

HOLY CROSS ACADEMY PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK



God's greatest miracles are his
"little ones"

Introduction:

Welcome to Holy Cross Academy Preschool! The coming year promises to be a great adventure. We want your child to have the best possible experience here at Holy Cross, and in order to insure our success we have compiled some of the more important information you will need to know in this parent's handbook. Included is a statement of our philosophy, and all of those extra little things that you may need to know in the coming months.

Please call school at any time with questions, or changes that are occurring in your child's life that might affect him or her here at school. Often knowing that someone in the family is ill or a parent is away on a trip helps us to understand your child better and help him or her through these times.

DIOCESAN PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (Children ages 3 to 5)

We, the Early Childhood Educators of the Diocese of Trenton, are dedicated to providing instruction which reflects our understanding of the unique needs of each child. We wish to foster the growth of young children through responsive, high quality Early Childhood Education, thereby supporting the diverse family structures that exist in our community.

We propose to educate our children, in an environment which encourages creativity and discovery, stimulates natural curiosity, builds academic and physical skills, nurtures spiritual growth, and enhances self-esteem. With this document, we intend to bring unity and continuity to each curricular area and to develop instructional programs that are relevant and challenging to young children.

We believe in the importance of helping children to develop critical thinking skills in order to be self-reliant and independent. We proclaim the need to foster Catholic Christian values in ourselves and our children, recognizing that these values help us to be responsible, productive, and caring citizens of our families, schools, parishes, and communities.

We endeavor to create a learning experience for children which is solidly based on the practices promoted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and which reflects our stated philosophy.

The role of the Early Childhood Education teacher is that of facilitator and guide. Therefore, teachers must prepare an environment that consistently emphasizes learning as an interactive process. Our programs should provide stimulation for a wider range of interest and abilities than the chronological age of the children might suggest. Activities should increase in difficulty and complexity as the children develop understanding and skills. Programs must provide multi-dimensional learning which moves from the concrete to the semi concrete to the abstract, so that activities allow children to translate their real experiences into an enriched knowledge base which is the foundation of advanced learning.

Lastly, we recognize the need to be accountable to the fulfillment of these goals. We must properly assess children's progress through recorded observations, anecdotal notes, and portfolios of children's work. This progress should be reported both formally and informally through frequent communication with families.

Why Preschool?

The first years of life are of vital importance to a child's growth and development. Foundations are laid which influence the ability of a child to accept him/herself, relate to others and respond positively to the environment. Family relationships provide a young child with the best model for developing attitudes, values and appropriate behavior. Interactions with other adults and children are extremely important and promote ways for a child to relate to the world around him/her.

Early childhood education provides the transition from home to a school atmosphere. Educational research indicates that these early years are crucial to learning and, in fact, form the basis for all future learning. Findings of the studies to date indicate that the number one contributing factor to children's success in school is prior attendance at preschool. The study states, *"Without a doubt, children who attend an early childhood program experience greater success (academically and behaviorally) than children who have not experienced preschool."*

The aim of our preschool program is to provide a safe, creative learning environment in which children will thrive. We want to prepare young children to meet the needs of the day; to give them a thirst for knowledge; and to educate the whole child; the intellect and the heart. In a world which is becoming increasingly competitive, we want Holy Cross to be a place for every child to be a child – free to play and explore and imagine in the course of a child-oriented day.

Our Philosophy:

Holy Cross interprets the general goals of early childhood education as being primarily the development of the whole child.

For the **spiritual development** of each child at Holy Cross, the program is designed to lead the child from wonder to discovery, from investigation to affirmation. This program helps the child in the process of discovering, affirming, and developing his/her inherent goodness and relationship with God.

For the **intellectual development** of each child, Holy Cross provides the opportunity for the children to develop and perfect a wide range of skills with which to meet future educational challenges. The program seeks to provide an environment in which each child learns from daily interactions as an individual, responds to innate curiosity and fosters a creative approach to problems.

For the **emotional development** of each child, Holy Cross is concerned with providing a preschool experience from which children will associate pleasure with themselves. The program seeks to develop self-confidence by optimizing chances for success while providing the space to fail without fear.

For **social development**, Holy Cross offers a place where each child freely interacts with adults and other children in the process of learning respect and developing the quality of caring for others.

Preschool Discipline Policy:

If a child has trouble being part of the group activities, discipline will be firm, positive, consistent and loving. Whenever possible it will take the form of natural consequence for an unacceptable action (i.e. if you throw a block, you have to go away from the block area and choose another toy). When natural consequence is inappropriate, the child will be directed to step away from the group. If the disruptive behavior becomes habitual, a parent conference will be requested so that we can all work together to encourage more acceptable behavior.

General Information...

School Time:

- 5 Day 8:15-11:45 Monday through Friday
- 5 Day Extended Day 8:15-2:00 Tuesday and Thursday
- 4 Day 8:15-11:45 Monday through Thursday

Please try to have your child arrive on time. It is difficult for some children to join others who already are at work or play.

Please be prompt at dismissal.

Friends & Car Pools:

- Car pools can be very helpful. Please give a list of those riding together.
- If your child is going home with someone other than you or the usual car pool, please send a note so that we will know what the change in the plan is for that day. **A note must come from the parent in order to release your child to anyone other than yourself.** Please do not call the school with changes.

Clothing:

- It is helpful if all boots, jackets, raincoats, sweaters, and other personal belongings are labeled. (Boots especially tend to all look alike!)
- Please dress your child in comfortable, easily cared for clothing. We do have smocks for messy activities, but often paint may get on clothing.
- We try to go outside every day, please dress your child accordingly.

Allergies & Illness:

- If your child has any allergies, please let us know what they are as soon as possible. We do cook on occasion and knowing what ingredients to avoid can be very helpful.
- For the protection of your child and others, please do not send your child to school with symptoms of any of the following: **Students should be symptom free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.**
 1. an upset stomach
 2. runny nose with a cold
 3. sore throat
 4. fever
 5. rash
 6. swollen glands
 7. diarrhea
 8. earache
 9. persistent cough
 10. other communicable illnesses

Please notify the school that morning as to the reason for absence. Call Mrs. Borkoski, our school nurse, at 732-708-3113 x201. If a child is injured or becomes ill at school, the parents will be notified. If the parents are not available, then the person designated to be

called in an emergency will be contacted. **Be sure to keep the school notified of any changes in telephone numbers, addresses, places of work, and emergency contacts.**

Each child has a permanent Health Record on which pertinent health information is recorded. Please keep the school notified of any health problems. All information is kept confidential.

Trips:

We are planning on taking several trips by bus. The cost for these trips will vary.

- A note will be sent home with your child before each trip, and you will need to sign a permission slip in order for your child to attend. If you would like to join us, you can indicate this on the slip as well.
- Walking trips during the school day will not require permission slips, but a sign will be posted on the classroom door.

Birthdays:

You may bring in a special snack on or around your child's birthday if he or she would like to celebrate with us here at school. If your child has a summer birthday we would be happy to plan an "un-birthday" day so that they can celebrate with us as well. We do ask that if you are planning on bringing something please check with us to make sure that there are no allergies in the class or other special treats planned for that day.

Show and Tell:

Show and Tell for the 5 Day program only is a special time for the children to share things or stories with the class. This activity helps the children develop verbally as well as have fun. For the most part it is up to the child to choose what they would like to share but at certain times throughout the year we will request certain things (i.e., something red). Please check the monthly calendars for special things to bring throughout the year.

Parent Participation and Conferences:

- If you have any special talents or hobbies that may be of interest to our class, we are always glad to have you share them with us. In addition, there will be opportunities for all parents to participate in special activities throughout the year.
- Conferences will be held in November and May
- You may always reach your teacher by email or by calling Holy Cross.

We can't wait to begin our adventure! Again, welcome to Holy Cross!