

2023-2024
parent handbook



highlands
preschool



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

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Welcome

The 2023-2024 school year celebrates Highlands Preschool's **70th year!** We look forward with great enthusiasm to another successful year, and we will enjoy sharing this preschool experience with you and your student.

Our History

Highlands Preschool Association, doing business as "Highlands Preschool," was organized in 1953 and originally leased space in Highlands Community Church. In 1967, the preschool was awarded nonprofit 501c3 status. The school moved in 1973 to share space with St. Andrew Presbyterian Church for another 30 years. In 2003, we settled into our current location at Community of Christ.

Our Preschool Today

Highlands Preschool is a unique organization unlike any other preschool in the area. We are both an independent private school and a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing a quality education to all. This is a unique combination for a preschool—independent of any parent organization, with education as our primary focus rather than religion or profit. This allows us to dedicate ourselves to giving preschoolers of all backgrounds a positive first learning experience to prepare them for kindergarten.

Nondiscrimination Policies

As a nonprofit, Highlands Preschool admits students of any race, creed, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, marital status, Vietnam era veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability, and grants equal rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. Highlands Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, marital status, Vietnam era veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, hardship fund and other school-administered programs.

Our Staff

MELANIE TOFTE



Pre-K Head Teacher

mtofte@highlandspreschool.com

Mrs. Tofte 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 Mrs. Tofte's 15th year teaching at Highlands Preschool.

SHANNON MACGILLIVRAY



Preschool/Early Threes Head Teacher

smac@highlandspreschool.com

"Mrs. Mac" has a Bachelor degree in Humanities and Liberal Studies from Western Washington University, trained with us, and has now taught at Highlands Preschool for 21 years.

KATIE CZERWINSKI



Extended Day Teacher

kczerwinski@highlandspreschool.com

Mrs. Czerwinski has a Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education from Louisiana Tech University and previously taught kindergarten in Louisiana and for the Renton School District. This is Mrs. Czerwinski's 12th year teaching with us.

GIZEL MATTHEWS



**Preschool & Pre-K Teacher,
Teacher Assistant**

gmatthews@highlandspreschool.com

Mrs. Matthews holds an Associate of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education from Renton Technical College, and a Montessori Teaching Certificate from Holy Cross Institute. Originally from Trinidad & Tobago, Mrs. Matthews taught Pre-K for six years at St. Gabriel's Early Learning Center there, and served as the school's Principal for another four years. We are thrilled to have her return for her third year at Highlands Preschool.

MAEVE GALLAGHER



Teacher Assistant

mwgallagher@highlandspreschool.com

Miss Maeve joins us for her third year as our Teacher Assistant (TA). Miss Maeve is a former Highlands Preschool graduate and will complete her Associate of Arts degree from Bellevue College this spring.

KAREN BECKMAN HOUSEHOLDER



Administrator

kbeckman@highlandspreschool.com

Miss Karen holds a Bachelor degree in Business Administration from the University of Washington with a concentration in Human Resource Management. This is Mrs. Beckman Householder's 23rd year with Highlands Preschool.

Our Board of Directors

Parents and guardians of enrolled students are automatically members of Highlands Preschool Association and comprise the total membership. Our volunteer Board of Directors governs the Association. The Board is similar to a PTA and is comprised of parent or guardian volunteers. If you are interested in being a volunteer, please contact the Board President or Miss Karen. Following are your Board officers:

- President: **Ashley Ridinger**
- Vice President: **Alesabet Haxby**
- Secretary: **Kathleen Blood**
- Treasurer: **Karen Beckman Householder**

Preparing for Preschool

- **Water bottle:** Please ensure your child has a no-spill refillable water bottle, labeled with your student's name, to bring to school each day.
- **Lunchbox:** Your child will need a small lunchbox each day with a nutritious snack. Our cubbies are small, so please use a lunchbox instead of a backpack.
- **Mask (optional):** If you would like your child to wear a mask at preschool, please ensure that they come wearing a mask that is comfortable but fits snugly and will not fall down during the day.

Attendance

- **Message Line:** 425-255-9422
- **Classroom Line:** 425-255-3833
- **Email:** kbeckman@highlandspreschool.com

Reporting Absences

State regulations prohibit us from allowing a student with any signs of illness to attend preschool. If your student shows any signs of illness or is unusually tired, please keep them home.

We are required to track attendance and know why a student is absent in order to report any potential COVID outbreaks (5 or more cases per core group) to the Department of Health. If your student is going to be absent for any reason, please either **send an email** or **call the Message Line** prior to the start of your child's class to leave a message with your student's name and the reason for their absence (including symptoms if ill). Please do this each day that they are absent:

Email: kbeckman@highlandspreschool.com
Message Line: 425-255-9422

Arrival

To ensure that we have a staff member ready to check you in and to minimize wait time for your student and others, please do not arrive any earlier than **5 minutes** before class time. If you arrive early for check-in, please remain in your car until your check-in time begins.

Please use only the front door (with the handicapped ramp) when arriving and exiting. All other doors remain locked from the outside, but are equipped with inside crash bars for emergency exit.

As you arrive, there is a key code door lock on the front door for security. Simply enter the door code provided on the Wallet Card in your first Day Packet to enter. (Additional cards are available on request.) After you enter, please proceed directly into the auditorium.

Check-In

As you enter the auditorium, proceed to the check-in table. You will enter your student's name on the check-in sheet for their class, the time of check-in, then print and sign your name to verify that your student shows no signs of illness.

Your student may then join their classmates, and we will direct them where to go. Students with downstairs classrooms will meet their teacher in the auditorium; students with main floor classrooms will meet their teacher in front of their classroom.

Please do not leave your child until they are with their teacher. Your student's teacher will lead the students to their cubby and assist them with putting away their belongings before starting class.

Once your student is with their teacher, you may exit the building. Only authorized personnel with proper background checks and accreditation may remain unsupervised on the premises.

Separation Anxiety

Whether preschool is a new experience for your student, or whether this is just a new class and new teacher, change can be difficult for a preschooler — and no change is 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 student 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 student.** Tell your student what to expect. Try practicing check-in at home! Your student may also pick out and bring a "lovey" (comfort item) from home—a stuffed animal, blanket, or other special item they can bring that will help them feel secure. Any comfort item brought from home will be kept in their private cubby, but your student may visit it if they are in need of it for comfort.
- **Make sure your student gets enough sleep and is healthy.** Most preschoolers need about 11 hours of sleep a night. If your student is tired or not feeling well, please keep them home and let us know.
- **Establish a ritual.** You might develop a short and simple routine saying to cue your student when it's time for them to go to their teacher, such as "Okay, see you later, alligator!" Consider practicing this parting at home.

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 student that you will come back, and always arrive on time for check-out.** 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 student you must leave. Our staff are experienced at dealing with any separation anxiety and are more effective at calming down your student once you are gone. Your student will slowly develop trust in their teacher to take care of them while you are away.
- **Don't sneak off.** Disappearing 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 student.** Never criticize your student's separation distress or scold them for it. Tell them that you understand their feelings, but don't let them dwell on their fears. Even if other parents may be watching, know that separation anxiety is a developmentally appropriate way for some preschoolers to

deal with their anxiety, and neither you or your student are doing anything wrong!

- **Know the crying will stop.** Most crying episodes last fewer than 10 minutes once you leave and stop altogether by the end of the second week. Your student 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 student has each day:

Appropriate Clothing

Dress your student 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 student in washable play clothes.

Students should wear non-slippery play shoes that they can be active in. Shoes should not have laces on them unless the student knows how to tie the laces themselves; otherwise, shoes should be slip-on or close with Velcro.

Masks are currently optional. If you would like your child to wear a mask at preschool, please ensure that they come wearing a mask that is comfortable but fits snugly and will not fall down during the day.

We will play outside as much as weather will permit. Please be sure to send your student each day with outerwear appropriate for the weather.

Please be sure to label all items that come to preschool with your student's name. This includes their mask, coat, hats, gloves, lovey, etc. Your student's teacher will need to be able to quickly identify which items go with which student.

Snacks and Water

There is a snack time during each class. We ask that your child bring a lunchbox each day with a nutritious snack. Please **do not send** the following:

- **Items that need refrigeration or heating:** Your child's lunch will not be refrigerated or heated, so be mindful that no food items will spoil.

- **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.
- **Any food containing nuts:** Due to the number of children who are highly allergic to nuts, and particularly peanut products, **Highlands Preschool is a nut-free school.**

Your child will not be allowed to eat these items, so please be sure that you send them with items that they can have.

All students should bring a spill-proof refillable water bottle, labeled with your student's name, filled with **water only**. Please do not send juice, milk or any drinks besides water. In addition to using their water bottle at snack time, they may also bring their water bottle with them to our Big Room and to the Playground.

Comfort Items from Home

Students may bring one comfort item ("lovey") from home if needed. Any comfort items brought from home will be kept in their cubby, where they can visit it whenever they need comfort. Please do not send your child to preschool with any other items from home, such as toys, without prior permission from your child's teacher.

Check-Out

Teachers will only release your student to a parent or other person listed in the Pick-up Authorization section of your Registration Form. If anyone else will be picking up your student (including another student's parent), you must notify the preschool by phone or email with that person's name and phone number. **Teachers will not release a student to an unauthorized person.** Preschool staff must ask for verification of identity if the person picking up is not known to them.

You may arrive up to **5 minutes** before your student's class dismisses. If you arrive early for check-out, please remain in your car until your check-out time begins.

Please use only the front door (with the handicapped ramp) when arriving and exiting. All other doors remain locked from the outside, but are equipped with inside crash bars for emergency exit.

As you arrive, there is a key code door lock on the front door for security. Simply enter the door code provided on the Wallet Card in your first Day Packet to enter.

(Additional cards are available on request.) After you enter, please proceed directly into the auditorium.

Check-Out Procedures

As you enter the auditorium, simply sign the check-in/out sheet on the same line as you checked in, noting the time of check-out. If your student's class has not yet arrived, please wait in the auditorium.

All classes will dismiss from the main floor near check-in/check-out. Please note that students must be seated before they can be dismissed to their parent/caregiver; your help in encouraging this is appreciated. This is to ensure your child's safety, so that the teacher can make sure that each child is with an authorized adult before exiting the building.

Early or Late Check-Out Policy

If you need to check out your student early or if you are going to be late arriving for check-out, please call the live **Classroom Line** and let us know.

Classroom Line: 425-255-3833 (use if you need to pick up early or if you are running late)

It is important that you be prompt in picking up your student. Not only does your student 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 student, so if you are late, two staff members must stay late to wait for you.

If a student is checked out late without notifying us, a fee of two dollars (\$2.00) per minute per student will be assessed, and a statement emailed to you. The fee goes directly to the two teachers to reimburse them for their time. However, exceptions may occasionally be made in emergency situations. **Please remember to call the Classroom Line if you are going to be late picking up your student.**

The teachers will follow these procedures when a student 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 911 to alert authorities if two hours has passed and no contact has been made with parents/guardians or anyone listed as an emergency contact.

Parking and Parking Lot

With staggered start times, parking in our lot should be available at all times. However, please follow our parking lot guidelines:

Allow adequate time to find a safe and legal parking spot.

Drive slowly and carefully in the parking lot and around the preschool at all times. Preschoolers can be difficult to see!

Park only in marked parking spaces in the parking lot. Make sure there are white lines on both sides of your car before you put it in park.

Park legally on the street if the parking lot is full. Remember that you must be 5 feet away from the end of a driveway and 30 feet away from a stop sign.

Avoid the orange cones in the parking lot. Do not ignore them or move them. They mark areas that are unacceptable for parking. For example, our mail carrier will not deliver our mail if the mailbox is blocked in any way.

Follow the arrows in the parking lot. Our parking lot goes around in a one-way counter-clockwise direction. Follow the proper direction when you are entering and exiting, even if it means that it will take you a little longer to park or to exit.

Park in the handicapped spaces only if you have a handicapped placard. We do have some families that need these spots.

Ensure that no student is left unsupervised in your car. If you have a sleeping child, take them with you or ask another parent to assist.

Health Policies

We have a comprehensive Health Policy which may be viewed online at www.highlandspreschool.com/documents/HealthPolicy.pdf, or you may ask to view a printed copy in the preschool office. Following are the important highlights for parents.

When to Stay Home

State regulations prohibit students from attending if they have any signs of illness. If you child shows any of the following symptoms, please keep them at home:

- *Fever (100.4°F) or chills*
- *Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing*
- *Muscle or body aches*
- *Loss of taste or smell*

- *Congestion or runny nose*
- *Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea*
- *Headache*
- *Fatigue*
- *Sore throat*
- *Cough*
- *Contagious conditions such as lice, scabies, etc.*

If your student has one or more of these symptoms, please keep them home and let us know. They may return if they test negative for COVID-19 or if they receive a different diagnosis from a health care provider, and they must have had no fever for 24 hours without medication and symptoms have improved.

If your student is not tested for COVID-19, they may return to preschool after 5 days since symptoms first appeared if they have had no fever with the past 24 hours without medication and symptoms have improved. A mask must be worn at preschool until day 10.

Authorization to Administer Medication

If your student needs an EpiPen, inhaler, Benadryl, or any other medication kept or administered at preschool, whether prescription or non-prescription, an authorization form is **required**. You will be provided with this form if you indicated on your registration that your child will need to take medication at preschool. All medication must be labeled and provided in the original container.

All medications are stored in a container inaccessible to students and away from heat, light, food, and sources of moisture or contamination. Medications are stored according to the specific manufacturer's or pharmacist's directions and in a manner to keep external medications separate from internal medications. All controlled substances are stored in a locked container.

If staff administer the authorized medication, you will receive a copy of a Medication Administration Report.

At the conclusion of preschool or your student's enrollment, any remaining medication should be picked up, or it will be destroyed within three working days after the student's last day. No medication will be returned via mail regardless of circumstance.

Emergency Health Care Plans

If your student has a life-threatening condition, Washington State law requires that a care plan, including medication orders, and the medication(s) are in place at

school before the student comes to school. Life-threatening conditions are defined as a health condition that will put the student in danger of death during the school day if a medication or treatment order and care plan are not in place. Contact the Administrator or your student's teacher to discuss these conditions before your student comes to school.

COVID Policies

Please be sure to **call our Message Line** to notify us if your student or a parent/caregiver has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or has been in close contact with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19. We will let you know what the current requirements are. This also helps us track if there is an outbreak (five or more cases in a core group).

Message Line: 425-255-9422

COVID Exposure with No Symptoms

Students and/or parents/caregivers that enter the building who have been **exposed** to a person with COVID-19 are required to follow these guidelines:

- Continue to attend/go to the preschool but test for COVID 3-5 days after exposure.
- If the test is negative, retest 24-48 hours after the first test.
- Wear a mask when indoors for 10 days after **last** exposure and monitor for symptoms.

COVID Exposure with Symptoms

Students and parents/caregivers that enter the building who **have any symptoms of COVID-19** are required to follow these guidelines:

- Stay home and test for COVID 3-5 days after exposure.
- If the test is negative, retest every 24-48 hours through at least 5 days after symptoms started.
- Wear a mask while sick or through 10 days after the **last** exposure, whichever is longer.
- Return to preschool when there has been no fever within the past 24 hours without medication and symptoms have improved.

Suspected Cases-Additional Preschool Procedures

If a student develops signs of COVID-19 while at preschool, such as a fever of 100.4 or higher, cough or shortness of breath, we will place that student in a room away from others, but supervised, until they can be picked up. Staff members that develop signs while at preschool will immediately go home.

Confirmed Cases

Students and/or parents/caregivers that enter the building who have **tested positive** for COVID-19 are required to stay home for at least **5 days**. They can return to preschool after 5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared if:

1. This is no fever within the past 24 hours (without medication) AND
2. Symptoms have improved AND
3. They wear a mask until 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

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 students 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 a supply of clean emergency clothes on hand. If a student becomes noticeably wet, the TA will offer the student a change of clothes and can assist the student with changing if needed. If the student becomes noticeably messy, or if the student does not want to change their clothes, we will call the parent or guardian to come and change them or take them home for the remainder of the day.

Pesticide Policy

We are dedicated to using the least amount of chemical control of pests in our program in order to provide the healthiest environment possible for our students. In order to control pests, we attempt to **prevent** any infestation by educating our staff on the following:

- Taking out trash daily, or more as needed
- Cleaning indoor trash cans regularly
- Keeping outdoor trash cans covered
- Keeping grounds clear of food and rubbish
- Cleaning and sanitizing all surfaces used for eating after meals
- Using and repairing window screens and door sweeps
- Monitoring pests

We also have pesticides applied monthly by a professional service to the outdoor landscape to control rodents, ants, and spiders. Application is made on a Friday afternoon, after school has adjourned, allowing more than 48 hours after application before any students or staff are on site. Should it become necessary to make an indoor or outdoor application with less than 48 hours before students or staff are on site, we will notify families and staff at least 48 hours before the application via email and post signs on the front door and on each classroom door. We do not store any pesticides in the building or on the grounds.

Safety Policies

Accidents and Injuries

Minor bumps and scrapes are an everyday part of young children exploring and learning through experience. We will call 911 and parents or emergency contacts will be notified in case of serious injury or medical emergency. All injuries sustained at preschool are reported to parents on an "Ouch Report," of which you will receive a copy.

Contact Information

It is essential that emergency notification information be on file at the school and that it be kept current. Contact the Administrator to update your emergency contact information if there are any changes. Be sure to designate other individuals who can be contacted in case of emergencies.

Pet Policy

We do not have any animals on site, and we do not allow any animal visitors at any time inside the building or on school grounds. If you bring a pet with you during check-in or check-out, the animal must stay securely in your car at all times.

Registered service animals being legitimately used by a person with a disability are allowed, as long as the animal's behavior does not pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others. The supervision and care of the service animal is the responsibility of the animal's owner.

Insurance Coverage

Enrolled students are covered by an accident insurance plan while on-site during regular school hours. If you need to make a claim, please contact the Administrator.

Disaster/Crisis Plan

We have a comprehensive Disaster/Crisis Plan which may be viewed online at www.highlandspreschool.com/documents/DisasterPlan.pdf, or you may ask to view a printed copy in the preschool office.

Emergency Drills

The staff is knowledgeable on procedures for fire drills, earthquake drills, lockdowns, and other situations that might require emergency action. We will routinely practice to prepare for emergency situations. Emergency supplies are also 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 (RSD) is late, closed, or on limited bus schedule, Highlands Preschool will be closed.

RSD information is provided on local radio and TV stations, posted at the top of the front page of the district's website at <https://www.rentonschools.us>, and posted on the district's Facebook and Twitter sites. Highlands Preschool will not normally send out notices about school closures. You may sign up for automatic school closure notifications on such sites as King5.com.

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. Adequate staff will stay until every child has been picked up.

Please always use your own best judgement. If we are open but you are uncomfortable driving in conditions near you, please feel free to stay home and just call the Message Line to let us know. Your student will never be penalized in any way for missing preschool.

Child Abuse Reporting Law Requirements

Preschool staff are required by Washington State law to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services any instance where there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation.

Preschool staff may not be able to notify parents when the police or Child Protective Services are called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, depending upon the recommendation of Child Protective Services.

Civility Policy

Highlands Preschool is committed to providing a positive, safe, and nurturing learning environment for your student. Our expectation is that RESPECT will be evident in the daily behaviors of all students, staff, and parents/guardians, and that each individual will take RESPONSIBILITY for their own behavior. Our focus will be to teach and model behaviors that are respectful, encourage students to be responsible for their choices, and to celebrate our successes.

Our Civility Policy serves as a guide for maintaining a culture of civility and respect for all. As adults, we can help create this culture by modeling respectful and ef-

fective communication strategies and problem solving to our children. In addition, the policy helps us to accomplish our goal of open communication between home and school. This policy applies to issues you may have with a preschool policy, a staff member, another parent or guardian, or another preschool student.

If an issue arises that you would like to address with a member of our learning community, the following steps will help ensure a positive interaction and help you to model appropriate social skills for your student:

- 1) Work out issues promptly.
- 2) Schedule an appointment with the person directly involved.
- 3) Choose an appropriate time and place for the meeting.
- 4) Present ideas in a respectful manner and remain open to the other person's point of view.
- 5) If the issue is not resolved, seek assistance from your student's teacher and/or the Administrator.

Parent/Guardian Expectations

As an extension of our Civility Policy and as a condition of your student's enrollment at Highlands Preschool, all parents/guardians, caregivers, relatives, friends, and all others who check your student in or out are responsible, and agree, to the following:

- Read and understand the policies in this handbook and follow them to the best of your ability without monitoring and reminding by preschool personnel.
- Be courteous and use appropriate language and actions with all students, staff, and other parents/guardians at all times, including via email, telephone, Facebook, or other social media.
- Approach no child other than your own regarding disputes or disagreements between students or adults at preschool.
- Take all questions, concerns or suggestions to a teacher or the Administrator, or use the indoor Drop Box as a Suggestion Box.

Behavior Management and Guidance

Preschool students are just developing social skills. An important part of our curriculum involves teaching appropriate personal and social behavior. Minor incidents like pushing, scratching, or pinching others are part of this learning process and are not unusual.

Indirect Guidance Techniques

We use indirect guidance techniques:

- We give advance notice: "You have five more minutes to play before it's time to clean up."
- We give choices: "You may paint with the other students or you may read a book in the quiet corner."

- We have a regular routine: "We always pick up toys after Big Room time. After Big Room is snack time."
- We avoid nagging: We tell the student what we expect just once, follow it by asking if the student remembers what we asked, and then offer to help the student do what was asked.
- We are consistent: We do things the same way each day so the students know what to expect and learn to trust and feel safe in their environment.

Direct Guidance Techniques

We also use direct guidance techniques:

- We use positive statements: "We use walking feet indoors" rather than "Don't run!" or "Use your words to tell us you're angry" rather than "Don't hit!"
- We get the student's attention by crouching down to his/her level, making eye contact, speaking quietly, and asking the student to repeat the directions.
- We try very hard to be fair. We examine our expectations to make sure they are age appropriate, and we don't make rules just because an activity is too noisy or messy.
- We avoid arguments by following through with solutions that address the problem, but also offer the student a way to exit gracefully from the problem: "You can choose a quiet place to calm down, or I can choose one for you."

Other Techniques

If a student is unable to demonstrate self-controlling behavior, a brief "time in" results for the student to regain control. "Time in" means that they are sitting with the teacher, not by themselves. This occurs only when other measures fail and is used as an opportunity for the student to regain self-control.

By law, and by program philosophy and policy, the following forms of discipline are forbidden: hitting, spanking, shaking, scolding, shaming, isolating, labeling ("bad," "naughty," etc.), or any other negative reaction to the student's behavior. All forms of corporal (physical) punishment are strictly forbidden on the premises by anyone, including parents (state law).

Some negative behavior is best ignored, since its goal is often to get attention. This technique can be used for some of the things students do, but would not be used with unsafe or hurtful behavior.

If a student is unable to gain control and requires extended one-on-one attention, the student may have to leave the preschool temporarily for safety's sake. Repeated uncontrollable behavior can lead to discontinuation of preschool enrollment; however, this is always a last resort.

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. Your student's teacher will also contact you to discuss any negative behavior patterns or concerns if needed.

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

Tuition/Financial Policies

Tax ID Number

The Highlands Preschool Federal Tax ID number is **91-6007727**. Please make a note of this number or bookmark this page for tax season. We are not able to respond to the many individual requests for this number.

Financial Agreement

A Financial Agreement was included in your registration packet or online registration. A copy will be provided in your student's First Day Packet. Be sure to keep this copy and refer to it if you have any tuition questions.

Yearly Tuition

Tuition is charged on an annual basis.

In-Person Yearly Tuition Rates (Sept. -June)	
2-Day (ThF) classes:	\$2,200
3-Day (MTW) classes:	\$2,500
5-Day (M-F) classes:	\$4,250
2-Day (ThF) Extended Day classes:	\$3,100
3-Day (MTW) Extended Day classes:	\$3,450
5-Day (M-F) Extended Day classes:	\$6,050
5-Day: 3-Day AM or PM + Extended Day:	\$5,600
5 Day: 3-Day Extended Day + 2-Day AM or PM:	\$5,650

Monthly Installments

As a courtesy, yearly tuition may be paid in ten equal monthly installments. These equal payments have nothing to do with either the number of days class is in session that month or how many days your student is absent. It is simply a payment on your yearly balance. (See below for monthly installments.) Families with two or more students enrolled receive a discount of \$5 per month, per student.

In-Person Monthly Installment Rates (Sept. -June)	
2-Day (ThF) classes:	\$220
3-Day (MTW) classes:	\$250
5-Day (M-F) classes:	\$425
2-Day (ThF) Extended Day classes:	\$310
3-Day (MTW) Extended Day classes:	\$345
5-Day (M-F) Extended Day classes:	\$605
5-Day: 3-Day AM or PM + Extended Day:	\$560
5 Day: 3-Day Extended Day + 2-Day AM or PM:	\$565

Making Payments

Monthly tuition installments are due by the 1st of each month.

You may pay tuition via PayPal from our website at www.highlandspreschool.com | **"Registration & Payments."** You may pay with any debit or credit card.

As a convenience to you, you may sign up for online Automatic Recurring Monthly Installment Payments, using any debit or credit card or a PayPal account. Just visit our website at www.highlandspreschool.com | **"Registration & Payments."** *Please be sure you start recurring monthly installment payments between the 1st and 10th of a month, as all subsequent payments will be processed on the same day of the month as the first payment and will be considered late if received after the 10th.* There is also an Unsubscribe button so you can cancel your automatic payments at any time.

Alternatively, you may write a check or money order. Please make checks payable to **Highlands Preschool** and **include your student's first and last name on the check**. You may place checks in the indoor drop 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.

Tuition for Extended Absences

If your student is going to miss an entire calendar month, you may pay half of that month's installment to hold your student's spot if you notify the Administrator at least two weeks prior to the 1st of that month.

Registration Payments

Registration/Supply Fee

A registration/supply fee of \$75 per student is payable within two weeks of registration and prior to your student's first day. The registration fee is not refundable and may not be waived. Only one registration fee is required per student per year.

Last Month's Tuition Installment Payment

Either the full yearly tuition or the last month's (June 2024) tuition installment is due within two weeks of registration and prior to your student's first day.

First Month's Tuition Installment Payment

The first month's tuition installment is due prior to or on your student's first day of class. If your student enrolls after the year has begun and starts on or after the 15th of a month, you will be responsible for half that month's tuition installment.

Late Payments

A late charge of **\$10** will be added to any tuition not received by the 10th of the month. A late notice will be sent after the 10th of any month if payment has not been received.

If payment is outstanding by the end of the month, your student will not be allowed to attend preschool unless other payment arrangements have been made with the Administrator.

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.

If a student's account is delinquent three (3) or more times in a school year, the financially responsible party for that account will be required to participate in Automatic Recurring Payment processing. If they do not, the student may face Compulsory Withdrawal.

Bounced Checks

A fee of **\$30** will be assessed for any checks returned for non-sufficient funds. We maintain the right not to accept this form of payment for the remainder of the year; alternative forms of payment, such as online payment or a cashier's check, may be used.

Withdrawal

You must submit a Withdrawal Form at least **two weeks** prior to your student's last day. Please contact the Administrator for a Withdrawal Form. If a form is not submitted, a half month's tuition installment will be due in addition to any outstanding tuition.

If your student's last day is before the 15th of the month and you have submitted a Withdrawal Form two weeks in advance, you are only responsible for half that month's tuition installment.

Refunds

The \$75 registration/supply fee is always non-refundable or transferable. The prepaid June 2024 tuition installment is fully refundable/transferable until **January 1, 2024**. A Withdrawal Form must be submitted and the student must stop attending by January 1, 2024 for a refund of prepaid tuition. Prepaid tuition is nonrefundable and not transferrable after January 1, 2024.

Tuition will not usually be refunded due to cancellation of classes (such as bad weather or power outages).

While we often process refunds quickly, ***please allow up to three weeks to process refunds.***

Communication and Assistance

You may contact the Administrator if you have any questions regarding tuition, if you are having difficulty paying, if your student will be absent for an extended period, or if you need to withdraw your student:

- **Karen Beckman Householder**, Administrator, 425-255-9422, kbeckman@highlandspreschool.com

Calendar and Special Events

The yearly preschool calendar usually runs for 41 weeks, starting the week of Labor Day and ending mid-June.

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.

Professional Teacher Days

The Renton School District calendar includes four Professional Teacher Days (PTDs); however, we will only take three of those. Our PTDs are marked on your yearly calendar. There will be **no school** on these days. Teachers will spend these days attending important trainings, such as CPR recertification, first aid training, or specific continuing education topics.

Missed Days

Any time that we miss a scheduled school day, such as due to weather or power outage, we will send a Distance Learning email out to all families due to attend that day. This robust email will keep your student engaged and learning while at home, while also avoiding lengthening the school year with in-person make-up days.

Fund Raiser Events

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 play-ground equipment, Big Room or classroom toys, and safety equipment.

In order to raise these funds, our volunteer Board of Directors will periodically hold fundraisers. While we would love to have 100% participation on every fundraiser and greatly appreciate it, you always have the choice. We do not require participation.

Celebrations

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

- Due to the number of severe food allergies in the school, in addition to our desire to promote healthy eating habits, **please do not bring in treats or any food items to share.** We'll keep everyone busy with super-fun activities and games. They'll never miss that sugar!
- Due to safety and allergy concerns, we ask that **no balloons** be brought to preschool.
- You are welcome to bring **"party" bags** to parties for each child if you wish. These may contain age-appropriate small toys such as Play-Doh, stickers, games, etc., but as always, **please no food/candy items—this includes Valentines!** Please put them in easy-to-carry, fully closing containers (like Ziploc bags) instead of bags that are open at the top. **NOTE: While our teachers try to be diligent, they cannot be responsible for the contents of parent-supplied party bags and valentines. Please do not send in food/candy, and be careful to check the contents of any such items sent home with your child, especially if your child has allergies.**
- Please drop off any party bags you are contributing at the check-in table when checking your child into class.

All classroom curriculum, art projects, lessons and activities are nondenominational and will not reflect any religious beliefs, although they may reflect cultural and holiday practices. Please speak with your student's teacher if you do not wish for your student to participate in any specific cultural or holiday practice. Your wishes will always be honored to the maximum extent possible.

Spirit Days

We will schedule some fun "Spirit Days" (dress-up days) during the year, such as Pajama Day, Sports Day, Superheroes and Princesses, or other fun themes. Spirit Days will be held in **October**, **January** and **April** and are marked on your yearly calendar. Preschool hours and routine are not affected, and your student does not have to participate if they are uncomfortable doing so.

2024-2025 Registration

Registration for next school year begins early in 2024. Some classes fill quickly, so be sure to mark your calendar now:

- Current Board members may start registering on **Thursday, January 11.**
- Returning families who currently have a student in the preschool, or have had previously, may start registering on **Tuesday, January 30.**
- New families may start registering on **Tuesday, February 6.**
- Registration is then conducted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Birthday

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.

You are welcome to bring **"party" bags** for each child if you wish. These may contain age-appropriate small toys such as Play-Doh, stickers, games, etc., but as always, **please no food/candy items!** Please put them in easy-to-carry, fully closing containers (like Ziploc bags) instead of bags that are open at the top. **NOTE: While our teachers try to be diligent, they cannot be responsible for the contents of parent-supplied party bags. Please do not send in food/candy, and be careful to check the contents of any such items sent home with your child, especially if your child has allergies.**

We encourage children to be sensitive to the feelings of others. Accordingly, we ask parents not to distribute

birthday or other party invitations at preschool, especially when not all children in a class are included.

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 "What's Happening" e-newsletter and calendar are emailed at the start of each month. This lists and explains all upcoming school-wide activities, important due dates, and more. **If you are not receiving our email newsletter, be sure to contact us.** All e-newsletters are also automatically posted to our website.

We post a printed copy of our monthly e-newsletter on the bulletin board near the front door and send home a paper copy of the monthly calendar and classroom news from your child's teacher.

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, or anyone else who needs to be aware of changes in our schedule or policies, sign up by following the link on the homepage of the preschool website, or by contacting Administrator Karen Beckman Householder at kbeckman@highlandspreschool.com. Links at the bottom of each email allow you to change your information or unsubscribe.

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, our calendar, information on special events, and this handbook.

Facebook

We have a private parent **Facebook group** at www.facebook.com/groups/highlandspreschool. This is a great place to stay connected, ask questions, receive event reminders, and more. If you're a Facebook user, be sure to join the group!

We also have a public **Facebook page** at www.facebook.com/highlandspreschoolrenton, where we post preschool and registration information for potential parents and the public.

Instagram

Our volunteers work with us to post fun photos of events, art projects, and more. Check us out at [@highlandspreschoolrentonwa](https://www.instagram.com/highlandspreschoolrentonwa/) (<https://www.instagram.com/highlandspreschoolrentonwa/>).

Text Message Alerts

We will occasionally send out text and/or phone message alerts for important news or due dates. These go to provided cell phones if permission was given on your student's registration form.

Online Privacy

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

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

We also ask you to follow the same guidelines when posting photos taken at preschool or preschool events that contain any children other than your own, particularly on social media. **Please do not post a photo that contains children for whom you do not have specific permission from their parents.** Many parents do not approve of their children's photos being posted online.

Languages

Highlands Preschool has a diverse population, with students 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. Please feel free to use our indoor Drop Box or outside mailbox to make suggestions or comments. You may submit your comments anonymously, or include your name if you would like feedback. You are also welcome to email the Administrator at any time.

Contacting Us

During preschool hours, please call the Classroom Line to speak directly with a staff member:

On-Site Classroom Line: 425-255-3833

Before or after preschool hours, or if you do not need to speak with a staff member directly, please call our message line to leave a message:

Message & Absence Reporting Line: 425-255-9422
Email: kbeckman@highlandspreschool.com

Speaking with Your Child's Teacher

We know that there are times when you may wish to speak with your child's teacher. If you have any questions or concerns that you would like to address with a teacher, you may do so in one of three ways:

1. **Email:** Simply email your student's teacher.
 - **Mrs. Tofte:**
mtofte@highlandspreschool.com
 - **Mrs. Czerwinski:**
kczerwinski@highlandspreschool.com
 - **Mrs. Mac:**
smac@highlandspreschool.com
 - **Mrs. Matthews:**
gmatthews@highlandspreschool.com
2. **Phone:** Call our Message Line to leave a message, and your student's teacher will return your call when they are available.
 - **Message Line:** 425-255-9422
3. **In Person:** Let your child's teacher know (by phone or email, or during check-in/check-out) if you would like to speak with them in-person, and they will meet with you privately after check-out is completed or at a mutually convenient time.