



Parent Handbook

PURPOSE

Our purpose is to provide a Bible-based curriculum and a wide variety of learning experiences to preschool children. Our goals are for each child to develop a good self-image, to learn respect for others, to indulge their curiosity and develop necessary skills for social, emotional and cognitive growth in a loving and nurturing Christian atmosphere.

"It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves, that will make them successful human beings." – Ann Landers

ORGANIZATION

Friendship School is a part of the Memorial Church of Christ educational program and is under the supervision of the Memorial Church of Christ elders and Children's Director. The school's day-to-day operations are overseen by the school director. We follow the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Childcare Licensing Guidelines.

- Ages 1 and 2: Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday from 9:20a.m. – 2:00p.m.
- Age 3: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (optional) and Thursday from 9:20a.m. – 2:00p.m.
- Pre-K: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (optional) and Thursday from 9:20a.m. – 2:00p.m.

ADMISSION FORMS

Admission forms are to be completed prior to the first day of school. All forms must be filled out and will be kept on file at the school. Your child must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of Health. All children entering the Pre-K class must also supply a record of vision and hearing screening. Please keep your enrollment information up-to-date.

ARRIVAL

The school doors open at 9:20 am, and we are unable to accommodate children prior. Please enter through one of the following options:

- * **Walk In:** Enter through the glass doors and walk your children to class. Give your child a quick goodbye so that they may begin their day. Linger in the classroom may cause unnecessary anxiety and take the attention of the teacher away from the class. Avoid bringing in siblings who are ill. **The walk-in doors will be locked at 9:35am.** If you arrive after 9:35, please pull up to the drop off door.
- * **Drop Off:** Pull up to the Friendship School entrance, and a staff member will greet you to retrieve your child from your vehicle and lead them to their classroom. As you are waiting in the drop off line, please do not block the crosswalk to the glass doors, as some parents will continue walking their children into the building.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance fosters your child's adjustment, and s/he will learn more through consistency in curriculum for the entire month. Please notify the school if your child will be absent.

If your child has been absent for one month without notice of intent, your enrollment will be eliminated and given to a child on the waiting list. If your child must be absent from school for a full month, you may retain your enrollment by paying two-thirds of your monthly fee.

If you withdraw your child before the end of the school year, you will owe the full month tuition of withdrawal date, plus the following month's tuition.

BIRTHDAYS

Feel free to bring a treat on your child's birthday to share with the class, but please do not have your child's birthday party at Friendship School. Coordinate the day you would like to bring a treat with your child's teacher to ensure proper food allergy accommodations are made. Avoid messy treats for the younger classes.

BRIGHTWHEEL

Brightwheel is a childcare app that we will use as primary communication method parents, all billing items such as tuition, fees, etc, and reports from teachers. Parents are expected to set up a Brightwheel account once the school year begins.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Friendship School is required to report any suspected child abuse. We are also required to receive one hour of training every year on recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect in child care settings. We provide open communication to staff and parents and provide information via internet websites and handouts that include warning signs, methods, strategies, and actions to educate parents between the center and community. More information can be found at childhelp.org or by phone at (1-800) 4-A-child or (1-800) 422-4453.

COMMUNICATION/PARTICIPATION

Please feel free to participate in any of our activities and visit the school or director. Please enter the school through the Friendship School entrance. Parents must check in with the school office when entering the premises.

A list of events will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Curriculum summaries will be sent home weekly. Reminders and other information will be sent via email and/or Brightwheel.

We are licensed by the State of Texas. You may contact the local licensing office via their website at **www.hhs.texas.gov**, or by phone at 713-287-3238. Their address is 1330 E. 40th Houston, TX 77022. Human Health and Services Child Abuse Hotline is 1-800-252-5400.

A copy of the Minimum Standards, as required by the state, are available in the director's office and on the Health and Human Services website. Our most recent Licensing inspection report is located on the parent bulletin board outside the director's office.

After reviewing our policies and procedures, if you have any questions or concerns about our policies, procedures, licensing or anything else, please discuss them with the director.

Daily Schedule

- Learning Centers (pretend, literacy, stem, sensory, building, etc.)
- Chapel or Music/Bible/Art
- Circle Time (Bible stories and children's literature)
- Naptime (1's and 2's)
- Arts and crafts
- Outside play
- Lunch

Departure

School is over at 2:00 p.m. Pull up to the Friendship School door where a teacher will bring your child to your car. The 3 year old classes will pick up from the outdoor playground. Arriving after 2:10 is considered late and will incur a \$5.00 late fee. Please do not make a habit of showing up at 2:10 or later. Be considerate of our staff and pick up your child promptly. If you need to pick up your child during school hours, please enter through the Friendship School entrance.

Children will only be released to persons listed on your Child Release Form. If it is necessary for someone other than those listed on the form to pick your child up, you must notify the director or assistant director in advance. If it is someone unknown to us, we will require picture ID and will record Driver's License number and license plate number.

Dress Code

Clothing should be comfortable and suitable for safety when running and playing. Please keep in mind that the children will be using paint, play-doh and other messy art materials. Closed toe shoes are required.

Discipline

Discipline plays an important role in the staff-child relationship at Friendship School. Limits will be set and rules established. However, no corporal punishment will be administered, and no discipline will be used involving toiletry, food or rest. In the event of biting, each set of parents will be notified and an incident report will be filled out. Discipline will be determined on a case by case basis.

If there are recurring discipline problems after trying to work one-on-one with the child, we will contact the parent for advice and information to help understand the problem. Communication in this area is vital, and we would appreciate being notified of any problems that could be affecting your children.

Emergency Preparedness

Our Emergency Preparedness plan includes procedures in case of fire, storm or other emergency situations. We practice these procedures monthly. We keep student and emergency personnel contact information with our emergency plan. A copy of this plan is available on request and is posted on our parent information bulletin board near the school office.

Expulsion Policy

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program. We want you to know that we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The following are reasons we may have to expel a child from this center:

Causes for Immediate Expulsion

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or him/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions towards staff members.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to a staff member in front of enrolled child.

Parental Actions Resulting in Child's Expulsion

- Failure to pay or habitual lateness in payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records.
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child.
- Verbal abuse towards staff.

Child's Actions Resulting in Expulsion

- Continuous uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
- Excessive biting.

Prior to expulsion, a parent will be called and correspondence will be sent home indicating the problem. Every effort will be made by both the center and the parent to correct the problem including in-class intervention and parent conferences. The parent will be asked to remove his/her child if the behavior does not improve after all support steps have been implemented to the best of our ability. The parent will be given a minimum of one week's notice to find another center to provide care for their child.

Fees (Non-Refundable)

A registration fee of \$200 per child per year (\$100 for each additional child) is due at time of enrollment.

A supply fee of \$150 per child per year is due September 1st of each school year.

Gang Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Holidays and Bad Weather Closings

We adhere to Spring Branch School District's holiday closings, as well as their bad weather decisions. **If Spring Branch is closed due to bad weather, we are closed also.** Please watch the local news channels or visit the **Spring Branch ISD website**.

Illness

According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, the symptoms and conditions listed below indicate contagious infection. Any child exhibiting such conditions may not be admitted to school or will be sent home immediately should these symptoms occur while at school. A child must be free of any of these symptoms for 24 hours without the help of medication before returning to school.

- FEVER – any oral or temporal temperature above 100.4 degrees is considered a fever.
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Continuous, heavy, non-clear nasal discharge
- EYES that are RUNNY and/or CRUSTY (pink eye/ conjunctivitis)

HEAD LICE – child may return to school after one application of medicated shampoo. A second shampoo is recommended within 7-10 days.

If your child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease (such as conjunctivitis) by a health care professional, you must bring medical documentation saying that return to school is allowed. **For the protection of all the children and staff that attend Friendship School, we ask for your cooperation in strictly adhering to this policy.**

If your child becomes sick while in our care, the child will be removed from the other children and made as comfortable as possible until you arrive to take him/her home. We do not have proper facilities to care for sick children.

In case of exposure to communicable diseases at school, you will be notified. In turn, we ask that you notify us if your child contracts a diagnosed communicable disease. Each child enrolled or admitted to Friendship School must meet applicable immunization requirements specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services. All immunization records for the children in care must be completed by the date of admission.

Medical Emergency Procedure

In case of medical emergency, we will immediately notify Hedwig Village Emergency Services followed by the contacts listed on your child's enrollment form. All school staff members are trained in first aid and CPR.

MEDICATION

If a child is on a medication that must be administered during school or needs medication for a periodic problem, **parents must fill out and sign an authorization form.** Medication must be in its original container labeled with the child's name.

Should your child have a special circumstance or have any allergies, please inform the teacher and director, and make sure the same information is on the enrollment form.

Nursing Mothers

We are able to make provisions for those mothers who may be nursing a child in our care.

Photos

There will be a photo release that you sign to allow or deny permission to photograph your child for educational and advertising purposes. These photos will be included in your child's memory book, posters around the school, school website, brochures and advertisements at Memorial Church of Christ.

Physical Activity/Recess

Early childhood outdoor play is vital for children's cognitive, social and emotional development. Outdoor play benefits children's physical health. It gives them opportunities to develop their gross motor skills, coordination and balance as they run, jump, skip and hop as well as climb, slide and learn to land safely. Clothing that allows easy movement and closed toe shoes are required.

All classes will have a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity during recess. Students will engage in unstructured play while on the playground or in a toddler time classroom. Students will engage in structured play while inside including but not limited to gross motor movement such as crawling, skipping, hopping, parachutes, throwing balls, etc.

All students will utilize the outdoor playground barring weather conditions. During inclement weather, students will utilize the indoor playground when closed to the public, the gym in the family center, the toddler time room in our church preschool hallway, and the auditorium.

Children will remain inside for recess when the outdoor temperature is 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher or when temperatures are lower than 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Weather will be accessed utilizing My Weather App. Students will utilize our indoor recess options listed above during inclement weather.

Registration

A complete registration form and non-refundable registration fee per child must be submitted in order to register for Friendship School. Waiting lists will begin when a class is full, and you will be contacted as soon as there is a vacancy.

Acceptance or rejection of any application is at the discretion of the director. During the year, the school reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child if necessary. (See expulsion policy).

Special Activities

Various special activities occur throughout the year including a Village Fire Department visit, Pumpkin Day, petting zoo, pony rides, pajama party, etc. Parents are always welcome to visit during the school day.

Tuition

We ask that monthly tuition be paid on the first school day of each month. There is a \$35.00 late payment charge for tuition paid after the 10th of the month. No credits for absences will be given. If a child withdraws from school during the year, full tuition will be due the month s/he withdraws.

May tuition for the upcoming school year is due in August of the current year. This payment will be due by August 1 and is non-refundable. September - April tuition will be due on the first of each month. Friendship School reserves the right to adjust fees from semester to semester, should the economic need arise.

Tuition rates:

- * 1 and 2 year old classes (Monday/Wednesday) \$331/month
- * 1 and 2 year old classes (Tuesday/Thursday) \$348/month
- * 3 year old classes (3 days a week) \$414/month
- * 3 year old classes (4 days a week) \$475/month
- * Pre-K class (3 days a week) \$447/month
- * Pre-K class (4 days a week) \$519/month

We offer a 10% sibling discount for the youngest sibling attending Friendship School.

Toys from home

Please leave your child's toys at home. Concern that a personal toy may be lost or broken distracts from class participation. Friendship School provides ample materials and activities for your child's involvement during the day and cannot be responsible for lost toys from home.

What to bring

- Change of clothes (pants, shirt, socks & underwear) in a resealable plastic bag labeled with child's name in case there is a playground, painting or potty accident.
- Lunch – simple finger foods (sandwich, chips, cheese, crackers, veggies, fruit, etc.) No spaghetti, soups or things that need to be heated. **The lunchbox should be one container with only ONE lid. It can consist of several compartments, but again, only ONE lid.**
- Contained drink in a **sippy cup/water bottle**. Avoid sugary drinks.
- 1s and 2s need a blanket for rest time. You may also send a small pillow. These may be left at school and will be sent home twice per month for cleaning. **All sleeping materials must be able to roll up and fit in a cubby.**
- One box of wipes for children who are toilet trained. We require all students entering the **3s and 4s be potty trained.**
- Large package of diapers and 2 boxes of wipes for children not yet toilet trained.
- A backpack to carry items to and from school.
- A roll of paper towels, Clorox wipes, and facial tissue.

Please label all lunch boxes, cups, coats, bags, blankets, etc. Friendship School cannot be responsible for lost items.