

Holly House Parent Handbook

Welcome! This parent handbook is created to help you and your child get the most out of your time at Holly House Preschool and to keep your child safe. If there is a concern or something you do not understand, please contact us before signing the agreement on the last page. Please return a copy of this handbook with your signature/s.

Mission Statement

Holly House is a private preschool program for three, four and five year olds. We focus on academic, social and self-care skills that the children will need as kindergarteners. We understand that children learn best through play and strive to provide a wealth of activities to encourage all children to actively engage in learning. We believe it is our responsibility as early childhood educators to lay the groundwork for creating lifetime learners. We know that parents are a child's first teacher and therefore seek to create a strong bond and sense of community with both our students and their families. All are welcome.

Enrollment

Students must be at least 3.5 years old in order to enroll at Holly House. All enrollment forms, including medical and emergency contact forms, must be completed and tuition paid before a child can enter Holly House.

Students must be fully potty trained. Pull-ups and diapers are not allowed as we do not have facilities for changing.

A parent/child tour is strongly encouraged before a child enrolls in Holly House.

Parents must read and sign the parent handbook agreement and hand in all other required paperwork before their student's first day at Holly House.

Registration fee of \$100.00 (non-refundable) and first month's tuition (\$525.00) are due before a child can enroll in the program. All supplies and morning snack are included in tuition.

Tuition

Holly House offers a five day a week, half-day, private preschool program. We do not offer financial aid or accept vouchers. Families may pay their child's yearly tuition all at once or a portion of it each month. If you choose to pay on a monthly basis, tuition is then due by the first day of each month without exception. Your child may not enter the school until tuition has been paid.

Tuition is calculated for the year-not day by day. We do have days off: teacher workshop days, holidays, and occasional bad weather days. No refunds are given for snow days, acts of God or if a family chooses to go on vacation when school is in session.

Tuition for the Spring 2021 semester is \$525.00 per month. Methods of payment include cash or check. Please make checks payable to: HOLLY HOUSE PRESCHOOL LLC. Thank you.

Birthdays

We love birthdays! Holly House will provide a birthday treat of a large marshmallow for each child with the birthday child getting to blow out a candle. We will also provide a sweet homemade birthday crown with your child's favorite colors. Please, no goody bags in school. In the interest of no hurt feelings, we ask that if you would like to distribute birthday party invitations that you either invite the entire class or mail them from home.

Clothing

At Holly House we focus on learning, playing and exploring- not keeping our clothes clean. Therefore, we ask that you send your child to school in play clothes that can get dirty and take a little paint or glue. Those stained hand-me-downs are just perfect for our busy days. Please label all personal items. We are not responsible for lost or ruined clothing. We do use art smocks.

We ask that you send your child to school in sturdy footwear and keep an extra pair of rain boots at school to wear on the playground and while exploring the field. Also, since we are outside in pretty much any weather, we ask that you make sure to dress your child for the weather. Raincoats, snow gear and mittens (so much easier and warmer than gloves), light jacket for fall and spring mornings, cool clothing, and sunscreen for warmer weather. Sun hats instead of sunglasses please for safety.

Curriculum

Holly House uses the Pocket of Preschool curriculum as a guide for kindergarten readiness. It is play based and developmentally appropriate.

Dis-Enrollment

Holly House understands that families move and childcare needs change. Should you need to dis-enroll your child kindly allow us thirty days written notice.

Food

Morning snack is included in tuition. Simple healthy snacks are provided- crackers, cheese, yogurt, fruit or our own cooking are all on the menu. Water is always available to the children and we do encourage them to drink it. We also take a pitcher of water and cups outside with us on warm days. We use bottled water.

We try and cook in the classroom once a week. Usually the recipe will be tied to a theme: letter shaped pancakes, Irish soda bread, pizza, fruit salad, soup. Cooking teaches many skills and the children really enjoy it. It also encourages them to try new foods. We try and use produce and herbs from our school garden when in season.

Gardening

We offer gardening opportunities for the students both inside and outside. We think it is important for children to understand where their food comes from and how things grow. We find that children are much more open to trying new food items if they have grown them themselves. We discuss the life cycle of apples and pumpkins, grow beanstalks with our Fairy Tale unit, grow a bean teepee in spring, tend our window boxes, enjoy a sensory garden, learn why bees are so important and grow "grassy heads" at school that even get haircuts!

We also welcome visits from farm animals if you have any to share with us.

Green Initiatives

Holly House strives to take good care of the Earth. We currently use the following methods to live up to this effort:

- Reusable cups are utilized throughout the day. Your child has their own personal cup that has been labeled with their name. They are sanitized each evening in the dishwasher.
- Paper towels are reserved for major messes. Washcloths are used after washing hands and cleaning up. Each washcloth is used once and then placed in the "used" bucket. All washcloths are run through the wash and sanitized each night.
- We welcome your donations of used washcloths. Stained ones work just fine.
- We use natural cleaners (Dr. Bronner's Soap and Magic Erasers) for most cleaning. North Carolina guidelines do require us to use bleach solutions for both bathrooms and sanitizing toys and tables. Floors are swept, vacuumed and mopped each day.
- We do our best to recycle paper scraps and items that may be reused to create art. We welcome your donations of paper towel tubes/gift wrap tubes, big cardboard boxes, plastic bubble wrap, wooden spools and bright plastic bottle caps!
- We do NOT use essential oil diffusers as this can be an asthma/allergy trigger.

Becoming more green is a journey and we hope you will join us in these efforts.

Medical and Illness Policy

All medical forms must be complete and turned in BEFORE a child can enroll at Holly House. This is in order to protect the health of all children and staff and also to be aware of until we have these items.

If your child has asthma we will need an action plan from your pediatrician as well as a rescue inhaler that is kept in school. Your child may not attend school if we do not have these items.

If your child has a life threatening allergy, we will need an action plan from your pediatrician and a set of Epi-pens to keep at school. Your child may not attend school if we do not have these items.

Students must be up to date on all recommended vaccines.

Sunscreen- If you would like your child to wear sunscreen at school please apply it before your child arrives. No sunscreen may be kept at school.

Holly House does not dispense over-the-counter medication(ie, Tylenol, Benedryl) unless it is an emergency-high fever or allergic reaction. All prescription medication must be accompanied by written instructions from your pediatrician and be in the original container.

Children who are ill or do not feel well should not come to school. We understand that parents need to be at work but by sending your child to school sick you are being inconsiderate of your child, staff and the rest of the Holly House families. We respectfully request that you please make alternate plans for care while your child is ill.

Children at the preschool age spread germs so easily. Because of this it is necessary to have the following policies in place:

- Fever- Your child must be fever free (without medication) for at least 24 hours before returning to school. That means if they have a fever today, they may not return until the day after tomorrow.
- Vomiting- Your child may return to school if they have not vomited within the last 24 hours. If they vomit today, they may return the day after tomorrow if feeling well.
- Lice- Your child must be completely lice and nit free with a signed note from their pediatrician before they may return to school.
- Diarrhea- Child must be diarrhea free (without medication) for 24 hours. Any medical concerns that may be crucial for staff to know about.
- Pink Eye- Your child must have a note from your pediatrician stating that the prescribed medication has been started and they must be symptom free (no oozing) before they return to school.

Holly House has a first aid kit on site. Our practice is to wash off a cut or scrape with water and cover it with a Band-Aid if necessary. No anti-bacterial will be applied. Parents will be asked to sign an accident report to document the injury. For a more serious injury, an ambulance will be called and if a parent cannot make it to the school on time, a staff member from Holly House will accompany the child to the hospital. No medical decisions may be made by Holly House staff.

Parents/Guardians

We are excited that you have chosen Holly House to help educate your child. We recognize and respect that you are your child's first teacher. We ask that you help prepare your child for school by doing the following at home.

-Aim for offering your child a healthy diet. Young children burn a tremendous amount of energy. They need good "fuel" to supply their engines. Cooking together usually encourages a child to try what they have helped prepare.

- Sleep is very important at this stage of development. Please have your child in bed at a reasonable hour for a three, four, or five year old and make sure they are getting enough sleep. It's hard to conquer new challenges when you're tired.
- Teach your child self-care skills. By pre-K age your child should have mastered several self-care skills. Dressing themselves, using the toilet independently, blowing their nose, brushing their teeth and pouring liquids are all skills that take practice. Please allow your child to practice and master these skills at home. We know it is faster to do it for them but allow them time to try it on their own most days. We are always ready to assist in school when a child asks for help.
- Learning manners starts at home. Waiting their turn, using kind words, using gentle hands, being helpful and cleaning up their own mess all take time to learn. We hope you will work on these skills at home so that we can support your efforts at school. A small job can be a big thrill for a preschooler. It also helps them to understand that a family works together to get chores done.

-Periodically we will send home Family Projects. This will usually be some type of simple art project or information gathering project that you may work on together as a family. Disguise the turkey or counting windows and doors in your home are examples. We then ask that you send them back in and we display them for all to enjoy. The children (and teachers) love to see all of the variations in these projects. No need to be an artist, it is not a competition. The point is to share in a fun family activity and to strengthen the home/school connection.

- So many parents ask what they can do to help their child "get ahead". It's simple: read to them. Every day. Take them to the library and introduce them to the world of books! Let them "catch" you reading. Talk to them about what kinds of books you enjoy now and what books you loved as a child. Look for a parent event one evening this Spring with our local literacy specialist.

Parent Code of Conduct

We want the very best for your child and family as your student begins their formal educational journey. Therefore, we ask that if a concern arises, that you address it immediately with the parties involved.

Our staff are professional educators and ask to be treated as such. The way parents interact with Holly House staff is observed by our students and sets the tone for how they value education within their family.

We strive to create a sense of community at Holly House. During the year we will have some family activities and we would love for you to join us. A Spring Art Show, Pot Luck Breakfasts, Muffins with My Grownup, are all activities that the children love. We hope you will join us as much as your schedule allows. If there is enough interest, we will also have a speaker or two come in the evening and discuss a topic of parent interest.

Schedule

Holly House is open from 8:30 am-12:00 pm Noon Monday - Friday. Please have your student to school on time and ready to learn. This means dressed properly, breakfast eaten, teeth brushed and fully rested. Upon entering the classroom, please allow your child to hang up their own coat and direct them to wash their hands. Then give them a kiss and a big hug and direct them to start their morning check-in on their own.

Holly House maintains an Open Door policy meaning parents/guardians may drop in and visit at any time and without prior notice as long as they do not interfere with instruction. Give us a few weeks to get settled into a routine at the start of the program. Please understand the doors are kept locked for safety. Just knock.

Please let us know if your child will be absent by calling the school number or letting us know in advance at drop off or pick up.

If a child is chronically tardy, they may be asked to dis-enroll, as a child coming in late interrupts lessons and the flow of the day, Chronic tardiness also harms the child's academic growth.

A daily schedule that evolves during the course of the year is posted in the classroom. We start the year with the following schedule:

- Arrival, wash hands, check in, table top/outdoor play
- Circle time-calendar, weather report, theme related story
- Center time/art project/small group instruction
- Toilet

Snack
Music and movement
Circle time- letters and numbers/show and tell
Toilet
Outside play and dismissal

School Closings

Holly House follows the Chatham County school system calendar (with the exception of start/end dates and holiday breaks) for the school year. If you are in doubt about whether school is in session for the day please consult WRAL website or the Chatham County Schools website. We will make every effort to contact parents should school be closed early due to severe weather. Please make sure your emergency contact information is up to date.

According to NC state guidelines we must also close if there is no electricity since our well pump will not run and we will have no water.

Social Media Policy

We will never photograph your child or post your child's photo on social media (only our private facebook page) without your written permission. Staff will not comment about a student or family on social media, the parking area, or in public. We ask that our parents hold to the same standard as well. Ignoring this direction is grounds for immediate dismissal for staff and dis-enrollment of a student. Your privacy and safety are important to us.

Photos of school activities will be posted on a private facebook page for parents and guardians to view. The photos will not be able to be shared. Once your child leaves Holly House, you must leave the facebook group as well. This is to ensure privacy for all families.

Visitors

If you or a grandparent would like to come to Holly House and read us a story, help with a craft or demonstrate a unique skill we would love that! Once we get settled into our year we will send home a notice about these opportunities.

We look forward to a wonderful year with your child and your family!

Please sign and return a copy of the next page before your child enrolls.

Please sign and return a copy of the this page along with all of the enrollment paperwork. Thank you

I/ We have read the Holly House Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the ideals and policies presented.

Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Child's Name _____

My/Our child may be photographed and photos displayed both within the school and on a private facebook page. Names will not be attached to a child's photo on facebook-just first initials.

Yes _____ No _____

Parent/
Guardian _____ Date _____

Parent/
Guardian _____ Date _____

Child's Name _____