

PARENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024



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Welcome to the Church in the Highlands Early Childhood Center! We are pleased and honored that you have chosen our school for your child. We are very excited to kick-off our school year and hope that this year will be a happy and rewarding experience for your family.

It is our goal here at the Church in the Highlands ECC to help your child develop their social skills, prepare for elementary school, build positive relationships with peers and adults. Most importantly we want the children to have fun! In our warm and structured setting our experienced teachers use a play and center based approach across all learning areas to foster each child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. We look at each child as a whole and are attentive to his or her individual needs. Since you are your child's first teacher, we will collaborate to nurture their individual academic and emotional growth.

Please familiarize yourself with this parent handbook. It will provide you with important and useful information throughout the school year. We know that entrusting a young child to others is a critical and emotional step for parents, so we urge you to communicate with any member of our staff if you have any questions or concerns throughout the year. We look forward to this year as we work together to create the best possible experience for your children.

Sincerely,

Dana McTiernan and Joanie Bivas

Co-Directors

Sick Policy

Illness

Children with fever of 99.6 or higher **must** stay home for 24 hours after their fever has broken, free of Tylenol/Advil, or their diarrhea or vomiting, has ceased. It is required that any communicable illnesses, such as, but not limited to head lice, coxsackie, conjunctivitis, impetigo, strep throat, stomach bugs etc, are reported to the school so that we may take appropriate precautions at the center. **If your child is ill for 3 or more days you must obtain a note from your child's doctor stating they are well enough to return to school and participate in our program.** You may submit the note or have the doctor fax or email it to us.

Coughs and Colds

Children with colds, coughs, respiratory symptoms not related to allergies may not be permitted into the program. A child should remain home if they exhibit hacking or a persistent cough with green or yellow phlegm or persistent nasal drainage. These symptoms may be present and contagious with or without a fever. We ask that you use proper discretion and courtesy in this case, as we strive to maintain a healthy environment for all the children.

COVID-19

If your child has contracted COVID-19, the child must quarantine for 5 days and be symptom free before returning to our program. A well fitting mask should be worn for days 6-10.

Medications

The staff at Church in the Highlands ECC is not able by law to administer, nor can we stock any over the counter medication such as cough syrup, Advil or Tylenol. If your child has allergies or a condition that requires a particular treatment you must have a Health Care Plan signed by your doctor and provide a new sealed medication, (such as an EpiPen, Benadryl etc.), this will be used for your child exclusively. We will provide the necessary forms you will need to complete and return to us.

***If your child suffers from allergies and presents symptoms but is NOT sick, please bring a doctor's note to keep on file.**

Emergency Drills

The OCFS requires us to have an emergency procedure in place. We are required to practice a shelter in place drill twice a year. You will be notified when we conduct these drills. We practice regular fire drills monthly.

Building Safety

- The ECC main entrance is on Grandview Avenue. This entrance will be locked during school hours and will be accessible only by ringing the bell. We have a video camera and automatic door opener at this entrance for protection.
- Our alternate entrance is on Longview Avenue, this door is always locked and is only opened when necessary.
- Both entrances have push arms and may be exited from the inside of the building at any time.
- All classrooms can be securely locked from inside if necessary.

Emergency Procedures

- Should the need arise to keep the children safe, the teachers will lead classes to the upstairs 3s classroom. This is our "safe room" and will be used when there is a situation in which it is safer to remain in the building rather than to evacuate.
- Stored in this room we have all parent contact information, bottled water, snacks, a first aid kit, sanitary supplies, a battery operated radio, a weather radio, flashlights and emergency phone numbers. Directors and teachers will have cell phones to communicate with families.
- All families will be notified of the whereabouts of their children and how to reach them. Children will remain under the supervision of their teacher until the emergency is resolved or the children are picked up by their caregivers.
- If a situation occurs that we must exit the building, we will go to our designated area on the playground or take shelter in the house next door to our school. If we must go further away from the building, our secondary location is Firehouse 1 at 93 Prescott Avenue. We will always communicate with families if such a situation occurs.

Early-Drop or Late-Pickup

We offer early drop-off starting at 8:00 am and late pick-up until 5:00 pm. You may register for this service for the year or as needed with a minimum of 24 hours notice required. We must have notice before we can guarantee coverage. If you choose to use this service on an as-needed basis you will be billed monthly. Please email us or call if you would like to add days or make changes.

Attendance and Absences

Children are scheduled to attend according to their schedule. If your child is going to be absent please contact us by phone or email. There is no reimbursement for vacation or missed days. If your child is absent for 3 or more days due to illness, you must obtain a doctor note to return.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival time for morning class is promptly at 9:00 am. Please wait with your child at the designated door while staff admit the children into the building and do a daily health check. Dismissal will be promptly at 11:45, 12:00, 1:00 and 3:00 at the same door. If you must pick up earlier than scheduled, please notify your child's teacher and come to the main entrance on Grandview Avenue and ring the bell. Late pick-up children will be picked up at the church office door.

Visitors

All doors will be locked to the outside throughout the school day with the exception of the main entrance outside door. If you need to come for an appointment with the directors or teachers, please enter on Grandview Ave. and ring bell until someone can greet you in the vestibule. They must sign in and out as well as wear a visitor tag.

Napping Policy

Full day students may have a brief quiet rest period in the afternoon if needed. They are encouraged to choose a quiet activity or relax during that time. We do not provide long nap times at our school.

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable, weather appropriate clothing that allows them to play and get messy. Flip flops or crocs should not be worn. Please provide a full set of extra clothes including socks to be left at school. Please label everything.

Class List

A class list is compiled for each class that includes phone numbers and emails, If you do not wish to share this information please notify directors.

Family Issues

Communication between home and school is essential when dealing with young children. Any changes in their home life may have an impact on their life at school. It is important we are made aware of those changes so that we may provide support to both you and your child.

Food

Our school is a **peanut and tree nut free school**. Please read labels carefully before sending in food to be sure items are **not** processed in plants that use nut oil. At this time we discourage homemade foods prepared at home to be sent in for snack for the class. If you are sending in food, please send closed containers with labels on. We provide a light snack daily. Parents are welcome to send in snack for the class. Each teacher will provide more information at the start of the year. If your child has allergies, dietary restrictions, or you have preferences for your child please make the teachers aware. You may want to provide snack for your child that we will keep stocked at school.

Family Participation

If you would like to volunteer your time in helping us with fundraising, teacher appreciation week, organizing family events or being a class parent, please fill out the parent participation form. We would greatly appreciate any time you could spare.

Parking

Please observe the signs posted on Grandview Ave concerning parking and be respectful of our neighbors. Parking is limited so please try to drop-off and pick-up in a timely manner. The spaces in our parking lot are reserved for private parking only.

Communication with Teachers and Staff

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice a year (fall & spring) to discuss your child's progress. Additional meetings may be held at the request of either the parent or teacher. Please use the teachers' school email addresses to communicate regarding any non-urgent matters. If there is an issue or concern, we ask that you set a time to speak privately with our teachers and directors. Please do not raise confidential issues regarding your child or any child at the door during drop off or pick up. We are happy to cooperate with your family in a private and respectful manner.

School Closing and Delays

When the White Plains Public Schools are closed due to weather, our school will *likely* be closed as well. If they have a 1 hour delay, we will open at 10 am. If they have a 2 hour delay we will open at 10:30 am. If the district is calling for early closure during the day, closure will be at the discretion of the directors. While we aim to follow the guidance of our district, there are times that changes in schedule will be at the discretion of the directors. We will notify you of any changes via email prior to 7:00 am.

Behavior Policy

Techniques such as guiding, redirecting and reminding children of class rules are used when behavioral issues arise. We encourage them to "use their words" when expressing their feelings and frustrations in an appropriate manner. If your child is experiencing behavioral issues, we will work with the family to discuss a behavior plan.

COVID- 19 Related Policies

We adhere to the policies and protocols set forth by the Office of Children and Family Services. At this time, masks are optional for all children as well as staff who are vaccinated. Staff will continue to adhere to heightened cleaning and sanitizing protocols. We will allow special educators, but discourage parents from entering the building unless necessary. See sick policy for more information.