

Merryhill Preschool

Parent Handbook



Parent Acknowledgement

Student Name (Please Print)

Student Social Security #

Address _____

Phone # _____

This Parent Handbook was created to promote an understanding of the policies and procedures at Merryhill School.

The information in this Parent Handbook applies to all activities occurring on school grounds, school buses, and during any school related activity. It is important that parents and students are familiar with these expectations.

Please remove this page, sign it, and return it to the Principal. It will be added to your child's permanent file. Your signature means that you have received this Parent Handbook and understand the policies and procedures of Merryhill School.

I have read and understand the policies and procedures in the Merryhill Preschool Parent Handbook. I agree to abide by them as will my child(ren).

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

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1. PROGRAM GOALS

Merryhill School's Preschool Program is designed to respond to the increasing needs of families with young children. We strive to provide a loving, caring atmosphere that will foster each child's feeling of autonomy and positive self-image. The staff is selected on the basis of their ability to interact positively with young children, as well as for their educational and caregiver experience.

The warm and nurturing atmosphere in our classrooms is carefully created to stimulate the children in an appropriate developmental manner. They also provide opportunities for exploring, learning and social interaction through a variety of daily activities, including use of manipulatives that encourage hand-eye coordination, fine and gross motor skills and visual tracking.

Our major goal is to provide the necessary educational foundation for success when our students enter an elementary school program by:

- Providing an atmosphere in which children are encouraged to be productive and creative
- Developing an appreciation for education and a love of learning
- Educating the whole child – cognitively, emotionally, socially and physically
- Encouraging a positive self-concept and feeling of self-worth
- Developing fine and gross motor skills
- Teaching about safety and good health habits
- Providing a strong foundation for reading, writing, mathematics, social studies and science
- Providing an atmosphere in which a child feels secure and comfortable away from his/her family
- Developing the ability communicate effectively with others
- Developing a sense of responsibility and independence by teaching self-help skills and strengthening decision-making abilities
- Developing the ability work and play in groups, as well as independently, and promoting healthy relationships with peers and adults
- Developing awareness of different languages and cultures through the introduction of Spanish
- Understanding the importance of technology as a tool for learning

2. ADMISSION

Merryhill School is non-sectarian, private, independent and non-discriminatory. We believe in equal education, attention and care for all children without regard to race, color, religion, or ethnic origin.

3. REGISTRATION & PAYMENT

To be enrolled, a complete Applicant Information Form, Tuition Agreement, Immunization Record, and all other state required forms must be on file. This information must be kept current throughout your child's enrollment.

Please refer to the Tuition Agreement and Fee Schedule for payment policies, including policies for absence, late pick up and illness.

4. ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

It is very important that all students' emergency contact information be up-to-date. If you move or change any of your telephone numbers, please notify the office immediately. Also, please inform us if there are changes in the emergency telephone numbers of people to contact if you are not available.

5. SCHOOL DAY

Merryhill School is open and supervised daily during the stated hours of business, excluding the holidays observed during the year. Your child's schedule may vary from day to day based on his/her needs. The preschooler's morning schedule may include breakfast, free choice activities, circle time, language development/reading readiness activities, math readiness activities, learning centers, motor movement and other activities, such as Spanish and computers. The afternoon schedule may include activities such as art, cooking, language experience, stories, music, and learning centers. Rest time, snack time, lunch and outside activities are provided for all preschoolers during the course of the day.

6. STUDENT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

All children must be signed in and out daily by a parent or authorized representative when arriving and departing from school. No child will be released to anyone other than his/her parent without prior written authorization from the parent.

7. STAFFING

Our teacher qualifications meet or exceed all state requirements for licensed early childhood facilities, and we adhere to the established child/teacher ratios. Our teachers are hired according to their education and experience in the field of early childhood education.

Our teachers and educational specialists continue to seek professional growth experiences either by continuing their formal education, by attending teacher professional development activities or through other professional enhancement activities. They are caring, nurturing individuals whose goal is to develop the whole child.

8. CLASS PLACEMENT

We support the development of the whole child and of individuality among children. It is expected, therefore, that the rate and pattern of development in young children will vary as they grow and develop.

Merryhill School teachers adapt their instruction to each child's learning ability. Children are placed according to developmental progress and may continue in a placement or repeat that placement if their developmental needs warrant such a decision. Appropriate continuation procedures and forms are used when recommending that a child repeat a program level and decisions are discussed with parents.

Children may enroll in our kindergarten if they will be five years old on or before September 1 of the year in which they are to enroll. If there is a question as to the student's kindergarten readiness, then the student may be assessed using the Metropolitan Kindergarten Readiness Test. If the child turns five years old between September 2 and October 31, then he/she must be assessed on the Metropolitan Kindergarten Readiness Test and score at or above the 80th percentile on all subtests. In no instance will a child be considered for kindergarten enrollment if he/she turns five after October 31st.

9. DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

A. Classroom Behavior

Our approach to discipline and behavior management is to solve behavior concerns using modeling, redirection, and positive reinforcement. We let children know the rules of their classroom and what is expected of them. We reinforce positive behavior through attention, praise and recognition. Circle time and other group meetings are used as a time for children to hear praise for themselves and others, to plan activities together, and to discuss class concerns and goals for desired behavior.

When needed for older children, we use “think time” as a tool to improve behavior. We discuss the behavior of concern with the child, set a plan of action, and give the child in-class “think time.” The purpose of “think time” is to give the child an opportunity away from the group to think about his/her behavior and plan with the teacher how to regain control of that behavior.

When necessary, we work with parents to resolve behavior issues. If the behavior concern cannot be resolved, we reserve the right to dismiss or suspend a child for unsatisfactory behavior.

B. Rules for Behavior on School Vehicles

Please review and discuss with your child the following rules for travel on school vehicles.

- Passengers will remain seated at all times, facing the front of the vehicle and wearing seat belts.
- No eating or drinking is permitted on the vehicle.
- Excessively loud, noisy or distracting behavior is not permitted.
- Fighting or pushing of any kind is forbidden.
- Parents are responsible for their child’s behavior while on school vehicles.

- Dangerous objects of any kind will not be allowed on a van.
- Each student is responsible for his or her belongings on a van.
- The driver must be notified if a child suffers from motion sickness.
- Doors shall be opened and closed only by the driver or by another designated adult.
- Children may not extend any part of their body through the vehicle windows.

10. HEALTH AND SAFETY

A. General

All students are required to have updated immunization and health forms as required by state law on file. These health forms must be submitted prior to the start of school each year. Parents must notify us in writing if their child has allergies of any kind.

Staff members are trained in first aid and CPR and can tend to everyday bumps and bruises. If a child has an accident or incident during the day, the appropriate form will be filed and sent home for the parent's notice. For any serious accident or incident, we will attempt to notify parents by telephone.

In the event of a serious emergency, the school will secure immediate medical attention as described on the "Authorization for Medical Treatment" section of the child's Tuition Agreement form filed in the school office. Every effort will be made to contact parents, guardians, or authorized family members or friends.

The annual registration fee includes the cost of student accident insurance. If an accident does occur at school and medical treatment is necessary, please see your Principal for information regarding the process of submitting a claim to the insurance company.

B. Sick Policy

The purpose of our sick policy is to reduce the spread of illness among children and to encourage full recuperation of sick children before they return to school. We depend on parents to assist us in maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all of our children.

We reserve the right to send home any student who shows signs of illness at school. Any student who becomes ill at school will be made comfortable until his/her parent can be notified and the student is picked up from school. A parent must pick up the ill child within one hour of notification.

A sick child must stay home where he/she is most relaxed and comfortable. Children may be sent home if they have any specific symptoms as listed below. In addition, a child must be free of all of these specified symptoms for at least 24 hours before he/she can be returned to school. These symptoms are as follows:

- A fever of 100 degrees or more
- Vomiting within the previous 24-hour period
- Diarrhea within the previous 24-hour period (including recurring episodes of diarrhea at school)
- A heavy nasal discharge indicative of infection
- A constant cough or sore throat
- Fussy, cranky behavior and generally not himself/herself
- A skin rash, excluding diaper rash
- Head lice
- Symptoms of a communicable disease

Following an illness, a child may return to school once he/she has either been seen by a doctor or it has been determined that the illness is not contagious. (A doctor's clearance may be requested.)

C. Medication

The following rules apply in order for Merryhill School staff to administer medications to children:

- A medication release form signed by the parent/guardian must accompany the medication. The form must specify the dosage to be administered, the time to be administered, and the length of time that the child is expected to be on the medication.
- If a medication is to be administered for longer than 10 days, we require a physician's signature on the appropriate medication form.
- Written authorization from the parent or guardian is also required in order for us to apply topical products, such as diaper ointment or sunscreen.
- Medication must be in the original container and prescription medication clearly labeled with the full pharmacy label.
- Medication must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name, the name of the medication and the directions for use.
- Prescription medication shall be used only for the child named on the label.
- Medication is not allowed in cubbies or book bags.
- The school cannot administer medicines or perform procedures requiring specific skills or prior medical training.

D. Fire and Other Safety Drills

As required by law, the school will hold regular fire and safety drills. It is expected that all students on the campus at the time of such drills will participate fully. At times, these drills may take place in inclement weather. All attempts will be made to assure that children are properly attired at such times. Should you find yourself on campus while a drill is taking place, please participate with your child. Please take time to review and discuss the importance of such drills with your child and to be sure that he or she knows the routines.

E. Rules for Vehicles While On School Grounds

Because the safety of our children is of paramount concern to us, we require all parents to adhere to the following rules of the road while on campus:

- There is a 5 miles per hour speed limit at all times while on school property.
- Park in designated parking spaces only.
- While on school grounds, pedestrians always have the right of way.
- Vehicle ignitions MUST be turned off, and the keys removed, while parked on school grounds.
- Children may NOT be left unattended in a vehicle at any time or for any reason.

Violations of these rules may result in a warning. If a violation is serious, or if violations continue, school personnel are authorized to take a tag number for a report to the local police.

11. FOOD SERVICE AND NUTRITION

We offer children nutritious mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks. Many of our schools also offer a quality lunch. Menus are posted for parents to review. Our menu conforms to all state nutrition guidelines. Food exceptions cannot be made except in the case of allergy or religious constraints. Parents are asked to see that children do not bring food into the school (except for special treats to be shared with all children in the class).

12. PERSONAL BELONGINGS / CLOTHING

While at school, children are asked to wear comfortable, washable clothing. They should also have outerwear that is suited to the weather in order to allow for outdoor play. Please furnish a labeled bag with an *entire* change of clothing (including socks) for your child, to be kept at school for emergencies. Please bring *two* entire changes of clothes for infants and toddlers.

All sweaters, hats, coats, mittens, boots, etc. must be labeled with the child's name. For safety reasons, clogs, sandals, open-toe and slick-soled shoes may not be worn.

Children are encouraged to bring a favorite blanket or stuffed animal for use at naptime. These items will be stored in your child's cubby until rest time.

Please keep in mind that cubby space is limited, thus small blankets are recommended.

Candy, gum, war toys, toy weapons, jewelry and money are not allowed at school. Toys should be sent only on designated share days. Please be sure your child does not put any of these items in his/her pockets or book bag.

13. BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are important to children, and they enjoy sharing them with their friends at school. We normally celebrate children's birthdays at snack time. Parents are welcome to attend. Please notify your child's teacher or Principal if you plan to bring a snack for your child's special day. Parents may bring only commercially prepared foods for birthday or holiday celebrations.

Teaching staff is not to be responsible for distributing party invitations. We urge you to mail them or distribute them outside of the school to avoid hurt feelings among the uninvited.

A popular way to celebrate birthdays is with a new book donation to the school library. A bookplate is placed in the donated book with the child's name and birth date, and the book is put into circulation for all students to enjoy. Your Principal may suggest titles for donations, if you prefer.

14. PARENT INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION

A. Parent Involvement

Merryhill School has varying opportunities for participation, such as donating time or treats for parties, accompanying field trips, etc. We encourage participation and volunteering. You are welcome to visit and observe our schools in operation at any time.

The school schedules a variety of events which may include Back to School Night, Fall Festival, Spring Flings, etc. Special events and reminders will be publicized by newsletters and other forms of communication well ahead of time. Parents will also be asked to participate in parent teacher conferences periodically throughout the year to discuss their child's progress.

Your continued support is essential in creating a positive learning atmosphere for your child.

B. Parent Communication

Merryhill School encourages the establishment of open channels for the parents or legal guardians of the children in the school to communicate with the school. Parents or legal guardians not subject to a restriction (such as a court order) are able to interact with their child's teacher, and other staff members involved with their children, on a regular, daily basis during the school's normal hours of operation (subject to any applicable procedures of the school, such as those relating to security, or those imposed by the school to ensure the effectiveness of teaching and classroom management).

In addition, parents or guardians are able to interact with their child's principal on a regular basis, and can make an appointment to meet with their child's principal (or, on an as-needed basis, the Executive Director to whom such principal reports) at a mutually convenient time. If these parents or guardians believe that they have not been able to communicate successfully with the foregoing individuals, they are also able to communicate with the Divisional Vice President or Regional Manager for the school, on an as-needed basis. Finally, if these parents or guardians believe that they have not been able to communicate successfully with the Divisional Vice President or Regional Manager for the school, they are able to communicate with the Chief Operating Officer of Nobel Learning Communities, Inc., the owner of Merryhill School, also on an as-needed basis.