in the past are:

- A Holiday Craft Fair (typically in December)
- A Book Fair (typically in February)
- An Auction (typically in March)
- SUNFEST (typically in May)

If parents have other ideas for fundraising activities, they should most definitely be suggested. We do not need to continue to repeat past events if there are other, better ideas out there.
Typically, we will assemble a committee of volunteers for each event. This committee will meet once a week in the weeks prior to the event, in order to plan for it. But even if a parent cannot participate in this committee, we always need families to donate money or goods toward the event and to work on the day of the event. Often, sign-up sheets will be posted in the lobby to encourage participation.

Please remember that these fundraising activities cannot succeed without the participation of ALL of the Dillon families. The proceeds from these events are used to purchase materials for the classrooms, and each child benefits from a successful fundraising event.

STATEMENT ON DISCIPLINE

At the Dillon Child Study Center, the management of children’s behavior revolves around the concept of discipline as self-control. The goal for the child is to be in control of his or her own behavior and to maintain positive feelings about him or herself. This is a gradual process that involves learning and guidance, because it is typical for preschoolers to engage in negative behavior.

Positive behaviors are modeled by the teachers, including helping, sharing and being sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Guidelines are introduced gradually as they relate to the child’s activities. Limits are placed on physically harming another child, biting, screaming, running out of bounds and/or hurting another’s feelings.

Age-appropriate expectations are stated for the child in a particular situation, and the child is given the choice to meet the expectation or to wait until ready
to do so. If the child does meet the expectation, such as walking instead of running, then his or her efforts will be praised.

If a child does not meet the expectation, he or she may be directed away from the activity until he or she is ready to return without engaging in the negative behavior. An adult who is there to help and encourage will guide the child through this process. The negative behavior is the issue, not the worth of the child. Every effort will be made to preserve the child’s sense of self-esteem.

Physical punishment is never permitted or tolerated. A child will never be left alone in a room, hallway or other area of the building. A staff member will always be with the child. It is our policy to contact families whose children have been involved in physical altercations, simply to keep the lines of communication open. We also keep incident reports on file at the school.

**LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION POLICY**

The teachers at the Dillon Center are happy to provide letters of recommendation as your child moves to another school, although we hope that you consider remaining at Dillon for our 4-and/or 5-year-old program, if that is appropriate. It will not be possible, however, to write them before mid-December due to the reality that the child’s teacher needs to get to know him or her before accurately representing the child on the form the school provides. We will of course make every attempt to abide by the specific due dates that individual schools impose. However, teachers must have a minimum of **two weeks notice** in order to complete a form, so please keep abreast of due dates.

Please fill out the top portion of each recommendation form and provide your child’s teacher with an addressed and stamped envelope to facilitate the quickest possible response. It is a Dillon policy that recommendation forms are mailed directly to the school or agency that has requested them; a copy of the recommendation will be kept on file and parents are welcome to see this copy.

We have found on occasion that the questions on the forms are developmentally inappropriate. If a form asks if your child is capable of a skill that we feel is too advanced for his or her age (i.e., decoding/reading), the teacher will include an explanation as to why he or she has not yet achieved the skill. Please know that we have your child’s best interests at heart, and we want your child to be accepted to the school of your choice. Teachers will be very thoughtful about what they include in the recommendation, and we ask parents to respect that, as professionals, we need to be able to stand behind what we write.

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please speak to the director of the Dillon Center rather than to your child’s teachers. A teacher’s most important job is to make the current year as successful as possible.
For more information:

www.sjcny.edu/dillon

sshapiro@sjcny.edu

718.940.5678

Director: Suzie Shapiro, Ed.D