

**PRESTON HOLLOW
PRESBYTERIAN
PRESCHOOL**

**FAMILY HANDBOOK
2023 - 2024**

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Preston Hollow Presbyterian School

Board Members

Trey Angel - President
Michelle Lyon - Secretary
Kara Altenbaumer-Price
Candice Brekke
Anne Edwards
Townsend Heald
Nancy Johnson
Katie Leto
Kathy Lett
Kelly Lipscomb
Michelle Lyon
Todd Owen
Matt Roberts
Laura Sparkman
Aimee Szygenda
Bob Warren

Non-voting/Ex Officio Members:

Nicole Bell, PhD - PHPS Executive Director
Colleen Garcia - PHPS Business Manager
Shannon Guse - PHPC
Lauren Marold - PHPS Technology Director
Beth Ramage - Preschool Director

Preschool Staff

Administration:

Beth Ramage - Preschool Director

Shari Ackels - Preschool Assistant Director

Teachers and Aides:

Emily Abdo

5 Day Teacher

Kay Burns

Aide

Aimee duPont

5 Day Teacher

Elizabeth Eckeberger

Older Toddler Teacher

Cecilia Garcia - Moreno

Older Toddler Teacher

Betty Gray

Young 2's Teacher

Suzy Hall

2/3 Day Teacher

Carolyn Harrison

STEAM Teacher

Kate Holthouser

Aide

Betty Jackson

STEAM Co-Director

Paula Leonard

STEAM Teacher, Aide

Kara Matute

5 Day Teacher

Carolyn Miller

Young Toddler Teacher

Lindsey Moran

3 Day Teacher

Lynsie Newman

STEAM Teacher

Valerie Norris

5 Day Teacher

Meredith Poole

Young 2's Teacher

Elizabeth Rochester

Young Toddler Teacher

Janet Spence

Aide

Liz Street

STEAM Co-Director, Aide

Jimmie Tunnell

Aide

Peggy Vernon

Young Toddler Teacher

Mary Ann Walters

STEAM Teacher

Sharon Wetzel

STEAM Teacher, Aide

Sharon Willard

2/3 Day Teacher

Paige Willingham

3 Day Teacher

School Hours

9:00am to 2:00pm

Overview

Preston Hollow Presbyterian Preschool was founded in 1953. It is a preschool program for boys and girls age 12 months old through pre-kindergarten. Each year we enroll students in classes as follows:

Young Toddler/Older Toddler/Young 2 Classes—9:00am-2:00pm: (12-29 months by September 1st)

Children can enroll 1 or 2 days a week, depending upon availability. Classes are offered Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. Children must be 12 months old by September 1st to enroll.

PreK 2 Day, 3 Day, 5 Day Classes—9:00am-Noon: (2½-5 years old by September 1st)

Children 2½ years to 3 years of age by September 1st -

2 Day class (T-Th) or 3 Day class (M-W-F)

Children 3 and 4 years of age by September 1st AND completely potty trained-

3 Day class (M-W-F) or 5 Day (M-F)

Children 4 years of age by September 1st AND completely potty trained -

5 Day class (M-F)

It is a nonsectarian program appropriate for children of any religious background, race or national origin.

Preschool Mission Statement

Our Preschool strives to provide a warm, loving and supportive environment for learning... an environment in which children are cherished and valued for who they are; receive respect and care for all aspects (cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual) of his/her being; and play and work within a developmentally appropriate structure to promote growth and support of his/her total being.

Curriculum

Our curriculum is an eclectic program developed over the years to help a child grow cognitively, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. We focus on the development of self-esteem while providing activities that stimulate a child's awareness of the world around him and the expansion of language and listening skills. In a self-contained classroom environment, each child is exposed to art, music, motor activities, science, dramatic play, and other age-appropriate learning activities. In the PreK Classes, the "Learning Without Tears" curriculum is an important part of our program that helps children develop school readiness skills. The "High Touch High Tech" science group visits the PreK 3- and 4-year-olds monthly to introduce scientific methods and conduct hands-on experiments.

Our ultimate goal is to promote growth in the whole child in an environment in which a child develops a love of learning and a love of school.

Admission

Children must be 12 months old by September 1st to enroll. Classes are offered Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday for children 12 months - 29 months. They can enroll 1 or 2 days a week, depending upon availability.

Children must be 2½ years of age by September 1st in order to enroll in a PreK 2 Day or 3 Day class. Children 3 or 4 years of age by September 1st and COMPLETELY POTTY-TRAINED can enroll in a PreK 3 Day or 5 Day class.

New Families should begin calling the Preschool Office (214-369-1395) after September 1st to place children in the wait pool for next school year. Returning students and families may re-enroll the first week of registration (early-January). Church members and New Families register the following weeks.

The Director, the Assistant Director, and the PHP-Preschool Teaching Staff collaboratively assign students to classes. When forming classes several factors are considered. These include the overall development of each child, the teaching style of each teacher, the peer makeup, and the gender ratio. Careful thought is taken when placing each individual child. Each child's placement is reviewed many times during the spring and summer. Please know that we work hard to find the best class possible for each child. After the final class placement is decided, no changes will be made.

After-Preschool Program

STEAM: stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics. It is an after-Preschool program under the direction of Mrs. Betty Jackson and Mrs. Liz Street as Co-Directors. This program is offered Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons from 12:00 - 2pm. The children bring their lunch and participate in a variety of age appropriate activities. STEAM is a playful way to teach amazing concepts and develop a love for discovering, learning, and creating. Each afternoon the children will explore a different STEAM topic. Any child enrolled in a PreK 2 Day, 3 Day, or 5 Day class is eligible to participate.

Discipline & Guidance Policy

Discipline is derived from the word disciple meaning, "to teach". Therefore, at Preston Hollow Presbyterian Preschool, we do not think of discipline as punishment but rather as an opportunity to teach self-control and Christian attitudes. This will be done in a loving and supportive way. In no instance will corporal punishment be administered, nor will consequences be related to food, rest or toileting. Please carefully read the Preston Hollow Presbyterian Preschool Discipline and Guidance Policy and sign the enclosed Parent Acknowledgement Form.

Discipline at Preston Hollow Presbyterian Preschool, when necessary, for the safety and well being of our children, is individualized and consistent for each child. Discipline is appropriate to the child's level of understanding and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

At PHP-Preschool, only positive methods of discipline and guidance are used that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Methods include using praise and encouragement instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior, reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear positive statements, redirecting behavior using positive statements and brief supervised time out from the group which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

No harsh, cruel, or unusual discipline or punishment is ever used at PHP-Preschool. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment are never used. Children are never humiliated or ridiculed. Voices are never raised at children.

Our goal is to provide positive guidance for children that teaches them skills that help them get along in their physical and social environment. We are endeavoring to give children understandable guidelines and redirection as needed to help them develop internal control of their actions and encourage them to exhibit acceptable age-appropriate behavior.

Operational Policies

Preston Hollow Presbyterian Preschool will be open from September through May. Beginning and ending dates, holidays and vacation days will be indicated on the enclosed school calendar. The hours are from 9:00am - Noon (STEAM is from noon - 2pm) for the PreK 2 Day/3 Day/5 Day Classes, and 9:00am - 2pm for the Young Toddler/Older Toddler/Young 2 Classes. Families may enter the school building at 8:50am. The Preschool entrance will remain locked until that time. Teachers have a daily planning period from 8:30-9:00am every morning. This time is necessary for teachers to successfully prepare for your child's school day. Please be aware that your child's classroom door may be closed if you arrive before 9:00am. All children need to be escorted to the classroom in the morning. Please do not send a child into the building alone. You will need to sign-in your child/children daily to ensure their safety. **Children may be released only to parents or a person designated in writing by the parent.** In order to follow State Regulations, we cannot accept phone calls to dismiss children to another person. **We must have this information in written form.** Parking for parents is available in the back (East) parking lot. Enter the building through the PHP-Preschool door. Please inform your child's teacher or the office by 8:30am when a child will be absent for any reason. This will help the teacher plan for the day and avoid interruptions during class.

Young Toddler/Older Toddler/Young 2 Classes: Parents/caregivers must sign-in their children each day. Children must be picked up by 2pm.

PreK Classes: Parents/caregivers must sign-in their children each day. Children must be picked up by 12:00pm, unless they are enrolled in STEAM. Children must be picked up from STEAM by 2:00pm.

Parents are encouraged to discuss, with the Director, questions or concerns regarding any program policies or procedures. We encourage parental involvement. Please talk with your child's teacher or the Director about ways you can contribute your time and talents. Parents will be notified by email immediately of any Preschool policy or procedure changes.

Inclement Weather & Emergency Closing

Closings due to inclement weather will be decided by the Director of Preston Hollow Presbyterian School. Teachers will call, text, or email their families to let them know the plan for the day. Should school need to be closed due to any unforeseen circumstances, families will be notified by the teacher.

No refunds will be given if PHP-Preschool is closed due to unavoidable circumstances such as bad weather, a high level of contagious illness or any other circumstances beyond our control. Days missed due to closings will not be made up at a later date.

Outdoor Play Guidelines

All children will participate daily in outdoor play, weather permitting. Please send your child dressed in the appropriate seasonal clothing (coat, mittens, hat). Since temperatures and conditions can change quickly, the weather is actively monitored throughout the school day. Children will be kept indoors if the following conditions occur:

- Inclement Weather (rain/ice)
- Outside Temperature is 32 degrees or below, or temperature with wind chill is 32 degrees or below
- Outside Temperature is 95 degrees or above, or heat index of 98 degrees or higher
- Orange or Red ozone levels

Outdoor play may be limited when wind chill or temperature falls below 40 degrees.

Neither sunscreen nor insect repellent will be applied to children during the school day.

Emergency Management Plan and Security

Preston Hollow Presbyterian Preschool is dedicated to maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment. To this end, we have devised an extensive Emergency Management Plan to resolve any unexpected or unplanned events that might threaten our students and/or staff. The following emergencies and emergency procedures are addressed in this plan: fire; tornado and severe weather; toxic substance or hazardous materials spills; a stranger or intruder on campus; and abduction or missing person; and/or a utility failure. In the event that our building cannot be re-occupied following evacuation or that the school grounds as well as the building must be evacuated, we will relocate to the sanctuary of Preston Hollow United Methodist Church, 6315 Walnut Hill Lane. Parents will be notified of this event by phone or email and will be asked to come pick up their children.

During certain emergency situations, the School Director may deem it necessary to dismiss students early. Parents will be notified by phone or email and will be asked to pick up their children from their classrooms.

Our school is secure during school hours. All doors are locked at all times. If you need to enter the Preschool during the school day, ring the bell at the Preschool entrance and you will be admitted.

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a school is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses are subject to harsher penalty.

All Preschool staff attend an annual training program about preventing, identifying, treating, and reporting suspected child abuse, neglect, and exploitation. As state law mandates, suspected abuse or neglect of a child must be reported and our staff is available to advise parents.

In accordance with the state agency, we have a comfortable place to accommodate breast-feeding mothers.

The following are posted in the classrooms and the Preschool Office:

- 1) Emergency Management and Evacuation Plan
- 2) A fire/emergency exit map showing two routes
- 3) Emergency telephone numbers
- 4) The names of children with allergies and procedures to follow

- 5) Class schedule and activity plans
- 6) Class assignments
- 7) Science and music schedules
- 8) A map of the classroom furniture arrangement
- 9) School and monthly calendars

A copy of the "Minimum Standards" and our latest Licensing inspection is available for review in the Preschool Office (Room N116). The number to contact the local Licensing Office is 214-951-7902. The TDFPS child abuse hot line is 1-800-252-5400. The TDFPS web site is www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Health, Safety & Nutrition

All accidents/injuries will be taken seriously and reported to the parent the day they occur. An Incident/Illness Report form will be given to the parent and a copy will be placed in the child's file. Parents will be called to pick child/children up if there is a question as to whether the child should see a doctor or if the child is overly upset.

If a child has any contagious illness, including Covid, please inform the school as soon as possible. An Incident/Illness Report form or note containing the same information will be sent out to all parents of children exposed to any contagious disease. If necessary, we will communicate Covid quarantine requirements to you. We continue to follow CDC guidelines for quarantining.

Keep your child home if he or she:

- 1) **Has a fever above 100 degrees or greater; If your child has a fever, he/she needs to be fever free for 24 hrs. before returning to school**
- 2) **Has signs of a new cold with sore throat, frequent cough, purulent eye discharge or copious mucous and is uncomfortable**
- 3) **Has a headache or head pain**
- 4) **Has a loss of appetite**
- 5) **Is excessively irritable or shows unusual lethargy**
- 6) **Has inflammation of the eye or eyes**
- 7) **Has a skin abscess or open sore not previously treated with an antibiotic; these should be covered with a bandage until healed***
- 8) **Has a rash**
- 9) **His/her behavior is not usual due to "generally not feeling well"**
- 10) **Has abdominal pain**
- 11) **Is vomiting or has diarrhea (must be symptom free for 24 hours)**

Your child will be sent home if he or she exhibits any of the above symptoms during the school day.

***Due to the increase in MRSA (Methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus), we require that all skin traumas, such as abrasions or cuts, be covered with a clean, dry bandage until healed. Children may not attend school with uncovered lesions.**

In trying to avoid accidents, children and activities will be carefully monitored at all times to ensure a safe environment.

In the event of an emergency, a staff member will administer first aid and if necessary, call 911. The parent will then be notified by phone. Only medical emergency vehicles will transport children should the need arise. Although we cannot guarantee a specific hospital or doctor, all medical and application forms listing your designated doctor and hospital will be sent with emergency personnel.

The Preschool Teachers will have current certification in First Aid and CPR. All staff must present written proof of a T.B. test before beginning the first day of employment. It is recommended but not required that all staff receive a yearly flu shot. No other vaccinations are required.

Staff will check student enrollment forms for allergies or medical conditions and note any needing consideration. Any child that has been diagnosed with a Food Allergy must complete the FARE - Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan. This Care Plan must be completed and signed by the child's doctor and parent. It must be on file in the Preschool Office before the child's first day of school. This information will be posted in the Preschool Office and the child's classroom. **PLEASE DISCUSS ANY SPECIAL MEDICAL NEEDS WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER.**

Snacks will be provided by the school and served daily. Parents of children with special dietary needs are responsible for sending snacks for their child/children. Parents are also welcome to read the labeled ingredients in school snacks. Snacks are kept in the Preschool Office (N115)

For children with severe allergies, it is recommended that parents provide Benadryl and TWO EpiPens. This will allow one EpiPen to be kept in the Preschool Office and one in the child's classroom. A signed FARE - Care Plan must be on file to administer Benadryl and/or EpiPens. **NO OTHER MEDICATIONS WILL BE DISPENSED.**

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

We are licensed by "The Texas Health and Human Services Commission". As mandated by this state agency, in order to participate in our program, a current immunization record with a signed statement of good health by the child's pediatrician is required by the 1st day of Preschool. The Immunization schedule must follow the most current schedule adopted by the State of Texas. Children that are 4 years old by September 1st must also provide a copy of their vision and hearing screening results to the Preschool. If applicable, an individualized Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan will also be required.

An exemption from immunizations *for medical reasons* will require a written and signed statement from a board certified physician. An exemption from immunizations *for reasons of conscience* will not be accepted.

If the current immunization record is not on file by the 1st day of school, the child will not be permitted to come to school.

POTTY TRAINING POLICY

Several PreK classes require children to be completely potty trained. For the health and safety of the staff and students, please do not bring your child to school wearing cloth underwear unless your child is completely potty trained. Completely potty trained means that your child does NOT wear a pull-up diaper, is able to recognize and verbalize the need to go to the bathroom, be able to take off and put on clothing, wipe, flush and wash hands independently. Children should be able to follow these practices both at home and at school. We understand that accidents happen. However, if accidents reoccur, we may require your child to stay home from school until they are completely potty trained or shorten the length of their school day.

NAPTIME POLICY

The Young Toddler/Older Toddler/Young 2 class schedule includes a naptime after lunch. During this time, the children are to rest or lie quietly on their mat or in their crib as to not disturb other sleeping children in the room. If your child cannot remain quiet during naptime, you may be asked to pick up after lunch. If you prefer to have your child nap at home, you may pick up your child before naptime. Please check with your child's teacher for an approximate time. Our goal is to provide a calm atmosphere for all children in the classroom during naptime.

BITING POLICY

Biting is a common and normal part of child development. Although our goal is to recognize triggers and redirect a child before the incident occurs, a biting incident may be unavoidable. If a bite occurs, the Teacher will first provide aid to the bitten child. The bitten area will be cleaned with soap and water and ice may be applied. The child who did the biting will be removed from the setting and explained in an age appropriate manner that this behavior is unacceptable. Parents of both the biter and the bitten child will be notified. If the biting continues, additional measures will be taken according to the specific situation.

CUSTODY POLICY

In the case of divorce or separation, we will continue to provide the custodial parent, the non-custodial parent and the step-parent(s) equal access to their child and all official records and reports regarding their child. This includes access to their child during Preschool hours, all classroom newsletters, school calendars and Preschool mailings. Exceptions to this are made when the custodial parent provides the school with a copy of legal documents related to custody arrangements and parental access to children and information.

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL POLICY

In Preschool, children build crucial social-emotional skills such as sharing, taking turns, and learning to cope with a wide range of emotions. At times, a child may have difficulty functioning successfully in this environment or difficulty adjusting to the rules and routines of the classroom. If so, the teacher will make every effort to work as a team with the child and parent to ensure a successful school experience. If a child continues to be disruptive to the classroom environment or places himself/herself or others in danger, a conference with the parent will be requested by the Teacher or Preschool Director to determine the next course of action. On occasion, the Preschool Director may request that the student withdraw if it is determined to be in the best interest of the student or the classroom. In this case, a refund of unused tuition will be given.

Drop-off & Pick-up Procedures

Parents and caregivers must sign-in their child at the classroom door each day.

When picking up your child at the end of the school day, parents should remain outside and wait for a Preschool staff member to assist you. This applies to all age groups and programs. Parents must pick up their children at the Preschool entrance.

All Preschool parents will be given a Pick Up Sign before or on the first day of school. This school-issued Pick Up Sign will have your child's name on it, and must be brought with you each school day at pick up. If you do not have the school issued Pick Up Sign, you will be asked to provide your driver's license as identification. If you need additional pick-up signs, please inform your child's teacher or the school office.

Children under the age of 2 ½ - Children under the age of 2 ½ years old in the YT, OT or Y2 classes may be picked up before naptime at 12:15 p.m., but no later than 2:00pm.

Children over the age of 2 ½ - PreK children over the age of 2 ½ years old in the 2 Day, 3 Day or 5 Day PreK classes should be picked up at the Preschool entrance beginning at 11:45am. Those attending STEAM should be picked up at the Preschool entrance beginning at 1:45.

Please lock your cars and do not leave purses or valuables in your vehicle during drop-off or pick-up.

Written permission from a parent is required for a child to leave school with anyone other than his parent/caregiver or persons designated on the child's enrollment form. It is the parent's responsibility to provide a note the day any changes will take place. This can be done as you are signing your child in at the beginning of the day, or this information may be emailed to the Preschool Director or Assistant Director.

Things to Remember for All Classes:

1. Please return your child's Physician's Statement and FARE Care Plan (if required) by the first day of school.
2. Starting school is an exciting experience for a young child but it can also be a difficult one. It is normal for some children to feel distressed when separated from the parent. Crying is a very normal reaction for children especially if this is their first school experience. A hug and a quick exit at the classroom door are the best remedy. If crying persists for an unusual amount of time, you will be notified.
3. Please dress your child for active play and learning with casual, washable clothes. Please have your child wear athletic shoes ONLY. **Closed toe, lightweight, soft sole shoes with Velcro fasteners are best. NO CROCS or BOOTS of any kind will be allowed at Preschool.** This is for their safety and quality of play. The children will spend some time outdoors on a regular basis. Please dress your child appropriately.
4. A school tote bag labeled with your child's name is needed to help your child care for his/her personal items. One that opens easily is preferred. No backpacks please.
5. Remember to sign in daily as mandated by "The Department of Family and Protective Services".
6. Look for monthly newsletters from your child's teacher.
7. Birthday and special treats are welcome. Cookies and plain muffins are preferred. We try to limit the sugar intake of children. Healthy treats are appreciated.
8. If families have a change in address, telephone number, employment, emergency numbers or family situation, that information should be provided promptly to the child's teacher and the Preschool office.

9. For safety and sanitation reasons, pets or animals of any kind are not allowed at Preschool.

Reminders for YT/ OT/ Y2 Classes:

Young Toddler (12-17 months)

Bring to School Everyday:

1. Tote-style School Bag - The PHP Preschool tote bag is recommended. It may be purchased at the Parent Meeting for \$10.
2. Complete set of clothes
3. Three or four disposable diapers
4. Lunch - ready to be served. If your child is still eating baby food, make sure to include a spoon
5. Bottle or sippy cup labeled with child's name
6. Desitin Cream - if needed

****Let us know about your child's food allergies**

****Label child's name on everything you bring. Please include a nametag on the OUTSIDE of the diaper bag and lunch box**

Older Toddler (18-23 months) and Young 2's (24-29 months)

Bring to School Everyday:

1. Tote-style School Bag - The PHP Preschool tote bag is recommended. It may be purchased at the Parent Meeting for \$10.
2. Nap mat - A foldable, washable one-inch mat is needed for naptime. The NapPak brand is recommended by our teachers. Please do not bring quilts/sleeping bag or a memory foam style mat.
3. Complete change of clothing (including socks)
4. Three or four disposable diapers
5. Desitin Cream - if needed
5. Sippy cup labeled with child's name
6. Lunch - Please provide a nutritious lunch that your child can easily feed himself - a divided Tupperware container works best. Milk and water will be provided. Have lunch ready to eat (meat sticks, fruit peeled, grapes cut, etc.). Teachers are not able to prepare food for each child. Please do not send shredded cheese, string cheese, hot dogs cut in rounds, Go-Gurt, peas or nuts.

****Let us know about your child's food allergies**

****Label child's name on everything. Please include a nametag on the OUTSIDE of the diaper bag and lunch box.**

Reminders for PreK Classes:

1. Please provide your child's teacher with a complete change of clothes: shirt, pants, socks and underwear. These need to be in a zip-lock bag labeled with the child's name (**label all clothing**; coats, hats, sweaters etc.). Remember to change out clothing during the year in accordance with the seasons.
2. Please send extra diapers/pull-ups if your child is still toilet training. (2.5-year-old classes only)
3. Please dress your child for active play and learning with casual washable clothes and closed-toe shoes. Crocs or boots are not allowed.
4. Please do not bring toys (including electronic devices) and other personal items from home unless designated for a special classroom activity. We cannot be responsible for lost or broken items. Toy guns and other weapon like toys are not allowed at school.
5. There will be two Parent/Teacher Conferences each year; one in the Fall and one in the Spring. Teachers will be happy to meet with you at other times if needed.