

2011-2012 parent handbook



highlands preschool



701 monroe ave ne
renton, wa 98056
Classrooms: 425-255-3833
message line: 425-255-9422
highlandspreschool.com

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Welcome

The 2011-2012 school year celebrates Highlands Preschool's **58th year!** We look forward with great enthusiasm to another successful year and will enjoy sharing this preschool experience with you and your child.

Our History

Highlands Preschool Association, doing business as "Highlands Preschool," was organized in 1953 and originally leased space in Highlands Community Church. In 1967, we were awarded our nonprofit 501c3 status. The school moved in 1973 to share space with St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, where we enjoyed another 30 years. In 2003, we settled into our current location at the Renton Community of Christ church, which has warmly welcomed our shared use of their facility.

Our Preschool Today

Highlands Preschool is a unique organization unlike any other preschool in the area. We are both an independent private school, and also a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing a quality education at an affordable price.

This is a unique combination for a preschool—independent of any parent organization, with education as our primary focus rather than profit. This allows us to dedicate ourselves to giving preschoolers of all backgrounds a positive first learning experience to prepare them for kindergarten.

Nondiscrimination Notice

As a nonprofit, Highlands Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, pro-

grams, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, hardship fund and other school-administered programs.

Our Staff

Our staff consists of five teachers, one teacher assistant and two part-time administrative positions. All staff must pass both national and state patrol background checks. Teachers must be certified in CPR and first aid. While not required, every staff member has had children attend Highlands Preschool in years past.

Teachers

Linda Helt (Preschool 1)—has been with Highlands Preschool for 24 years, has a Bachelor degree in Education from Central Washington University, and brings us a wealth of knowledge and experience. Linda is our Preschool 1 (4s) Head Teacher.

Connie White (Preschool 2)—has been with us for 19 years and holds an AA degree in Early Childhood Education from Bellevue Community College. Connie also came to us with previous teaching experience. Connie is our Preschool 2 & 3 (3s & Early 3s) Head Teacher.

Melanie Gallagher (Preschool 1)—has a Bachelor degree in Elementary Education and an endorsement in Early Childhood Education from Washington State University. She previously taught kindergarten for the Issaquah School District. This is Melanie's 3rd year teaching at Highlands Preschool.

Shannon MacGillivray (Preschool 2 & 3)—also known as "Mrs. Mac," has a Bachelor degree in Humanities & Liberal Studies from Western

Washington University, trained with us, and has now taught here for 9 years.

Kathee Rose (Preschool 1 & 2)—joins us again in her 5th year of teaching. Kathee came to us with child care experience and trained with us. Kathee holds an Early Childhood Education Certificate.

Administration

Karen Short is our Administrator. Karen holds a Bachelor degree in Business Administration from the University of Washington with a concentration in Human Resource Management. As our administrative positions are part-time, Karen is also regional Communications Coordinator for an international non-profit organization. This is Karen's 11th year with Highlands Preschool.

Elizabeth Dompier is in her 4th year as our Bookkeeper. Elizabeth has a Bachelor degree in Business Administration with a Finance Specialization and Economics minor from Central Washington University. Elizabeth is also our Teacher Assistant (TA).

Our Board of Directors

Parents and guardians of enrolled children are automatically members of Highlands Preschool Association and comprise the total membership.

Government of the Association is conducted by our volunteer Board of Directors, which is similar to a PTA. The Board is made up of parents or guardians, who perform various volunteer tasks, set policies and financial goals. If you are interested in in being a volunteer, contact the Board President or your child's teacher.

Curriculum

Preschool Philosophy

"A Child Learns By Doing"—Our philosophy of education centers around play. Play is the most complete educational process of the mind. This allows the development of the "whole" child—intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically—and facilitates the natural unfolding of each child's potential. In return, the child experiences a growing sense of self-worth and a personal joy in learning.

Young children learn in a different manner than do older children. Young children learn by actual contact with real objects, events, and people. (That's why field trips, outdoor play and other exciting activities are so important.) Young children learn by involving themselves in exploring, discovering, repeating and continually adapting what they see into their daily lives.

Young children are not yet prepared to learn by words alone. They do not learn by explanations or descriptions of things that are far off in time or space. Just because young children can repeat words easily, does not necessarily mean they understand and grasp the meaning behind the words. It is only through varied, first-person real life experience that words are filled with meaning for the young child.

Preschool is a time to begin learning independence, while developing trust and respect for others. An important part of this program is social adjustment, sharing and cooperating with others. Our goal is for them to "want" to come to school by stressing that "learning is fun."

There are many skill levels and unit topics covered during a school year, and we try to make all of it fun and interesting. Included in these units are numerous projects and many forms of art for enhancement. Most important is the child learning to see themselves as an individual who is unique, with qualities unlike any other.

Preschool 3 Curriculum (Early Threes)

Activities

This is usually the first school experience for the Early Threes. It is a time for the child to develop independence, learn and expand social skills, and build a sense of himself/herself as a problem-solving and reasoning individual. Our program includes story time, a daily art project, movement to music, and group activities which will allow the child to develop a curiosity for life and a way to express his or her individuality.

Skill Areas Covered

1. Motor Skills
 - a. Large motor movement
 - (1) Running
 - (2) Jumping
 - (3) Climbing
 - (4) Learning movement to music
 - b. Small motor movement
 - (1) Crayons, markers
 - (2) Paints
 - (3) Glue
 - (4) Manipulative games
 - (5) Puzzles

- (6) Learning finger plays
- (7) Building with blocks

2. Language Development

- a. Circle time
- b. Singing songs
- c. Reciting finger plays
- d. Reading stories
- e. Feeling comfortable expressing ideas
- f. Question of the week
- g. Name recognition

3. Social Skills

- a. Learning to share & play well with others
- b. Learning personal space and boundaries
- c. Learning to respect the property of others
- d. Learning to respect the feelings of others
- e. Manners

4. Math Development

- a. Counting numbers 1 through 10
- b. Introducing shapes and colors
- c. Color mixing

Unit Topics

- 1. Colors
- 2. Shapes
- 3. Dinosaurs
- 4. Space
- 5. Animals
- 6. Insects
- 7. Sea life
- 8. Plants
- 9. Holidays
- 10. Seasons

Preschool 2 Curriculum (Threes)

Activities

The three year old needs to build a sense of themselves as a problem-solving, reasoning individual, while developing trust and independence. This is accomplished through many play experiences. Play is a key mode to development. This program includes daily art projects, skill builders, circle time and group activities, allowing the child to gain a greater awareness of individuality.

Skill Areas Covered

1. Motor
 - a. Large motor movement
 - (1) Running
 - (2) Jumping
 - (3) Climbing
 - (4) Learning movement to music
 - b. Small motor movement
 - (1) Crayons, markers
 - (2) Paints
 - (3) Glue
 - (4) Manipulative games
 - (5) Puzzles
 - (6) Learning finger plays
 - (7) Building with blocks
2. Language Development
 - a. Singing songs
 - b. Reciting finger plays
 - c. Speaking in complete sentences
 - d. Feeling comfortable expressing ideas

- e. Introducing lower case letters
- f. Question of the week
- g. Name recognition

3. Social Skills

- a. Learning to share and play well with others
- b. Learning to respect the property of others
- c. Learning to respect the feelings of others
- d. Manners

4. Math Development

- a. Counting Numbers 1 through 20
- b. Sequencing
- c. Graphing

Unit Topics

1. Colors
2. Shapes
3. Dinosaurs
4. Space
5. Animals
6. Insects
7. Sea Life
8. Plants
9. Holidays
10. Seasons

Preschool 1 Curriculum (Fours)

Activities

The four year old program will help your child gain the skills and personal readiness necessary for kindergarten. This program in-

cludes daily art projects, skill builders, circle time and group activities, allowing the child to gain a greater awareness of his/her individuality. Letters and their relation to sound will be introduced. We will emphasize understanding of number concepts as opposed to learning to count by memorization. Your child will create his/her own art work and will be proud of his/her own creation. Good development of fine and gross motor skills must occur before your child is ready for prolonged "seat work."

Skill Areas Covered

1. Motor Skills

a. Large motor movement

- (1) Jumping, running
- (2) Rolling and throwing a ball
- (3) Distinguishing right and left hands
- (4) Rhythmic movement to music and clapping

b. Small motor movement

- (1) Control with crayons, markers, paint
- (2) Using paste and glue
- (3) Doing finger plays
- (4) Writing first name when read
- (5) Scissors

2. Language Development

a. Expressing ideas

b. Speaking clearly

c. Speaking in complete sentences

d. Singing and reciting songs and finger plays

e. Speaking in front of peers

3. Reading and Math

a. Introduce upper and lower case letters

b. Introduce left and right

- c. Introduce top and bottom
- d. Classify objects
- e. Dictate stories
- f. Days of the week
- g. Months of the year
- h. Patterning
- i. Sequencing
- j. Estimating
- k. Identifying basic shapes
- l. Beginning number concepts
- m. Counting

4. Science

- a. The five senses
- b. Nutrition
- c. Weather
- d. Animals
- e. Seasons
- f. Recycling

5. Social Studies

- a. Myself, family, friends and school
- b. Community helpers
- c. Transportation

6. Art

- a. Basic colors
- b. Crafts
- c. Painting

7. Music

- a. Singing and moving to music
- b. Following directions from songs
- c. Rhythmic clapping

8. Social Skills

- a. Working and playing with others
- b. Self-control
- c. Respecting property of others
- d. Recognizing and accepting responsibility

Unit Topics

1. Amphibians and Reptiles
2. Space, Stars, Planets
3. Sea life
4. Insects and Butterflies
5. Farm Animals and Growing Fruits & Vegetables
6. Holidays
7. Seasons
8. Alphabet
9. Rhyming
10. Fairy Tales/Kingdoms
11. Polar Animals

Example Daily Schedule *(Varies by Class)*

<u>AM Classes</u>	<u>PM Classes</u>	<u>Activity</u>
9:00-9:45	11:30-12:15	Welcome to class and art project
9:45-10:15	12:15-12:45	Big Room time
10:15-10:30	12:45-1:00	Snack time
10:30-10:50	1:00-1:20	Circle time
10:50-11:10	1:20-1:40	Outside time
11:15	1:45	Dismiss

Program Goals

By the time your child completes their experience at Highlands Pre-school, our goal is for them to be ready for kindergarten in a vari-

ety of ways. Here are some of the things we strive for your child to accomplish:

Colors and Shapes

- Recognizes and names primary colors.
- Recognizes circles, triangles, rectangles and squares.
- Matches shapes or objects based on shape.
- Copies shapes.

Numbers

- Counts orally through 30 (minimum).
- Counts objects in one-to-one correspondence.
- Understands empty and full.
- Understands more and less.

Reading Readiness

- Remembers objects from a given picture.
- Knows what a letter is, recognizes letters and their sounds
- Has been read to frequently.
- Looks at books and magazines.
- Recognizes some nursery rhymes.
- Identifies parts of the body.
- Knows common farm and zoo animals.
- Pronounces own first and last name.
- Expresses self verbally.
- Identifies children by name.
- Tells the meaning of simple words.
- Repeats a sentence of 6-8 words.
- Has own books.
- Understands that print carries a message.
- Pretends to read.

- Uses left-to-right progression.
- Answers questions about a short story.
- Tells the meaning of words heard in story.
- Looks at pictures and tells a story.
- Prints own first name.
- Knows days of the week and months of the year.

Position and Direction

- Understands up and down.
- Understands in and out.
- Understands front and back.
- Understands over and under.
- Understands top, bottom, middle.
- Understands beside, next to.
- Understands hot and cold.
- Understands fast and slow.

Listening and Sequencing

- Follows simple directions.
- Listens to a short story.
- Listens carefully.
- Recognizes common sounds.
- Repeats a sequence of sounds
- Repeats a sequence of orally given numbers.
- Retells simple stories in sequence.

Motor Skills

- Is able to run.
- Is able to walk a straight line
- Is able to jump and hop.
- Is able to alternate feet walking down stairs.

- Is able to march.
- Is able to stand on one foot for 5-10 seconds.
- Is able to walk backwards for five feet.
- Is able to throw a ball.
- Pastes objects.
- Claps hands.
- Matches simple objects.
- Touches fingers.
- Builds with blocks.
- Completes simple puzzles.
- Draws and colors beyond a simple scribble.
- Able to zip a zipper and button a button.
- Controls pencil and crayon well.
- Cuts simple shapes.
- Handles scissors well.
- Able to copy simple shapes.

Social-Emotional Development

- Can be away from parents or primary care givers for 2-3 hours without being upset.
- Feels good about self.
- Is not afraid to go to school.
- Cares for own belongings.
- Maintains self-control.
- Gets along well with other children.
- Plays with other children.
- Recognizes authority.
- Shares with others.
- Talks easily.
- Puts away toys.
- Able to stay on task.
- Able to work independently.

Coming to Preschool

Please use only the front door for both arrival and pick-up. For safety reasons, all other doors will remain locked. The front door is unlocked during normal drop-off and pick-up times, but is locked during class hours to prevent unauthorized entry. If you need to enter the building when the front door is locked, simply enter the code **C701** or use the intercom.

Teachers will open the classroom doors when class is due to start, right at 9 am and 11:30 am (11:15 for Preschool 3 classes). **Do not arrive more than FIVE MINUTES before class is to begin.** This is extremely important, particularly for PM classes, as there is not adequate room in the parking lot or building if the AM classes have not completely left. Please do not enter a classroom before the teacher opens the door.

All children must be walked to, and picked up from, their classroom. **DO NOT** drop your child off by the front door of the building, unless previously arranged with a teacher or assistant to meet them there. Children must be with an adult at all times in the building, playground and parking areas.

Once you have dropped off your child, please exit the building. **The Big Room is CLOSED to families once class has begun.** Our teachers need to use the Big Room, and only authorized personnel with proper background checks and accreditation may remain on the premises, unless you are picking up your child.

Attendance

We do not take attendance at preschool. For most short absences, you do not need to call the school. If your child will be gone for an

extended period, such as with a major illness or family trip, please notify your child's teacher or the Administrator.

Separation Anxiety

Whether preschool is a new experience for your child, or whether this is just a new class and new teacher, change can be difficult for a preschooler—and no change more difficult than separation from you. Some degree of separation anxiety is a sign that the preschooler has developed healthy attachments to loved ones.

Parents who recognize the signs of separation anxiety and work to prepare their child will reap the rewards for years to come. When children feel secure, they will have an easier time developing friendships, separating from parents and others, and carrying out their tasks with confidence.

Ahead of Time

- **Prepare yourself.** Read and understand these guidelines, and be prepared to separate from your child. If you are not ready for the separation, they will not be either. Know what you will do and say when the time comes. Try role-playing with your child to rehearse the separation.
- **Prepare your child.** Tell your child what to expect. Bring them to Open House to meet the teacher and see the classroom. Some children enjoy taking pictures to show grandparents and other special people. Read books about going to preschool. Make shopping for a preschool lunchbox a special event. Pick out a "lovey" from home—a stuffed animal, blanket or other special item they can bring to class which will help them feel secure.
- **Make sure your child gets enough sleep and is healthy.** Most preschool children need about 11 hours of sleep a night. If your

child is tired or not feeling well, it may be better to keep them at home that day.

- **Establish a ritual.** You might develop a short and simple routine to follow when it's time to part, such as hanging up their coat, dropping off their lunch box, giving each other a big bear hug and a kiss, saying, "I love you" and waving good-bye.

Time to Part!

- **Focus on the positive.** Remind them they are loved, they will be safe, and they will have fun—*not* that mommy will miss them.
- **Always tell your child that you will come back, and always arrive on time for pick-up.** This builds trust, both in you and the teacher.
- **Smile and follow through.** Even if you are hesitant yourself, put on a brave face and tell your child you must leave—and then leave. Don't linger too long, as this only adds more anxiety to the situation. Our teachers are much more effective at calming down your child once you are gone. Your child needs the opportunity to develop trust in their teacher to take care of them while you are away.
- **Don't sneak off.** If you disappear, it makes the separation worse and undermines trust. Say goodbye and go.

After you Part

- **Don't berate yourself.** Distress is simply one sign of your child's attachment to you. On the other hand, don't be concerned if your child doesn't show distress; it's not a sign of a lack of attachment, just the outcome of a different personality.

- **Don't berate your child.** Never criticize your child's separation distress or scold them for it. Tell them that you understand their feelings, but don't let them dwell on their fears.
- **Know the crying will stop.** Most crying episodes last less than 10 minutes once you leave, and stop altogether by the end of the second week. Your child will learn through consistent experience that each goodbye is soon followed by your happy return. It won't be long before "I don't want to go to preschool" turns into "I'm not ready to leave!"
- **Expect lapses.** Children from three to five years of age may show distress seemingly out of the blue. Possible causes include difficulties at home or breaks in routine, such as returning from a vacation or illness.

What to Bring to Preschool

We do not ask you to donate classroom supplies; your tuition and registration/supply fee cover these expenses. There are a few things, however, to make sure your child has each day:

Appropriate Clothing

Dress your child in clothing that is okay to get paint on! Due to the various play and art activities, we cannot be responsible for damage to clothing, so *please* send your child in washable play clothes and non-slippery shoes. Picture days are considered "dress-up" days; the teachers will curtail messy activities for that day so that you may dress your child as you see fit.

To avoid confusion and loss of articles, please **label** all items that come to preschool with your child's name. All items that cannot be

identified will be donated to charity if not claimed by the last day of regular classes.

Show and Tell Items

Please consult your child's teacher about their policy regarding show and tell *before* sending toys or any other personal items to preschool with your child, as these can be very distracting in class.

Lunchbox and Snacks

There is a 15-minute snack time during each class. We ask that each child bring a lunchbox each day. Please include a nutritious snack for morning classes and a mini-lunch for afternoon classes. Children may also bring a small, no-drip container of **water** only. Please *do not send* the following:

- **Sweets.** Please refrain from sending candy, cookies, donuts, or anything else with a high-sugar content.
- **Messy or runny foods** such as yogurt, Go-Gurt®, applesauce, fruit cups or pudding. These are difficult to clean off the carpet.
- **Juice, milk or any drinks besides water**—again, due to the carpeting in the building.
- **Any food containing nuts.** Due to the increasing number of children who are highly allergic to nuts, and particularly peanut products, **Highlands Preschool is a nut-free school.**

Please remember that while our teachers remind children not to share food with classmates and try very hard to be vigilant at snack time, they cannot absolutely guarantee that your child will not come into contact with food items to which they may be allergic. If your child has a severe allergy, please be sure to discuss it with your child's teacher.

Dismissal from Preschool

Class ends at 11:15 am or 1:45 pm (11:00 or 1:15 for Preschool 3). As with drop-off, we ask that you not arrive more than **FIVE MINUTES** before class dismisses. The front door will be locked until this time.

Please exit the building as soon as possible after picking up your child. **The Big Room is CLOSED to families after class.** Under no circumstances should you allow any children to play in the Big Room after class dismisses. Again, there is not adequate room in the building or parking lot for PM classes to arrive if AM families are not gone, and our lease, insurance, and legal agreements with staff require the building to be closed right after PM classes dismiss. If you have another child that uses the Big Room during the five-minute wait period, please be sure to pick up after them.

Teachers will only release your child to you or another person listed in the Pick-up Authorization section of your Registration Form. If anyone else will be picking up your child (including another child's parent), you must notify the teacher in writing. ***Teachers will not release a student to an unauthorized person.***

Late Pick-up Policy

It is important that you be prompt in picking up your child. Not only does your child need the assurance that you will be on time, but our teachers are only paid until the end of class time and our building must be closed. Our insurance requires that two adults be present with a child, so if you are late, two teachers must actually stay late. If a child is picked up late, a fee of two dollars (\$2.00) per minute per child will be assessed, and a statement emailed to you from our

bookkeeper. The fee goes directly to the two teachers to reimburse them for their time. However, exceptions may occasionally be made in emergency situations. ***Please call the classroom line and inform your child's teacher if you are going to be late picking up your child.*** Be sure to keep the classroom phone number with you at all times!

The teachers will follow these procedures when a child is not picked up:

1. Attempt to contact the parent(s) and/or guardians on home and cell numbers;
2. Attempt to contact any and all other persons listed as emergency contacts;
3. Dial 9-1-1 to alert authorities if more than 60 minutes has passed and no contact has been made with parents/guardians or anyone listed as an emergency contact.

Parking and Parking Lot

Please safely park your car for arrival and pick-up. We understand that the parking lot can get full at times; however, ***do NOT park illegally or leave your car running.*** Please park only in **marked parking spaces**—not at the end of a row or by the entrance; this blocks the driveway and makes it more difficult to see children. If the lot is full, on-street parking is legal and you may park across the street at the Renton Technical College.

No child should be left unattended or unsupervised in the parking lot. If you have a sleeping baby, please arrange for another parent to walk your preschooler in/pick up your preschooler, or stay with your baby. ***Do not leave them alone in the car!***

Please make sure all children are safely inside your vehicle before striking up a conversation with another parent or any other delay in the parking lot. **Please do not allow your child to play in the parking lot or climb the trees.**

Please remember to drive slowly and carefully in the parking lot and around the preschool at all times.

Impairment Policy

The staff has a duty to keep your child safe. If your child's teacher has any reason to believe that you or the person picking up your child is intoxicated or otherwise impaired in any way, the police will be called. You, or the person picking up your child, may have the option of designating another authorized person to pick up your child instead, but the teacher does not have to offer this option if they are uncomfortable doing so or feel it might lead to an escalated situation.

Health Policies

Your child's health is important to us. At preschool, we practice diligent hand sanitizing and washing, and we learn other good health practices as part of our curriculum. It is equally as important that you fill out your child's Health History information on the registration form completely, make sure your child's teacher is aware of any special situations, and keep them home when ill.

Immunizations

Washington State law requires student immunization forms to be completed and on file *before* attending preschool. Your child's immunizations must be up-to-date, or you must sign a Certificate of Exemption. No exceptions can be made.

Bathroom Policies

We know that many preschoolers have not been potty trained for long or are still mastering this skill. We do not require that children be completely potty trained before starting preschool. We do ask that they come in underwear or a pull-up rather than a diaper.

We keep some "emergency" clothes on hand at the preschool. If a child becomes noticeably wet, the TA will offer the child a change of clothes and can assist the child with changing if needed. If the child becomes noticeably messy, or if the child does not want to change their clothes, the TA will call the parent or guardian to come and assist the child with changing or take them home for the remainder of the day.

Our TA will usually meet children in the hallway outside of the restroom, escort them into the bathroom and make sure they get back to their class safely. Our teachers use walkie-talkies with the TAs as necessary to ensure that children are accounted for at all times.

Hand Sanitizing and Washing

According to research performed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, alcohol-based hand sanitizers are considered as effective at killing germs as washing hands—and more so if hands are not vigorously washed in warm water for at least 20 seconds and dried thoroughly.

Therefore, our teachers assist each child with hand sanitizing prior to snacks, and have the children wash hands after using the bathroom or when visibly soiled, such as with paint or dirt from the playground. Please be aware, however, that if your child's class is scheduled to be on the playground just before class dismisses, you

will need to assume responsibility for hand washing at that time. Please let your child's teacher know if your child cannot use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

Attendance and Illnesses

It is extremely important that your child be in good health when you send him/her to preschool. As the spread of pandemic flu has become of particular concern, we monitor local health department notifications and will keep you updated with important information. We ask that you do your part by following three important guidelines:

1. **Keep your child at home**, or they may be sent home, if any symptoms of illness are present. Children exhibiting signs of illness will usually be isolated from other students until they are picked up.
2. **Do not bring your child back** to preschool until they have been symptom-free for at least a full **24 hours**. If your child has a fever *and* a sore throat or cough, King County Public Health asks that you keep them home for at least **7 days**.
3. **Notify the school immediately** if your child has the flu, Pink Eye, Strep Throat, Chicken Pox, Head Lice or any other highly contagious condition. We will notify other parents if warranted.

Symptoms of illness for which you should keep your child at home:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Rash
- Drainage from the eye (Pink Eye)
- Appearance/Behavior - unusually tired, lack of appetite, difficult to wake, confused, irritable

- Sore throat
- Cough
- Fever
- Nasal discharge (especially if yellow or greenish)
- Scabies, head-lice or other infestation - children may not return to school until they are free of lice and nits (eggs)
- Strep throat
- Chicken pox

As we do not take attendance, you do not need to notify the pre-school if your child will miss preschool due to illness (unless because of a contagious condition); simply keep them home.

No medications will be given unless arranged with the teacher and an Authorization to Administer Medication form completed.

Safety Policies

Accidents and Injuries

Minor bumps and scrapes are an everyday part of your child exploring and learning through experience. Minor injuries sustained at preschool are reported to parents on an "Ouch Report," of which you will receive a copy.

If a child requires immediate attention, we will notify you and get them the medical attention they need. If the parent, guardian and emergency contact cannot be reached and an emergency exists, the teacher will seek medical care as needed.

Contact with Children

For the safety of your children, as well as insurance requirements, we must be vigilant about who comes into contact with your children and how we come into contact with your children.

Our staff is screened with both national and state patrol background checks. They are also carefully trained in appropriate contact and procedures. All parents and guardians must normally exit the building during class.

As described previously, our front door is locked during class hours to prevent unauthorized people from entering the building or having access to the children. You may use the entry code or the intercom at any time if you need to enter the building or pick up your child prior to regular dismissal time. While locked to the outside, all doors are equipped to open freely for exit in case of emergency.

Contact Information

The preschool must have on file at all times a correct phone number where you can be reached in case of an emergency. If your phone number(s) and/or address change during the preschool year, please contact your teacher or the Administrator to ensure that we always have accurate information.

Insurance Coverage

While on preschool premises, *enrolled students* are covered by an accident insurance plan while on-site during regular school hours, and after hours or off-site during school-sponsored activities (like Big Night or field trips). **Siblings and all others are not covered.** If you need to make a claim, please contact the Administrator for the necessary forms.

Emergency Procedures

Our teachers and children will practice fire and earthquake drills in conjunction with their regular routines. Emergency supplies are kept on site.

Emergency Weather

Prior to the start of the preschool day, we follow the Renton School District's emergency weather schedule.

If the Renton School District is late or closed, Highlands Preschool will be closed.

To determine if the Renton School District is late or closed, you may check any local news agency, call the Renton School District at 425-204-2300, or visit www.schoolreport.org. This website has a service where you may sign up to be notified automatically at up to three email addresses and mobile phone numbers if the Renton School District is late or closed. Highlands Preschool will not normally send out notices about school delays and closures.

If the teachers decide that preschool should close **while school is already in session** (such as with a sudden snowstorm), parents or guardians will be called. A teacher will stay until every child has been picked up.

Parent Pledge

Highlands Preschool is committed to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for your child. In an effort to protect your child and ensure their development in a positive way, we ask you as parents to make the following pledge:

- "I will strive to follow all preschool policies and procedures as set forth in this handbook. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and understand the policies in this handbook, and to follow them to the best of my ability. I understand that preschool personnel cannot always monitor, or be responsible for, my family's compliance with these policies and procedures.

- "I will strive to support the preschool in the way I communicate with the children, the staff of the preschool and other parents. I will not be discourteous to, threaten or use inappropriate language or actions towards any child, teacher, administrator, parent, guardian or any person acting on behalf of the preschool, either on or near preschool property, or when attending preschool-related functions.
- "I will not approach any child other than my own to obtain confirmation, clarification or "their view" on preschool-related issues, disputes, or disagreements between children at preschool. Such matters or concerns must be brought to the Teacher's or Administrator's attention.
- "I will take any questions or suggestions to the Teacher or Administrator directly, or use the suggestion box. I understand that spreading rumors and complaining among parents can be destructive and not in the best interest of my child's experience and education at preschool.
- "I understand that Highlands Preschool is a private school, with full rights to refuse admission. Should I violate this pledge, I understand that my child's enrollment may be terminated."

You formally agree to this pledge — and all handbook policies — by continuing your child's enrollment.

Discipline is Learning

Most preschool-age children do not have perfect social skills. An important part of our curriculum involves teaching appropriate personal and social behavior. Minor incidents like pushing, scratching or

pinching others can be expected as part of this learning process and are not unusual for many children.

We view discipline as a learning opportunity. When an incident occurs, we take appropriate steps to protect other children and teach proper behavior. We begin with such techniques as redirecting (*"Since the tower keeps falling, let's play with the dinosaurs instead"*) and offering positive alternatives (*"When you want a turn with the toy, you may ask your friend instead of hitting him"*). As inappropriate behavior continues or escalates, we may use additional teaching methods such as time outs. If we feel that the safety of other students is in jeopardy, we may call parents to pick up the child or issue a short-term suspension.

Anytime disciplinary action is required, other than for minor incidents such as a simple redirection, you will receive a **Disciplinary Learning Report**. The purposes of this report are to keep you aware of what is happening at preschool, keep the lines of communication open, and give you the option of continuing the same methods at home for consistency.

As our primary concern must be with the safety and welfare of the children, we may in extreme and rare cases terminate a child's enrollment if it is determined that they pose an immediate and continuing danger to themselves, other students, or school personnel, or an immediate and continuing threat of substantial disruption to the educational process.

If you become aware of a conflict between children during class time, please discuss the incident with your child's teacher for appropriate action. Following our Parent Pledge, we ask that you not confront other parents or children in a negative manner.

Tuition Policies

Registration

Fees due at registration include a \$75 non-refundable registration/supply fee and first month's tuition. If your child registers after the school year has begun in September, tuition for the first month will be due in full if your child's first day is on or before the 15th of the month. If your child's first day is after the 15th of the month, tuition for that month is half the monthly tuition.

Rates

Monthly tuition rates are as follows: **2 days/week (Th/F) classes are \$120, 3 days/week (M/T/W) classes are \$145, 5 days/week (M-F) classes are \$195, and the Early Threes (Th/F) classes are \$130.** Monthly discounts of \$5.00 per child are made for families with two or more children enrolled.

We are often asked why tuition is the same for months that are shorter or longer, including September. Tuition is based on the total number of days school is in session for the year, and then divided by the number of months in the school year (September to May). This allows for easier *equal tuition payments* each month.

Due Dates

Tuition is due the *first of each month*. You may pay online via PayPal from our website at www.highlandspreschool.com, or write a check or money order. Please make checks payable to **Highlands Preschool** and *include your child's first and last name on the check*. You may place your payment in the indoor collection box, the outdoor locking mailbox, or mail to:

Highlands Preschool, 701 Monroe Avenue NE, Renton, WA 98056. Please do not pay in cash, so we can be sure each payment is properly credited.

Absences & Tuition

A spot in the class is reserved for your child. Therefore, even if your child is to be absent from preschool *for any reason* (including family vacation or illness), tuition will still be due. If your child attends class one day in a month, full tuition is due. If your child is going to miss an entire month, half of that month's tuition will be due if you wish to hold your child's spot. If you know your child will be absent for an extended period, please be sure to notify your child's teacher, the Administrator or Bookkeeper.

Other Charges

A late charge of **\$10** will be added to any tuition not received by the 15th of the month. A late notice will be sent after the 15th of any month if payment is not received. If payment is outstanding by the end of the month, your child will not be allowed to attend preschool unless other payment arrangements have been made with the Bookkeeper. If payment is still not received in full or payment arrangements made by the end of the second month, your account will be referred to our collection agency. You will be responsible for any additional collection fees.

A fee of **\$30** will be assessed for any checks returned for non-sufficient funds.

We want to work with you if you are having difficulty paying tuition or do not understand our policies. Please contact the Bookkeeper to discuss payment options or ask questions.

Hardship Assistance

Partial tuition assistance may be available for a short time to any currently-enrolled student whose family is experiencing a financial hardship. Please contact the Bookkeeper or Administrator for more information or to apply.

Withdrawal

If you intend to withdraw your child from the preschool at any time, you must complete and return a **Withdrawal Form**. It is preferable that you return the Withdrawal Form in advance, prior to your child's last day. Because we do not take daily attendance and cannot verify when your child last attended, **you will continue to be liable for monthly tuition until you have returned a Withdrawal Form.** This form is available on the preschool website, or may be requested in person or via email from any preschool staff. You may return the form to your child's teacher, the indoor collection box, the outdoor locking mailbox, by mail, fax or email.

If your child's last day will be on or before the 15th of any month, and you have already submitted a Withdrawal Form, tuition for that month is half the monthly tuition. Tuition will be due in full if your child's last day is after the 15th of the month.

Refunds

The \$75 registration fee is non-refundable. Tuition will not be refunded due to cancellation of classes (such as bad weather).

If you pay a full month of tuition and withdraw your child by submitting a Withdrawal Form before the 15th of the month, you will be refunded for half that month's tuition. While we often process them quickly, ***please allow up to three weeks to process refunds.***

Special Collections

During the year, the preschool will collect orders or money for various activities. *Please do not hand orders or money to your child's teacher.* Our teachers do not have anywhere secure to store money in their classrooms, making it easy for your checks to get misplaced or stolen there. To help the teachers and ensure your money is secure, please deposit all orders and money in the indoor collection box or outdoor locking mailbox, preferably in a sealed envelope which lists on the outside:

1. Child's full name (first and last);
2. Teacher's name;
3. Activity (ID Tags, fundraisers, etc.);

Fund Raisers and Donations

As a registered nonprofit organization, we set our tuition rates to cover operating costs. Any extra expenses or programs must come from additional funding. These include things such as purchasing or replacing playground equipment, Big Room or classroom toys, and safety equipment.

In order to raise these additional funds, we periodically hold fundraisers. While we would love to have 100% participation on every fundraiser, you always have the choice. We do not require participation.

Calendar and Special Events

The yearly preschool calendar usually runs from the week of Labor Day, to the last full week before Memorial Day.

Make-up Days

If there are five or more school days canceled during the year, such as due to snow closures or power outages, the school year will be extended one week. Fewer than five missed days will not be made up.

Teacher Training Days

Following the Renton School District calendar, there will be two Teacher Training Days per year. There will be no school on these days. Teachers will spend this day attending important trainings, such as CPR recertification, first aid training or specific continuing education topics.

Holidays

To help our families with scheduling, we follow the Renton School District's holiday and vacation schedule as much as possible. These dates will be listed on your Yearly Calendar, posted on the web site, and listed in each month's e-newsletter.

Celebrations

We have a number of special celebrations throughout the year during normal classroom hours, such as our Halloween Party in October, our Winter Holiday Party in December, the Valentines Party in February, and Spring Fling in April. Our teachers help your child celebrate each event in a fun and unique way.

Because any change in routine, such as a celebration, can be stressful for children, we have put together the following guidelines to keep our celebrations low-key and stress-free, but fun:

- Due to the number of severe food allergies in the school, in addition to our desire to promote healthy eating habits, we ask that treats not be brought in to share. We'll keep everyone busy with super-fun activities and games. From Halloween Costume parades to Valentines exchanges and Spring egg hunts, they'll never miss that sugar!
- You are welcome to bring **"goody" bags** to parties for each child if you wish. These may contain small toys such as Play-Doh, stickers, rings, etc., but as always, please no food/candy items. Please put them in easy-to-carry, fully-closing containers (like Ziplock bags) instead of bags that are open at the top.
- Due to safety and allergy concerns, we ask that **no balloons** be brought to preschool.
- Please **no parents or guests** during the celebrations. Our classrooms are too small to accommodate extra people, and it is also a distraction to the children. Please drop off any items you are contributing at the beginning of class time.

We try to be inclusive of all religions and beliefs. If you do not wish for your child to participate in any type of celebration, please let your child's teacher know.

Birthdays and Unbirthdays

If you would like your child to celebrate a birthday or 'unbirthday' (a celebration for children whose birthdays don't fall within the preschool year), please let your child's teacher know at least a week ahead of time. To make the day extra special, your child will be recognized with fun things like birthday crowns, stickers, singing a birthday song, etc.

Instead of bringing in treats, your child may bring in a special book to his/her class for their birthday. The teacher will read the book to the whole class in honor of your child. You may purchase a book to donate to the classroom, or just have your child borrow a favorite book from home or the library.

We encourage children to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. Accordingly, we ask parents not to distribute birthday or other party invitations at preschool, especially when all children in a class are not included.

Field Trips

Your child's class will be taking trips occasionally. When a trip is scheduled, it will be noted in the monthly email newsletter. Due to our large enrollment, some classes may have trips scheduled on different days.

Due to state law regarding car seats and booster seats at preschool age, ***every child must be driven to the field trip site by their parent or guardian, or in a privately-arranged carpool.*** Younger siblings may usually accompany you on the field trip, but must pay any required fee if participating.

Since you will be transporting your child, we do not require written permission to attend field trips. If you would prefer that your child not go on the field trip, simply keep them at home.

All-School Performances

We periodically have fun performers or presenters come to Highlands Preschool. When a performer is scheduled, it is usually the only event that day. We usually ask that you stay, as ending times

may vary. If you need to leave, please check with your child's teacher. It is important that parents staying for the performance ***PLEASE refrain from talking*** during the performance. Siblings accompanied by a parent are welcome at these events.

Spirit Days

We will schedule some fun "Spirit Days" during the year, such as Pajama Day, Crazy Hat & Hair Day, and other fun themes. Preschool hours and routine are not affected, and your child does not have to participate if they are uncomfortable doing so.

Open House and Big Night

In addition to the Meet the Teacher Open House prior to the start of school, we hold an evening Open House for registered students each fall as part of our "Big Night," which also includes our Scholastic Book Fair. We encourage you to take this opportunity, along with working parents, siblings, other family members and friends, to meet your child's teacher, see the classroom, and view some of the great projects on which your child has been working.

Registration

Registration for next school year begins in February. Prior to official registration dates, registration forms will be distributed through your child's teacher for parents who wish to re-enroll their children for the following school year. Parents who currently have a child in the preschool, or have had previously, will be given the first opportunity to register. Registration is then conducted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Picnic

An all-school picnic is scheduled at the end of the school year in a local park. Parents need to stay with their children at this event; siblings are welcome to attend. Bring a blanket and lunch.

Communications

We strive to keep parents up-to-date and thoroughly informed about preschool events, classroom events and curriculum, safety issues, Board decisions, contact information, and much more. At the same time, we try to be environmentally responsible by limiting the amount of paper copies we make and distribute.

E-Newsletters

Email is our primary means of communication with you. A monthly newsletter and calendar will be distributed via email at the beginning of each month. This will list and explain all upcoming school-wide activities, changes in class times, classroom projects your child will experience and more. All email communications are automatically posted to our website.

We also post a printed copy of our monthly newsletter on the upstairs bulletin board and will have a very limited supply of paper copies available on the bulletin board for distribution; paper copies will not automatically go home with your child, so please be sure to read your email.

Email addresses provided on the Registration Form are automatically added to the email list; anyone else may also sign up for our email news; we highly recommend that caregivers, grandparents, or anyone else who needs to be aware of changes in our schedule or

policies, sign up. They can sign up simply by following the link on the homepage of the preschool website, or by contacting Administrator Karen Short at kshort@highlandspreschool.com.

Links at the bottom of each email allow you to change your information or unsubscribe at any time.

Web Site — www.highlandspreschool.com

The Highlands Preschool web site is designed to both inform the public about our preschool and provide you with current preschool information. On the site, you will find the monthly e-newsletter, information on special events, and this handbook.

We may occasionally post a picture on the web site including children. However, we have adopted the following privacy/security policies to protect your children:

1. No picture including an identifiable child's face will be used without parental permission;
2. No picture containing a child will be labeled with any part of that child's name.

Languages

Highlands Preschool has a diverse population, with children from many different backgrounds. We understand that English may not be read in every home. We recommend use of an online translator, such as www.online-translator.com to view our website and email communications if needed.

Suggestion Box

We welcome your input at any time. We provide paper next to our collection box; please feel free to use this paper, or your own, to

make suggestions or comments. Each and every submittal is addressed in a timely manner, either by the staff or at a Board of Directors meeting. You may submit your comments anonymously, or include your name if you would like feedback.

Contacting Us

We do not have an on-site office, and administrative staff work from home, usually after preschool hours. Email is the best way to reach us whenever you have registration, tuition, or other administrative questions.

Because the only on-site staff are our teachers and TA, it is important to keep phone calls and other distractions to a minimum. Therefore, the preschool has two phone lines:

- **425-255-9422** — This main line connects directly to a message service. If you have a registration, tuition or other administrative question and cannot email, you may use this number to leave a message. Messages are checked once a week, so please be patient for a return call.
- **425-255-3833** — This classroom line connects directly to the teachers. Use this line only when you need to speak to your child's teacher regarding pick-up, drop-off, illness, etc. *Please do not interrupt the teachers with administrative questions.*

A wallet-size card with the front door entry code and these phone numbers is included in your First Day Packet. Please keep this card with you so that you have the classroom line handy if you need to reach us in an emergency.

2011-2012 Staff Members

Administration:

Karen Short
Administrator
kshort@highlandspreschool.com

Elizabeth Dompier
Bookkeeper/TA
edompier@highlandspreschool.com

Teachers:

Melanie Gallagher
Preschool 1 Teacher
mgallagher@highlandspreschool.com

Linda Helt
Preschool 1 Head Teacher
lhelt@highlandspreschool.com

Shannon MacGillivray
Preschool 2 & 3 Teacher
smac@highlandspreschool.com

Kathee Rose
Preschool 1 & 2 Teacher
krose@highlandspreschool.com

Connie White
Preschool 2 Head Teacher
cwhite@highlandspreschool.com

2011-2012 Volunteer Board Officers

Katie Czerwinski
President
katie@highlandspreschool.com

Amy Ward
Vice President
award@highlandspreschool.com

highlands preschool



701 monroe ave ne
renton, wa 98056

Classrooms: 425-255-3833
message line: 425-255-9422
highlandspreschool.com