



2021-2022 Preschool Parent Handbook



**Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center
305 South Dogwood Drive
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
(540)433-2474**

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Philosophy & Goals

The mission of Westover Preschool is to provide a safe and nurturing environment designed to promote learning opportunities for our children. Through creative and meaningful play activities, the program promotes the healthy social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of each child. A positive self-concept will be developed, and creativity and self-expression are encouraged. Emphasis is placed on self-discipline by providing limitations and rules.

Administration

Westover Preschool is administered by the Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation. The program is staffed by part-time teachers employed by the Parks & Recreation Department. and has met all minimum standards for licensure by the Virginia Department of Social Services. These standards can be reviewed by any parent upon request.

Harrisonburg Parks & Recreation
305 S. Dogwood Dr.
Harrisonburg, Va. 22801
Phone: 540-433-2474
Fax: 540-433-9169

Recreation and Special Events Manager: Matthew Little
Youth Services Specialist: Nicole Gray
Email: Nicole.Gray@harrisonburgva.gov
Westover Preschool Director:
Email:

Registration

All children must be registered before admission to the program. Registration is held on an ongoing basis from June 1 through the upcoming year. The fee (payment for first month: \$50/4-Year-Old; \$35/3-Year-Old) is payable at the time of registration. The program is offered to children of **city residents** who are fully potty trained and who are or will be **3 years** of age by September 30 and to children who are or will be **4 years** of age by September 30 of the current year.

Before a child can enter the program, the parent must provide the following information:

1. Birth Certificate.
2. Completed registration form.
3. Completed health & immunization record.
4. Payment of registration fee (monthly fees recurring on the first of each month August 1st -March 1st).

Registration for the 2021-2022 preschool year will be held on **June 21**, 2021 for children previously enrolled in the program and their siblings. We will open registration to the public on **July 12**, 2021.

Hours of Operation

4-Year-Olds: September 10- May 20, 2022: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 9:30am-12:00pm
4-Year-Old Open House: Friday, September 9, 2021 9:30am-11:30am

3-Year-Olds: September 11- May 19, 2022: Tuesday and Thursday 9:30am-12:00pm
3-Year-Old Open House: Thursday, September 8, 2021 9:30am-11:30am

Our schedule follows the Harrisonburg City schools schedule; we are closed when they are closed.

Arrival & Departure Policies

Your child needs to be brought to the classroom accompanied by a parent or other adult. No child will be released without parent or written permission by a parent for another adult to pick up the child. If the child is not picked up by 12:15 p.m., a parent will be called and /or any other emergency numbers listed on the registration form. A late-arriving child may locate the group by checking the posted schedule or asking a staff member at the reception desk.

A head count of children is taken on an ongoing basis and always when children are taken from one location to another such as to and from restrooms, gym, playground, etc.

Daily Schedule

The following is a sample schedule. The current schedule is posted in the preschool room.

9:30-10:15	Free Play
10:15-10:30	Clean Up and Bathroom Break
10:30-10:45	Group Time (calendar, helpers, songs)
10:45-11:00	Snack Time
11:00-11:15	Story Time
11:15-11:30	Craft Activity / Gym or Playground
11:30-11:35	Bathroom Break
11:35-12:00	Gym or Playground /Craft Activity

Storage of Personal Items

Each child will be assigned their own storage space or “cubbie” when they arrive the first day. All personal items will be kept in their “cubbie”. Any items that are left behind will be kept in a safe place until the child’s next visit.

Food Policy

A snack will be provided by the Recreation Department each day. A monthly snack schedule will be posted in the room. Snacks will include fruits, vegetables, crackers, spreads, cheese, cereals, bagels, cookies, pretzels, and theme related foods. Juice or milk, and water will be offered daily.

If parents would like to bring a snack on birthdays or other special occasions, they should inform the teachers a week ahead of time. Parents are more than welcome to provide a snack any day if they so desire.

Inclement Weather Policy

The Preschool program will not meet when Harrisonburg City Schools are closed due to inclement weather. Please listen to local radio or television stations for announcements of school closings. You can also call 540-433-2474.

EXCEPTION: If city schools start later than usual, due to severe weather, we will start at our regular time. However, if due to inclement weather the city offices open at 10am or later, preschool will be closed.

Attendance

It is important for parents to notify the school if their child is not attending the program each day. If a child is absent for 3 or more sessions, the teachers will call the home for information about the child's absence.

Illness & Severe Injury

If a child becomes ill or is running a fever, the teachers will contact the parents about picking up their child as soon as possible. The child will be separated from the other children and remain supervised by the teachers.

An injury requiring medical attention will result in the parents being contacted. If parents cannot be reached, the teachers will contact one or both emergency numbers listed on the registration form. In case of emergency medical treatment being required, the parent will be instructed to meet the staff at the appropriate medical facility, and the teachers will bring the registration form with "authorization to obtain care".

Medications

If a child must have medications on hand for emergencies (bee stings, asthma, food allergies), the parents must provide the following:

- Written permission to administer the medication signed by a parent and the child's doctor.
- Provide the original prescription label on the medicine.
- Medicine must be in the original container.
- Make sure the name of the child on the prescription and the child receiving the medication are the same.

Only prescription medicine will be given. Teachers do not apply sunscreen or lotions to any children. If parents wish for their child to have sunscreen, then they should apply it to their child before they arrive at school.

Medications will be kept in a locked cabinet in the preschool room. Any medical authorization note will be kept with the child's personal file. Teachers are required and have received training on administering medications as noted on page 4 of this manual.

Discipline

Disciplinary action may be used as a tool to modify behavior of disruptive children. Discipline is usually in the form of a verbal warning, redirection, and a short “time out” in which the child is placed in a chair away from (but within sight of) other children. Time out does not exceed 5 minutes. When disciplinary actions arise, the following steps are taken to prevent further incidents:

1. Parent / guardian are notified if action is severe or repeated.
2. Conference with parent and staff to try to remedy the situation.
3. Possible suspension from the program with a referral to other programs better suited to the child’s needs.

The following actions or threats thereof are forbidden:

1. Physical punishment, striking a child, roughly handling or shaking a child, restricting movement through binding or tying, forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position, or exercise as punishment;
2. Enclosure in a small confined space or any space that the child cannot freely exit himself;
3. Punishment by another child;
4. Separation from the group so that the child is away from the hearing and vision of a staff member;
5. Withholding or forcing of food or rest;
6. Verbal remarks which are demeaning to the child;
7. Punishment for toileting accidents; and
8. Punishment by applying unpleasant or harmful substances.

Staff Development & Training

Background Checks: All staff who will work with children within the Preschool program will be required to complete a criminal background investigation every 5 years.

CPR & First Aid: Certification in Child CPR and Standard First Aid must be renewed every 2 years.

Staff is subject to random drug and alcohol testing by professional staff at R.M.H. as required by Harrisonburg City.

Staff is mandated to complete 16 hours of training annually in areas which relate to childcare, safety issues, programming, and supervision of children by the Virginia Department of Social Services.

Periodic training in the following is required by staff:

- * Daily Child Health Observation
- * Medication Administration
- * Department of Social Services Mandated Reporting Training

Child Abuse

Any childcare professional is required by law to report any suspected case of child abuse or neglect. Training is available from many sources in identification, procedure, and treatment. Professionals are protected from litigations. Teachers have received instruction in daily health observation of children as well as mandated reporting procedures.

Injury Prevention Plan

- Playground area is maintained and checked by the Parks & Recreation Maintenance staff, our certified playground safety inspector and by preschool teachers on a regular basis. Mulch is raked and checked before use by children.
- Two-way radios or cell phones are taken with staff outside to playground.
- There is site and sound supervision of all children at all times while children are at Westover Preschool. Head counts are taken on an ongoing basis while outside, before coming in, and again once inside.
- The staff will meet on a regular basis to review injuries and discuss prevention measures.
- The condition of all rooms in use by the preschool program is maintained with safety in mind. Floors are always dry, electrical outlets are covered; children are not allowed to run or climb except in the gymnasium or playground and with supervision. All safety regulations outlined in the "Standards for Licensure" are followed.

Playground Safety Plan

When taking the children to the playground there will always be a ratio of one teacher per 10 children with at least two teachers present. The children will receive instruction on properly lining up and staying in a line to and from the playground. To ensure safety from vehicular traffic one teacher shall walk ahead to check for traffic before opening the door and allowing the children to cross to the playground. Teachers will place themselves at various locations on the playground to enable them to have sight of all children.

A first aid kit and two-way radio or cell phone will be taken outside with the group. A head count of children will be taken on an ongoing basis the entire time children are outside, before coming in, and once again when arriving inside the building.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

The staff will practice procedures for various types of emergency evacuations throughout the year. These include fire, tornado, earthquakes, hazardous material spills, flood, and intruder evacuations.

Evacuation plans will include the following:

- a.) Assembly points based on the type of emergency.
- b.) Essential documents (i.e. attendance sheets, phone numbers, medicines)
- c.) Communication with two-way radios or cell phones
- d.) Flashlights, fresh batteries, and battery-powered radio

Emergency evacuation routes are posted in each room and open areas of the building. They depict primary and secondary routes of egress. They also depict Shelter-In-Place rooms in the building.

In the event of fire, Security Concepts will contact the Emergency Operations Center.

The preschool teachers will conduct a **Fire Evacuation Drill each month** with the children. A mock alarm will sound, and the children will proceed out the main entrance, and sit at the end of the sidewalk while teachers take attendance.

The teachers will also conduct **Shelter-In Place Drills** (tornado, earthquake, hazmat emergency). They will sound a mock alarm and take the children to the craft room which is in the interior of the building. Teachers will communicate with other staff by means of two-way radios or cell phones.

For the **Intruder Drill**, the teachers will sound a mock alarm and gather the children in the corner of the classroom. This location is not visible from the door. The door will be locked, and the lights turned off. Teachers will communicate with other staff by means of two-way radios or cell phones.

If in an emergency and the children must evacuate the grounds, they will be taken to Thomas Harrison Middle School. Teachers will then call parents from cell phones to pick up their child. Harrisonburg Transportation will pick up the children and take them to Thomas Harrison Middle School.

There is available, upon request, a detailed Emergency Preparedness Plan that has been approved by Michael L. Landis, Assistant Fire Marshal.

Emergency Phone Numbers

Teachers will keep this list of numbers with the two-way radios or cell phone and First Aid kit:

Police: 434-4436

Thomas Harrison Middle School 434-1949

Transportation Department: 432-0492

Community Activities Center: 433-2474

Parks & Recreation Athletics Office: 433-9168

Asbestos

The Community Activities Center was built in 1977 and contains some building materials that have been identified as containing asbestos. In 1995, these materials were identified in ceilings and floors and have been removed, encapsulated or action was taken to abate any risk to human health. Periodic surveillance inspections by a licensed inspector are conducted.

Covid-19 Procedures

In response to the current Covid-19 pandemic check in and check out procedures will be modified. Students will have individual sign in/out folders with an added column for temperature check upon arrival and symptom checks throughout their time in the program. Any child exhibiting any symptoms will not be allowed to attend until: at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, at least 24 hours without a fever without fever-reducing medication, and all other symptoms have improved. **Isolation information from the Virginia Department of Health is provided below.** Should a child become symptomatic while in the program they will be isolated until parent pick up and the Virginia Department of Health will be contacted for plan of action.

Our current cleaning procedures already align with state guidelines regarding disinfecting surfaces and the substances (bleach and water mixture) used but increased routine cleanings and disinfections will occur as small groups rotate through activities as well as disinfecting high touch areas like doors. Cubbies will continue to be used with cubbies spaced out for student's safety and protection. Proper handwashing techniques will be applied throughout the program with additional opportunities for practice to be incorporated into the daily schedule.

Participants will be required to wear masks and continue to maintain social distancing when appropriate. Supplies needed within the classroom will be assigned individually and sharing of items will no longer occur.

Licensing Information

Westover Preschool is licensed under the Virginia Department of Social Services. For more information contact www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/index.html.