



# PARENT HANDBOOK

## **Table of Contents**

<b>LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES</b>	3
<b>LETTER FROM THE TEACHER</b>	4
<b>NAME/SPONSORSHIP</b>	5
<b>PURPOSE/MISSION STATEMENT</b>	5
<b>SAFETY</b>	5
<b>GOALS</b>	5
<b>ENROLLMENT POLICY</b>	5
<b>REGISTRATION FEE</b>	6
<b>REFUNDS AND WITHDRAWALS</b>	7
<b>CURRICULUM</b>	7
<b>ARRIVAL</b>	8
<b>DISMISSAL</b>	8
<b>OVERTIME CHARGES</b>	8
<b>PICK-UP AUTHORIZATION</b>	9
<b>FIELD TRIPS/FAMILY EVENTS</b>	9
<b>DISCIPLINE</b>	9
<b>NUTRITION AND SNACKS</b>	10
<b>TOYS FROM HOME</b>	10
<b>SPECIAL PERSON DAYS</b>	10
<b>SHARING BOX</b>	10
<b>HOLIDAYS AND SNOW DAYS</b>	11
<b>WHAT TO WEAR</b>	11
<b>PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES</b>	11
<b>WORSHIP</b>	11
<b>WAYS WE CAN HELP</b>	12
<b>IMMUNIZATION AND ILLNESS</b>	12
<b>MEDICAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN</b>	13
<b>EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN</b>	13
<b>COMMUNICATION IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY</b>	13
<b>FIRE RESPONSE PLAN</b>	14
<b>EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE PLAN</b>	14
<b>INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES</b>	14
<b>IN CLOSING</b>	15

## **LETTER FROM YOUR PRESCHOOL TEAM**

Dear Parents,

Thank you for choosing Harbor Covenant Preschool for your child's education. We are a ministry of Harbor Covenant Church. We are pleased to offer a quality Christian preschool where we will integrate physical, spiritual, intellectual and social facets of a child's development in an engaging and age appropriate way. We are excited to nurture and encourage your children's natural curiosity in an engaging and developmentally stimulating environment. Our mission & vision were established in 2018 by Jessica Bauml, former Children's Director.

Preschool children are at a very exciting age. Their little minds are sponges, absorbing the world around them. We want to take advantage of this and teach them solid Christian values while nurturing their self-confidence and natural exuberance. We want kids to be excited about school and graduate with the knowledge that God made them, God loves them and Jesus wants to be their friend.

We welcome you and your child into this program at Harbor Covenant Preschool. We are pleased that you have entrusted your child to us for the coming school year. We hope you will feel free to be an active part of your child's early education during his/her time here.

Read through this handbook as well as all the supplemental notes that will be sent to you during the school year. Please reach out to Nicole Pasin, Director of Administration if you have any questions.

In His Service,

The Preschool Team  
Terrie Dignam, Lead Preschool Teacher  
Amy Wright, Assistant Preschool Teacher  
Nicole Pasin, Director of Administration

## LETTER FROM THE TEACHER

Welcome,

I am so glad that you have decided to join us at Harbor Covenant Preschool! I look forward to serving your family and have a great year planned for your child. I have almost 30 years of teaching young children. I began teaching the 18-24 month class through Highline College, taught at Rainbow's End Cooperative Preschool and spent 12 years at Gig Harbor Cooperative Preschool. I've taught from 18 months up to five-year-old pre-K students. I love working with young children and helping them discover the way that they naturally learn best. I find them to be creative, inquisitive and fun!

It is an exciting time in the Peninsula School District with a renewed focus and interest in the development and learning that takes place from birth to age five. I am a founding member of the Peninsula Early Learning Coalition, a collaborative group of early childhood educators, administrators, kindergarten teachers and service providers working together to strengthen, increase awareness of, and improve the overall skill sets of the children within the community. A good, solid foundation and broad skill set learned early on, with time in a classroom to practice, can make all the difference for those children entering Kindergarten. I am very invested in each individual child and delight in watching them grow, learn and discover the world around them.

I was born and raised in Northern California but have loved living in the Pacific Northwest for over 30 years now! There is always so much to see and do. My husband Jim, and I have so enjoyed raising our children on Fox Island. We have a daughter Courtney and two sons, Josh and Dylan. Just as I encourage them to seek new adventures, I look forward with faith, to this new year of adventures!

Blessings to you all,

Terrie Dignam  
Lead Teacher

## **NAME/SPONSORSHIP**

The name of this organization is Harbor Covenant Preschool. It is a non-profit organization through Harbor Covenant Church. No part of its earnings benefit any member or individual. All funds earned by the school are reinvested in the school. The school is under the jurisdiction of the Harbor Covenant Church, part of the Evangelical Covenant Church. The preschool is overseen by a ministry team of Harbor Covenant.

## **PURPOSE/MISSION STATEMENT**

Harbor Covenant Preschool is an exciting, safe, engaging place to learn and make friends in a Christian context. Children will grow socially and flourish in a learning environment that will prepare them for their elementary education.

## **SAFETY**

Our top priority is for kids to have a safe and secure learning environment. We accomplish this by providing a dedicated space for kids. We start with secure, locked entry doors that lead into our classroom which has a dedicated preschool bathroom. We also have a fenced outdoor play area. All staff and volunteers are background-checked and trained in abuse prevention. We follow the two person rule at all times; at no time is a child alone with an adult.

## **GOALS**

Our goal is to develop each child physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually by instilling in them a value system consistent with the word of God. We strive to have a caring and safe environment in which each child has the freedom to explore and grow under the encouragement and acceptance of the staff. We will work together to help the children achieve their best by building self-confidence and trust in God. We acknowledge that all children are unique and realize that we can all learn from one another.

Learning new things is fun and exciting. We are pleased to play an important role in your child's early education. It is our hope, with Christ as our guide, that we can make a difference for children, church and community.

## **ENROLLMENT POLICY**

- A child must be at least 3 years-old by August 31 of the year they are enrolled in the 3's, 3-day preschool class.
- A child must be at least 4 years-old by August 31 of the year they are enrolled in the 4/5's, 4-day preschool class.

**Your child must be fully potty trained before they can start school at Harbor Covenant Preschool.**

Every child is enrolled on a trial basis for two months. After this time, if determined by the teacher that the school is not meeting the educational needs of the child

and/or the child is disrupting the educational program, the Harbor Covenant Preschool Ministry Team may vote to terminate enrollment or transfer to an appropriate class.

\* If a child is withdrawn under these conditions within the first month, tuition may be refunded.

Harbor Covenant Preschool does not discriminate against race, color, religion, sex or ethnic and national origin.

In accordance with the Washington State Law, the Omnibus AIDS Act, Harbor Covenant Preschool will not deny admission to any part of its program to HIV-infected or AIDS diagnosed children. We will also never, in accordance with the same Washington State Law, reveal the name of any child who is enrolled in our program and is infected with the HIV virus or diagnosed with AIDS without the written consent of that child's parents or guardian.

## **TUITION**

Tuition costs are based on a 36-week preschool year. Tuition can be paid in 10 monthly installments (due August-May) or be paid in full at the beginning of the school year.

Tuition for the:

3's class is \$240 per month.

4/5's class is \$300 per month.

Invoices for tuition are sent out on the first of the month and are due within 5 days of receiving the invoice unless prior arrangements have been made with the Administrator. A \$25.00 late fee may be added if tuition is not paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

## **REGISTRATION FEE**

The \$100 enrollment fee is non-refundable and due in full when you register your child into our program.

## **REFUNDS AND WITHDRAWALS**

Because our tuition is based on actual operating expenses, we are unable to pro-rate monthly tuition because of school holidays, snow days, family vacations etc. Consideration will be given to those students who are absent because of lengthy illnesses. Each child is enrolled for the entire school year, or for the balance of the school year if enrolling mid-year.

Withdrawals from the school must be made in writing (signed by the parents/guardian) and submitted to the Administrator. The written notice should include the date and reason for withdrawal. Students attending any day of the

month will owe the full month's tuition. A student may be automatically withdrawn if their bill becomes 30 days past due and other arrangements have not been made.

## **CURRICULUM**

Our program features a curriculum rich in hands-on experiences, pre-academic practice and classroom routines that will excite your little one to learn and grow both spiritually and educationally. They will be prepared for their journey into the elementary years by having spent time getting familiar with classroom structure, daily expectations and individual instructional attention.

The curriculum features opportunity for both large group and smaller group gatherings, as well as a balance of teacher directed and independent learning activities. Every aspect of our program will allow your child varied means to achieve success, from the instruction, to the classroom set up, to the positive character building, creating a love of learning. There is no "one right way to learn," and our program will reflect multi-sensory opportunities for your child to find the way that they learn best.

Our classroom will have a monthly theme that will be reflected in the activities, books, materials and centers presented. There will be a color and shape of the month as well as letters of the week woven in to introduce, highlight and feature directed learning. Changing the environment and materials used each month generates newfound interests and reduces behavior issues. Curriculum activities are sourced from a variety of resources gathered over 25 years of working with young children and will include:

*Handwriting Without Tears* – Designed by an Occupational Therapist and Early Childhood Specialist to use children's natural fine motor development for optimal success. It is used by the Peninsula School District (PSD) so your child will be familiar with it when they enter the school system.

*Second Steps* – A social/emotional program designed to build children's skills to successfully navigate childhood social encounters. Also used in PSD.

*Get Set for School* – Expanded second Steps program that focuses on transition to Kindergarten skill sets (in 4/5's class only).

*Growing Up Wild* – A nationally recognized nature appreciation program for use with young children, driven by the book, "Last Child in The Woods."

Our program will operate under the standards for instruction and learning of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Our projects and instruction will be developmentally age-appropriate for the children we serve. We will offer field trips to enhance our lessons and sense of community.

## **ARRIVAL**

We request that you do not bring your child early and that you and your child wait in your car until teachers come out of the building and place the preschool flag outside Entrance B to indicate that school is ready to begin. The flag will remain in place while class is in session.

We will use a drive through drop off/pick up system. You may pull up through the driveway area in front of the building briefly while walking your child to the door or waiting for them when school is over. This is a designated fire lane so if you need to stay for a longer length of time please pull around to a designated parking spot.

Teachers will escort the children into the building and proceed with the check-in protocol. (Use of bathroom, wash hands, put coats in cubbies.)

It is imperative that we are notified if your student will not attend or will be late to class that day so we can arrange appropriate escort procedures. Use Facebook to notify the staff or call the front office 253-851-8450.

## **DISMISSAL**

Be on time to pick up your child from school. If you know that you are going to be a few minutes late because of an unforeseen circumstance, notify the front office immediately at 253-851-8450 so that we can reassure your child that you are on your way. If you are planning to pick up your child early, inform the teacher at the beginning of class that day. This will help ensure that your child will not miss out on something important and that you receive any important messages for the day.

## **OVERTIME CHARGES**

While we understand there are times you may be late picking up your child, you will be charged an overtime charge of \$1 per minute if it becomes a chronic issue. Be considerate and arrive on time to pick up your child. Late pick-ups leave teachers without adequate preparation, lunch and clean-up time.

## **PICK-UP AUTHORIZATION**

No child will be released to a person or persons not authorized by a parent prior to being picked up. In the case of single/divorced parents: If the custodial parent wishes to prohibit the other parent from picking up the child from school we must have a copy of a court order stating this.

## **FIELD TRIPS/FAMILY EVENTS**

Typically, each class takes 3-5 offsite field trips per school year. We ask that each parent arrange transportation for their own child to and from all offsite field trips. Field trips are for our students only. We are not able to accommodate younger or older siblings. If you are unable to provide transportation for your child, let us know. We may have ideas that could be a solution.



Harbor Covenant Preschool will host a couple of Family Events during the year. These events are for the whole family to attend.

## **PHOTOS**

During the school year, pictures of your child may be taken by staff/families during the school day or during special school events. We have three locations that we use to share these images. Please note that children's names will never be published with their photos. 1. Our closed Facebook Group. This page is ONLY accessible to approved group members and is a wonderful way to share fun photos of class activities and events, this page helps to share pertinent information with parents and engage our families. 2. Our public Facebook Page, and other social media. We sometimes use class shots to showcase exciting activities that we put together. Our public Facebook page allows us to show the Gig Harbor area what we are all about, and helps potential families decide if our school would be the right fit for them. 3. Our marketing materials. We also sometimes will use a select number of pictures that include our students in our brochures and website. Pictures are selected with care, and personal information is never disclosed. If you prefer to NOT have your child's image be used in the public scenarios (#2 or #3) above please make sure to indicate this on your student info/medical/release form.

## **DISCIPLINE**

We recognize that each child's feelings are honest, real and important. Our discipline policy will be to handle each situation with love and understanding. We will help each child develop the inner control needed as they learn appropriate behaviors.

One of the methods we will use to teach self-control will be to discuss the situation with the child. We will remove the child from the group and talk with him/her. At the time, we will aid the child in recognizing and naming their feelings and offer alternate choices, guiding them toward a more positive response.

Another method of redirecting will be a quiet time. This will give the child the opportunity to calm down, allowing them time to gain inner control. Quiet time will always be in the presence of the teacher or assistant and be in a quiet atmosphere. We will strive to protect your child's feelings at all times. Your child will never be used as an example of unfavorable behavior. We will not embarrass them, treat them unfairly, or use cruel or disproportionate punishment.

\*If a child is aggressive toward another (pushing, shoving, hitting, spitting, biting), the aggressor will be removed from the group and placed in a supervised quiet time.  
\* A behavior may warrant calling a parent during the day to speak with their child or to take their child home for the day.

\* Should these efforts fail to produce the desired behavior in the child, parents will be called to meet with the teacher to develop a suitable strategy for correcting the child's inappropriate behavior.

\* If the above steps do not produce the desired behavior in the child, the child will be withdrawn from school.

\* No spanking or any kind of corporal punishment is allowed.

## **NUTRITION AND SNACKS**

Harbor Covenant Preschool will provide a healthy snack for each child each day during class. If your child has any food allergy, sensitivity and/or is on a special diet; notify us and bring a supply of suitable snacks for them. It is important that we understand the severity of your child's allergy as well as how the allergy presents itself. Keep us informed so that we can help your child stay safe and healthy!

We would like to promote the principles of good nutrition, which will aid in the good physical development of your child. Therefore, we would encourage snacks to be nutritious in nature. Examples include fruits, veggie sticks, cheese/crackers, raisins, trail mix, healthy muffins, yogurt etc.

Parents are invited to provide a grain type snack once a quarter.

Occasionally the snack will be prepared by each child as a cooking project.

To help foster appropriate lunch skills the pre-K (4/5's) class will start bringing a lunch from home on Mondays only from January-June. This also helps prepare them for kindergarten.

**\*All snacks will be handled only by the teacher and most will be prepackaged in order to limit students handling others food items. We will no longer have snack "family style".**

## **TOYS FROM HOME**

We ask that you leave your child's toys at home. We do not want them to get lost or broken. Help your child to understand this rule. Children will have an opportunity for Show and Tell and the Sharing Box on their special person day.

## **SPECIAL PERSON DAYS**

Each child will be assigned a "Special Day" throughout the year. This will be a sharing experience that will focus on each child and their family. Not all children have a birthday that falls during the school year so we set aside these times to make your child the "star" of the day. On their assigned day they will get to bring a special toy or item from home to share and a short book to read to the class. They will also bring a poster in the 3's class and a book for the 4/5's class (pages provided by teacher). Parents are welcome to come and take pictures during their sharing time. Baby siblings are allowed to attend. You will be given specific instructions during the month that your child's day is assigned.

## **SHARING BOX**

Throughout the year we will be utilizing a sharing box for show and tell. This experience is a great way to encourage children to speak in front of a group. The box will rotate through the classes with each child at least twice during the year. Your child will bring the box home with a note regarding what type of thing to return in the box to share that will support our curriculum, and learning themes. For example, they might be asked to bring something that starts with the letter B, or that is red, or that is triangle shaped. They return the box on their day assigned, give the class clues to guess the item and then after it is revealed the item will be put away (not played with in class).

## **HOLIDAYS AND SNOW DAYS**

School will be closed on national holidays and breaks following the Peninsula School District calendar. Written notice of such closing will be made via the preschool newsletter and social media.

Harbor Covenant Preschool will also close due to snow and hazardous conditions anytime the Peninsula School District is closed. (See Inclement Weather Section for more details.) However, school closures due to bad weather will not be made up.

Feel free to contact us with any questions.

## **WHAT TO WEAR**

Send your child to school in comfortable clothing that can get soiled. Sometimes we do messy things in class and it's hard to ensure that your child will stay clean. Provide a jacket or sweater even on sunny days. Our Northwest weather can be unpredictable, and we will take the children outside as often as the weather allows. Also, while it is required your child be potty trained, we do realize accidents can happen. It is required to have an extra set of pants and underwear kept here at school labeled with your child's name. Closed toed shoes are best but not required.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Though it is tempting to stay and chat with your child's teacher during pick-up and drop-off, we ask that you limit your conversation. If you have concerns or something you wish to talk about, contact your child's teacher outside of school hours via e-mail. That way the teacher can address your concerns without compromising her attention with the children or other demands.

Once a year there will be a Parent Teacher Conference offered, in January for the 4/5's class, and in March for the 3's. It will be a formal time to sit down and share about your child's developmental progress and set goals. On conference day there will be no class held, the teacher will meet parents at a pre-assigned time.

## **CHAPEL**

Children are eager learners who want to know all about the world around them. This is the perfect way to introduce them to the love of Jesus. Our desire is to maintain a Christian atmosphere in the classroom. We have Chapel once a week using First Look/Wonder curriculum from Orange. Each month there is a new theme, bible memory verse, music and bible lesson. These lessons are geared towards the preschool level of learning and can be applied to a preschooler's life. Resources are sent home with parents so they can continue the life application at home.

Once a month we will hold Family Chapel for parents to attend. Your monthly calendar will indicate the day.

## **WAYS WE CAN HELP**

When you enroll your child in our school, we assume the responsibility of assisting you with special needs in relation to your child's adjustment, growth and development. We will look after their health and safety while in our care. We would appreciate if you would try to keep us fully informed of any changes that occur in your child's home situation during the school year, e.g. the birth of a baby, an accident, a death in the family, a separation, a divorce or a traumatic experience.

If we are kept fully informed of any such situations, we will be better able to understand and support your child should any changes occur in their behavior during class.

## **IMMUNIZATION AND ILLNESS**

Your child's health is a matter of great importance to us, along with the health of other students. Parents are required to notify the school whenever their child has been exposed to or contracts a contagious disease.

Head lice can show up in your child quite unexpectedly. If this happens, they are to be kept home until all signs of lice and eggs are gone. If we notice it at school, your child will be immediately isolated from the other children and you will be notified.

Your child will be sent home if he/she appears to have symptoms of illness during class time. In such cases he/she will be immediately isolated from the other children and the parent will be contacted.

Use common sense when deciding if your child is well enough to attend school. Letting a sick child attend class only exposes the entire class and we must be considerate of others.

School policy for keeping your child home:

- Any infection e.g. strep throat, conjunctivitis (pink eye), ear infection, (must have been taking an antibiotic for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school)
- Fever in the past 24 hours of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more
- Vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Chills or sore throat
- Bad cold, with a very runny nose or bad cough
- Any contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19
- Excessive coughing or sneezing.
- Loss of taste or smell
- Other symptoms that are related to COVID-19

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN**

**\* If your child requires an EPI pen or inhaler, you must provide one to keep on the premises labeled clearly along with the medical authorization. All staff are trained in administering an EPI pen or assisting with an inhaler.**

### **Minor Injury**

In the event of a minor injury, first aid will be administered and an injury report will be filled out and sent home with the child. Parents will be contacted if necessary.

### **Serious Injury**

In the event of a serious injury, 911 will be contacted immediately. Other children in the class will be moved into another room with an assistant so that the teacher can attend to the injured child. We will attempt to notify the parents and if they are not available, we will call the emergency contact. All of our teachers and staff are trained in CPR and first aid.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN**

Harbor Covenant Preschool has developed and implemented a comprehensive plan for responding to a variety of natural disasters and hazardous situations including fire and earthquake. Staff and students will practice appropriate responses including evacuation.

Our system for managing school emergency situations provides students, staff and parents with a plan and sense of security. Student safety is our focus and guides our decisions. Staff members have been trained to respond to a variety of emergency situations.

## **COMMUNICATION IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY**

- Be patient. We will communicate with you as quickly as possible.
- Don't call the church/school office. It jams the phone lines when we may need them to contact emergency personnel.
- Remember- Your child's safety is our first priority!

## **FIRE RESPONSE PLAN**

In the event of a fire alarm, classes will immediately and calmly evacuate the building, following the safest possible route. Emergency Services (911) will be notified of the situation. Teachers will account for all students and will have their emergency contact cards with them. Parents will be notified as soon as possible.

Fire drills will be performed at least twice per year, and teachers will instruct students on fire safety procedures.

## **EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE PLAN**

Students and staff practice "Drop, Cover and Hold" as a response to earthquake.

*What does it mean?*

Drop- Under something sturdy and taller than you are.

Cover- The back of your head and neck with one arm.

Hold On- In case the thing you're under moves.

After the shaking stops, students will be evacuated from the building and go directly to the outdoor meeting space. The building structure will be checked and assessed for cracked ceilings, broken windows and other damage. If the building seems sound, then students will return to the building. If the building does not appear to be sound, the fire department will be notified and parents will be called to pick up their children.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES**

Winter may bring weather conditions that require school schedule delays or closure. Safety for your child is our primary concern.

- Normal school operations will prevail unless a change of schedule is announced
- We follow Peninsula School District's weather closures.

If the announcement is:

- **Closed**- then there will be no morning or afternoon classes

- **2 hour late start**- then there will be no morning classes. Afternoon classes will operate as usual.

Our goal is to make information available to families about school closure or changes in the school schedule by 5:00 a.m. Details will be announced in the Welcome Packet.

### **IN CLOSING**

We'd like to thank you for allowing us to partner with you in educating your child. If you ever have any questions or concerns, our door is always open to you. We are looking forward to an amazing year at Harbor Covenant Preschool, and we are so glad you have chosen to join us!