

Parent Handbook



7612 Wanyamala Road, Henrico, Virginia 23229

Phone: 804-288-3887

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Director: Jackie Allgood

Our Mission is to provide children, between the ages of 2½ years old through Pre-Kindergarten, a safe, developmentally appropriate, nurturing environment to promote social, emotional, and academic growth, as well as a positive self-image and love of learning.

HILLTOP PRESCHOOL

Since 1988, Hilltop Preschool has been serving the community alongside West Richmond Church of the Brethren. Hilltop enjoys a wonderful reputation within the Richmond Community and continually strives to offer the best educational and loving preschool experience for the children in the community we serve. Hilltop Preschool is tucked away on several acres of land in a quiet residential neighborhood. This location affords a safe and enjoyable outdoor experience for the children and their classmates.

Hilltop believes the preschool years are critical in the process of laying the foundation for continuing personal, social, physical, spiritual and intellectual development. We also believe a well-rounded preschool experience is important in readying children for a lifetime of success.

The Director, under the guidance of the Preschool Board, coordinates the school. The Board consists of church members, a treasurer, and the Director. Maximum school enrollment capacity is 70 children.

STAFF

Hilltop Preschool is a member of the Association For Early Learning Leaders.

The teaching staff is selected on the basis of their educational background, as well as their personality, love for children and ability to work effectively with children.

All preschool staff member is screened, clears background and fingerprint checks, and exhibits the following: good character and reputation, good health, good communication skills in working with children and their families, and knowledge of the developmental needs of young children. Staff is CPR/First Aid Certified, and participates in Early Childhood Continuing Education throughout the year, as well as monthly staff meetings/learning sessions.

Classes are comprised of a Lead Teacher and Assistant Teacher or Floating Assistant Teacher. Class ratios may be 1:10 or less.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Hilltop Preschool maintains an open admissions policy provided there is space in the classroom for that child's age group. We accept children between the ages of 2½ years old through five based on their age **as of September 30th**. Children who are 2½ years old do not have to be potty-trained. All other students must be potty-trained and independently toileting.

We reserve the right to deny or terminate enrollment to any child who would not benefit from our program, for lack of payment, or for not returning all proper forms.

Hilltop Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, disability, orientation, or national and ethnic origin in any of its educational programs, admissions, or general policies.

CLASSROOM PLACEMENT

The director, in conjunction with the teacher and/or parents, may make exceptions for class placement based on the individual needs of the child. Placement in classes is subject to change after enrollment if it is determined that a child meets the developmental criteria to move up or down to another class before the next school year. Final placement is at the discretion of the Director.

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WAITING LIST

Once classes are filled, Hilltop will maintain a waiting list for families interested in new vacancies.

REGISTRATION AND TUITION FEES

A completed registration form and fee is required. The amount is \$100.00 and is non-refundable. The registration fee holds a place for your child for the school year. School year is defined as September through May.

Proof of identification (official birth certificate or passport, not photocopies) must be viewed by the Director before school begins.

Several forms will need to be completed before school begins. These forms include a State Health (Doctor) Form, an Emergency Care form, carpool form, and contract agreement.

The first tuition payment is due on or before August 1st. This will include September's tuition plus one month's deposit that will be applied to May's tuition at the end of the school year. This deposit will be applied to May only and will not be applied to any other month, nor is it refundable. All tuition paid is non-refundable.

Tuition payment options include annual, biannual, and monthly.

There are no refunds for vacation days, sick days, or closings due to inclement weather.

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the Director immediately if the tuition obligation is unable to be met by the due date. Failure to meet this obligation could result in your child/children being withdrawn from the school until such time as this obligation is met.

Hilltop currently accepts cash or checks. It is preferred that cash be the exact amount due as we do not keep change in the office.

Checks should be made out to Hilltop Preschool. Payments may also be set up on EASYPAY/BILLPAY with your bank. Payments should be mailed to: 7612 Wanyama Road, Henrico, VA 23229 ATTN: HILLTOP PRESCHOOL.

The current returned check fee charged by all banks involved will be passed along to the payer. This fee plus the tuition due must be paid before children can return to class.

Only cash or money order will be accepted after the 2nd occurrence.

A LATE FEE of \$20 will be charged after the 5th of the month. If tuition is not received by the 8th of the month, the student will not be able to attend school until tuition and late fees are paid. Student's enrollment may also be forfeited if fees are not paid by the 10th day of the month.

If you are out of town (brief or extended), or your child is ill, you will need to mail the tuition to avoid the late fee or forfeiture of enrollment.

WITHDRAWAL

Enrollment is for the entire school year. If withdrawal is necessary, a written statement needs to be received at least one month prior to your child's last day at school so that vacancies may be filled.

Refunds will not be issued for the tuition payments already paid regardless of the length of time that the child has attended, or for reasons of moving or job transfer.

A refund **may** be made if:

- Withdrawal is recommended by a physician
- It is determined that all reasonable efforts have been made and the preschool is unable to meet the child's and/or parent's needs. This decision must ultimately be approved by the Director and/or Preschool Board.

SCHOOL OPERATING PROCEDURES

The school hours are 8:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Car pool arrival will begin at 8:30 a.m. and run until 8:45 a.m.

If you arrive after 8:45, you will need to park and walk you child to the preschool entrance around the side of the building.

Dismissal will begin at 12:00 and run until 12:15. If you arrive after 12:15, you will need to pick your child up in the Director's office.

There is a late pick-up fee beginning at 12:16 p.m (according to cell phone or computer time)

Late fees are: 12:16-12:25 p.m. = \$10 Late Fee

12:26-12:30 p.m. = \$15 Late Fee

After 12:30 p.m. = \$15 Late Fee + \$2.00 per minute.

If we are unable to reach you, the emergency contact will be called. If the child is not picked up by 12:45 p.m., the Police Dept. and/or Social Services may be called as a last resort, as deemed necessary by school staff.

If there are repeated late pickups, you will be charged a fee of \$15 for each ten minutes you are late, and your child may be expelled from the program.

If you know you will be late picking up your child, please call the preschool at (804) 288-3887. Since we are conducting carpool, it may be necessary for you to leave a message. If you have an emergency and must speak with someone immediately, you may try the church office at 804-288-6439.

CAR POOL

For ease of transition, it is preferred that all classes participate in carpool, but not mandatory.

Please advise your teacher if you will be carpooling with other families.

Both the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up take place in the paved parking lot.

When stopping to drop off or pick up your child, your child needs to be accessible on the sidewalk side of the car. Parents should stay in the car.

After picking up your child, please pull into a parking spot to buckle your child into his/her car seat. This will keep our line flowing.

If you are running late in the morning, please park your car and walk your child to the preschool door under the brick archway on the side of the building. You will need to knock on the door and a staff member will greet you and escort your child to their classroom.

There could be times when the church has programs going on that necessitate Hilltop to be flexible in its carpool routine.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

We will follow the Henrico County Public School (HCPS) system for most holiday closings and inclement weather closings or delays.

Parents need to stay informed of HCPS closings, or log onto their website.

Closings will also be posted on local news channels: WWBT Channel 12, WRIC Channel 8, or WTVR Channel 6.

If HCPS has a **delayed opening** of one or two hours, Hilltop will have a delayed opening of one hour and will open at 9:30 a.m. Drop-off carpool will run from 9:30-9:45 a.m. Pick-up carpool will remain 12:00-12:15 p.m.

If HCPS is closed for inclement weather, Hilltop will also be closed.

Missed days due to school closings are beyond our control and may not be made up, nor is a refund given. The Director may make efforts to recapture missed snow days after 5 whole days are missed. Late openings do not constitute a missed day.

DAILY SUPPLIES

Each child is asked to bring a tote bag or back pack to school each day. Please label bags with your child's name for easy identification.

A folder will be placed in your child's tote bag at the beginning of the year. This folder will be used for communication purposes. **Please check and empty your child's folder each night.** You may use the folder to send in notes and tuition payments paid by check.

CLOTHES

Dress your child in clothing that is comfortable for active work and play, inside as well as outside. Closed-toe shoes are preferable.

No flip flops or sandals, please. Some of our activities are messy so clothes should be washable. Please be mindful of sending your child in pants that are easy up and down for independent toileting. Belts, overalls, suspenders, and onesies cause frustration in children trying to be independent.

Please label all coats, jackets, and hats with your child's name. Please do not send scarves as they pose a choking hazard on the playground. Though mittens are preferred, gloves are ok IF your child can independently put them on and off.

Children should have a change of clothes that can stay at school, including underwear and socks. Please put them in the provided labeled Ziploc Bag. These items should change seasonally.

Non-toilet trained children should have a supply of wipes, pull-ups, and non-latex gloves that will remain at school. If the supply runs low, the teacher may ask you to replenish it.

SNACKS

Each child must bring a nutritious/nut free snack and drink each day.

Please pack the snack in a spill proof container that your child can open themselves or with minimal help.

Drinks should come in a closing kid-friendly bottle. Containers and drinks must be labeled with your child's name. Also, do not send snack that needs to be refrigerated or heated. Please cut up fruits, including grapes.

We will help children peel bananas. Fruit cups with syrup are discouraged, unless the juice is drained already. Fruit in Jello is ok.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS/JEWELRY

Please refrain from sending your child in valued jewelry that may get lost. All personal belongings should be marked with the child's name. Children are not to bring personal toys to Preschool unless asked to do so by their teacher. Though we make every effort to keep all items safe, Hilltop is not responsible for lost items.

PARENTS' INVOLVEMENT AT HILLTOP

There will be many opportunities for parents to get involved in their children's education:

- Parent-school communication, Parents may use daily folders for notes to and from the teacher or the Director. Each teacher will also communicate via their own email account.
- Joining your child in the several opportunities throughout the year to come in to school for specials performances, programs, and parties that are offered.
- We thank you for your help with your children learning at home, which occurs when parents reinforce classroom activities and behavior.

Parents are always welcome in the classroom. Visits may be arranged in advance with the Director and/or Teacher. Visitors must first report to the Preschool office. Due to our small classroom size, we must ask you to please leave siblings at home unless you are attending a family event.

COMMUNICATION

Parents are expected to send in a written note or email informing us when there will be a change in their child's schedule.

We welcome parents to feel free to discuss concerns or questions with the Director or their child's teacher. Parents are encouraged to call, send a note, or email the appropriate staff with questions or concerns. Please keep all discussions between the Director and teacher in confidence of the child and other adults.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS/CONFERENCES

A written evaluation of your child's adjustment to school will be sent home in the fall. Conferences will be held at a parent's or teacher's request.

An additional evaluation of your child's progress during the school year will be sent home in the spring toward the end of the year.

Conferences may be scheduled at the request of either teachers or parents any time during the school year.

ILLNESS

Staff members may not administer medication to your child. This includes cough drops.

Do not send your child to school when he/she has a bad cold or infectious disease.

If a child appears to be sick or contagious, a parent will be called and asked to take their child home.

Please cooperate by keeping your child home:

- for a fever, cough, sore throat, earache, rash, and nasal discharge, or eyes are inflamed. If your child has vomited or had diarrhea in the previous 24 hours.
- when a constant cough is present.
- when there are symptoms of a communicable disease.

Children who show signs of discomfort/illness will be sent home in consideration of others.

Children who have had a fever should remain at home for 24 hours after the temperature has returned to normal.

Please call Hilltop if your child has a contagious disease so other parents may be notified to look for similar symptoms.

HEALTH AND FIRST AID

Hilltop takes extreme care and all precautions to prevent any injuries of the children at the school, but at times, accidents do happen. In the event of an accident or emergency situation, routine first aid will be administered when needed. If first aid is necessary (other than a hug and/or band aid), an accident report will be filed and given to the parents to sign at the end of the day. In case of a major emergency, the staff will notify the parents, 911 may be called, and emergency contact called and/or child's doctor on file, if the parents are not able to be reached.

FIELD TRIPS

Hilltop will not be taking children off the premises for field trips. Instead, we will invite various guests to our facility to entertain and educate the children throughout the school year. Some of the things planned during the year may include: Halloween Dress-Up Party and Parade, Petting Zoo, Henrico County Firetruck and Fire Fighter visit, School Bus Tour and Learn (for rising Kindergartners), Easter Egg Hunt, VDOT Touch-A-Truck, "Pastries with Parents," Valentine's Breakfast, Christmas Class Party and Cookie Decorating, etc.

CELEBRATIONS AND PARTIES

Several celebrations, programs, and parties will be held during the school year. Your child's teacher may send home a note asking for a food or paper item to be contributed. Please also send in your child's regular snack on these days. All food brought into the school must be either be prepackaged or prepared in an inspected kitchen.

Birthdays are a fun and exciting time for children and may be celebrated at school. Children may bring a treat to share with the class. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher in advance, and ask if there are any food allergies among the classmates.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Hilltop Preschool staff are receivers of shared confidences both from children and their parents. Our program is committed to protecting the rights and privacy of the children, their families, and our staff.

Privacy will be maintained in both verbal and written communication in accordance with the ethical principles of professional behavior in the preschool setting. The identity of children and their families will be revealed only in the cases of professional necessity such as in child abuse or neglect, developmental records and special family circumstances.

Confidentiality will always be retained unless the Director determines plausible danger or risk exists for the child, staff or program. In such cases, the appropriate personnel or agency may be contacted and be done without the parents' knowledge as required by law.

STAFF

All staff undergoes extensive background checks through fingerprinting, State Police checks, and Department of Social Services screening.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Hilltop Preschool utilizes existing classrooms in the church building, Monday through Friday. The sanctuary is used for performances and meetings. The gathering room is used for special programs and occasions, as well as Music and Movement Class.

The playground is adjacent to the church building and is equipped with age appropriate equipment.

Indoor areas are comfortably controlled by central heating and air conditioning. Annual inspections are made by fire and health inspectors.

INSURANCE

Hilltop Preschool is covered by a policy from Church Mutual Insurance Company. The policy limits meet all required statutes.

COMPLIANCE

Hilltop Preschool is an Exempt Child Day Center in accordance with the Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1716. We are regulated and licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services, and are in compliance with the standards set forth in the Code. We are regularly inspected by both the Health Department, and the Fire Marshal to meet all of their standards.