



# Early Childhood Parent Handbook

## **Our Mission**

Holy Trinity Catholic Church and School is a faith-filled eucharistic community committed to Christ-centered stewardship especially through education, justice, hospitality and service

## **Contact Information**

### **Holy Trinity School Office**

Phone: 515-255-3162

Fax: 515-255-1381

<https://holytrinitydm.org/school>

## **Equity Statement**

### **NON DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES**

It is the policy of the Des Moines Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you believe you have (or your child has) been discriminated against or treated unjustly at school contact Mary Gisler 2926 Beaver Ave, Des Moines, IA 50310; phone: 515-255-3162; email: [mgisler@htschool.org](mailto:mgisler@htschool.org)



## **Welcome From the Holy Trinity Early Childhood Staff**

Dear Families,

Welcome!

We are looking forward to a successful year for you and your child in our Early Childhood Program.

We believe the Holy Trinity Early Childhood programs enjoy their good reputation largely because of the support of our families. Your participation is the key to the success of our programs. We encourage your involvement. We welcome it.

We have prepared this Early Childhood Parent Handbook for your information. The handbook should answer most of your questions. If you have additional questions, please contact your child's teacher or classroom staff.

Sincerely,

Holy Trinity Early Childhood Program Staff

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## **OUR CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENTS**

Our Early Childhood curriculum is literacy-based and is designed to provide young children with many ways of playing and iterating with others in the learning environment. Teachers use Houghton-Mifflin Pre-K curriculum, Second Step, PBIS, Scaffolding Early Literacy (SEL) and Mature Play with play plans, as well as additional research-based strategies to help us meet the needs of our diverse population. By following the standards listed below, we are ensuring that all children receive a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate experience that prepares them for kindergarten. Teachers assess the progress of each child using a variety of tools. Teachers use screening tools to identify a student's interests as well as their needs. Teacher Strategies Gold is used to monitor children's progress and the information gathered assists with planning instruction. Student portfolios are also created to show progress over time. Parents receive information about their child's progress during home visits, conferences and as needed throughout the school year.

## **IOWA EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS**

- Physical Well-Being and Motor Development
  - Healthy and Safe Living
  - Large Motor Development
  - Fine Motor Development.
- Approaches to Learning
  - Curiosity and Initiative
  - Engagement and Persistence
  - Reasoning and Problem Solving
  - Play and Senses
- Social and Emotional Development
  - Self
  - Self-Regulation
  - Relationships with Adults
  - Relationships with Children
- Communication, Language, and Literacy
  - Language Understanding and Use
  - Early Literacy
  - Early Writing
- Mathematics
  - Comparison, Numbers and Operations
  - Patterns
  - Shapes and Spatial Relationships
  - Measurement
  - Data analysis
- Science
  - Scientific Reasoning
  - Scientific Investigations
  - Scientific Communication
- Creative Arts
  - Art
  - Music, Rhythm, and Movement
  - Dramatic Play
- Social Studies
  - Awareness of family and community
  - Awareness of culture

- o Awareness of the relationship between people and the environment in which they live
- o Awareness of the past

## ATTENDANCE, PICK UP & SCHOOL CLOSING POLICIES



### Attendance

Good attendance is important for school success. Your child should attend school every day, except when they are ill. It is also important for students to arrive on time each day for the following reasons:

- Children learn the routine and feel comfortable when they know what to expect daily.
- Children begin and end the day as a group. It is important to begin and end the day on a positive note.
- The teacher plans each part of your child's day. If your child is frequently tardy they will miss important learning opportunities.
- Children begin to develop good habits and a positive attitude about school attendance.

**Parents must call the school office to report when their child will be absent. The attendance line is 515-255-3162 ext 114 or email [attendance@htschool.org](mailto:attendance@htschool.org).**

- If your child is absent and staff does not hear before the specified time, you will be contacted to determine the cause of the absence.
- Students should be picked up at dismissal time. If your student has not been picked up 15 minutes after dismissal time they will go to Kid's Connection for a drop-in cost of \$29.

### Pick Up Policy

Children will only be released to an authorized adult as determined by the guardian. Authorization must be given on the Emergency and Pick-Up Permission form by the parent or legal guardian. The names and telephone numbers of adults authorized to pick up your child must appear on this form. **Families should provide as many emergency contacts as possible for emergencies. Please keep these numbers updated if your phone number changes or is disconnected.**

### School Cancellation/Closing

#### EMERGENCY SNOW CLOSINGS

The decision to delay the start of school, cancel or to dismiss early will be made by the school leadership. All families will receive an email notification and phone call. Families may elect to receive SMS messaging in the event of emergency closings/delays. It is critical your information is up to date in PowerSchool in order to receive these updates.

- If Holy Trinity has a delayed start, Preschool/PreK AM will NOT have classes.
- If Holy Trinity has an early dismissal, Preschool/PreK PM and TK will NOT have classes.
- To check for school cancellation, etc., please check the school website (<https://holytrinitydm.org/school>) or KCCI channel 8 or WHO-TV 13.
- In the event of school closings or cancellations, Kids Connection will be CLOSED and all school extra-curricular activities will be canceled.

## HEALTH



### Accident or Illness

- Parents will be contacted immediately in case of serious illness or accident. Preschool staff provides written incident reports to parents when there are minor injuries, minor changes in health status, or behavioral concerns. Accident reports will be completed at the discretion of the school nurse for injuries that require medical attention.
- Please notify the classroom if your emergency contact numbers change, so we can contact you in case of illness or emergency.
- Parents who are working or going to school are encouraged to have a “back-up” plan for a sick child.
- Everyone must wash their hands when entering the classroom.
- Medical records and all health related information will be located in the nurses office and routinely updated by the registered school nurse.



### Communicable Disease Policy

**Please keep your child home if they have any of the following symptoms**

Symptom or disease:	Child may not attend class until:
Diarrhea	Free of diarrhea for 24 hours
Fever – 100.3 degrees by mouth	Fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine
Impetigo	24 hours after treatment is started
Pink eye	Note from doctor
Rash with fever	Note from doctor
Ringworm	24 hours after treatment is started, cover
Vomiting	Free of vomiting for 24 hours

- You will be contacted and asked to pick up your child if he or she becomes ill at school.
- Please notify the classroom if your child has a communicable disease
- The classroom will post notices of exposure of children to a communicable disease.

**Please keep your child at home if he or she has an illness that is contagious OR:**

- Prevents them from being comfortable at school (for example-ear infection or continuous coughing).
- Your child needs more care than the staff can provide without affecting the health and safety of other children.



### Medication Policy

Families are encouraged to give medication at home where children are under the supervision of a parent/guardian. Occasionally, children will need to take medication at school or have medication available for an emergency. The school district’s medication policy is as follows:

- Prescription medication will be located in a locked cabinet.
- Only nurses or other trained district staff will give medicine to a child at school
- The parent or guardian must sign the Authorization and Permission for Administration of Medication form which can be found at <https://holyltrinitydm.org/school>.

- The parent must personally deliver medicine in its original pharmacy container to the school nurse.
- Prescription medications must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container with date, student's name, prescribing physician or person authorizing administration, medication, dosage and time.



## **Mental Health**

Holy Trinity Early Childhood recognizes the importance of mental wellness in our children and our families. Our goal is to assure that each child and family is supported in handling life's challenges in effective ways. Building support staff, community agencies and resources are available to our families and children.



## **Nutrition**

Nutritious meals or snacks are served to all children.

Students will be provided a healthy snack to eat at a designated time in the classroom. Each day students will receive two portions of a healthy snack and water.

- Suggestions include string cheese, fruit/vegetables, crackers, and pretzels.
- Holy Trinity School has students with severe, life threatening food allergies. We require classroom snacks sent to school contain NO peanuts or peanut oils and are store purchased. Please check food labels before sending snacks to ensure they contain no peanut, peanut oil, or products that may have been manufactured around peanuts. Thank you for helping keep ALL students safe.
- Let us know if your child has any food allergies or religious food preferences. If your child has a food allergy, the Diet Modification Request Form must be completed by your child's health care provider and returned to your teacher/school nurse.



## **Physical, Dental, Immunization Forms & Screenings**

### **Physical Examination, Dental Examination and Immunization**

- Children are required to have a current physical and valid certificate of immunization on file at all times.
- Physicals are due within 30 days of enrollment.
- If your child does not have a doctor or dentist, a list of providers can be provided upon request.

### **Screenings**

- Screenings provide important information about your child's health. Each child will have a hearing screening in the Spring. If you do not want your child to participate, please notify the school nurse in writing.



## **Toilet Trained PRESCHOOL 3'S AND TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN**

Preschool 3's and Transitional Kindergarten students must be fully toilet trained to attend Holy Trinity Preschool. As a fully toilet trained child, each child must do the following:

- Will tell the teacher he/she needs to go to the bathroom.



- Is able to go to the bathroom (either urinating or a bowel movement) on his/her own. This includes being able to remove clothing, sitting on the toilet, wiping himself/herself, putting clothing back on, flushing the toilet, and washing and drying his/her hands.
- Is aware of the need to use the toilet without reminders from the teachers (although, teachers do make requests of children at various times of the day, for example, before or after meals, before going out to the playground, etc.).
- Be in regular underwear. Pull-ups are not allowed to be worn.

Our staff is aware that accidents happen. That is why we ask you to keep a change of clothing at school. However, if your child has accidents every day they are in school, we do not consider your child to be toilet training.



## **Toilet Trained UPK**

### **Toilet Training Expectations**

- Children are **not required to be fully toilet trained** to attend Universal Preschool unless otherwise required by state licensing regulations.
- Toilet training is defined as:
  - The child showing awareness of bodily needs
  - The ability to sit on a toilet or potty chair
  - Beginning to communicate the need to use the toilet (verbally or nonverbally)
- Accidents are expected and treated as a normal part of development.

## **Family Partnership**

### **Families are expected to:**

- Communicate their child's current toilet-training stage upon enrollment
- Provide an adequate supply of diapers, pull-ups, wipes, and a complete change of clothing
- Notify staff of changes in toilet-training routines or strategies being used at home
- Work collaboratively with staff to ensure consistency between home and school

### **Diapering and Pull-Ups**

- Children who are not toilet trained or who are in the process of toilet learning may wear diapers or pull-ups.
- Staff will follow all state licensing health and safety procedures, including:
  - Use of gloves
  - Proper sanitation of surfaces
  - Handwashing for both staff and children after diapering
- Diapers and pull-ups will be checked regularly and changed as needed.

### **Toilet Learning Support at School**

#### **Staff will:**

- Encourage, but never force, children to use the toilet

- Offer regular, routine bathroom opportunities
- Use positive language and reinforcement
- Respect children's privacy and dignity at all times
- Never punish, shame, or embarrass a child for accidents

### Accidents

- Children experiencing toileting accidents will be assisted calmly and discreetly.
- Soiled clothing will be sent home in a sealed bag.
- Staff will help children change clothing but will encourage age-appropriate independence when possible.

### Health and Safety

- Staff will not apply creams, ointments, or diaper rash treatments unless proper authorization and documentation are provided by the family, in accordance with licensing regulations.
- Any concerns related to toileting, rashes, or discomfort will be communicated promptly to families.
- Please contact the school nurse for more information or to see the complete Toilet Training Policy.

### UPK Cleaning and Sanitation Practices

To ensure the classroom is properly cleaned and sanitized, all classrooms use the Monthly Cleaning and Sanitizing Frequency Table. Staff will complete each item on the Monthly Cleaning Checklist; initialing and dating as completed daily. The current month's Cleaning Checklist may be posted in an area accessible to staff, and placed in the Classroom Monitoring Binder upon completion, at the end of each month. Completed Monthly Cleaning Checklists will be filed in the Classroom Monitoring Binder for one program year. To promote indoor air quality, aerosol, spray or other air fresheners, sanitizers or perfumes cannot be used in child occupied/used areas. Chemical air fresheners and sanitizers may cause nausea and an allergic response in some children. Odors should be controlled by ventilation and appropriate cleaning and disinfection.

## SAFETY



### Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

All classroom teachers are mandatory reporters as required by local and state laws.

If you suspect a child under the age of 18 is being abused or neglected please call:

- **The Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-362-2178** (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Please be ready to provide identifying information and the whereabouts of the child. You may remain anonymous unless you are making a report as a mandatory reporter. If you are making a report as a mandatory reporter, you must leave your name and contact information.

**If you believe the child is in imminent danger, CALL 911 immediately.**



### Clothing Suggestions

Please dress your child in clothing appropriate for play. Tennis shoes or other shoes with rubber soles should be worn.

### **For safety reasons:**

- Avoid flip-flops and other loose fitting shoes.
- Avoid having students wear jewelry (necklaces, long dangly earrings) they may be lost, broken or present a danger while playing.

**We go outside every day, weather permitting.** When the weather is cold, please dress your child warmly in a hat, coat, gloves and long pants. If you need assistance obtaining appropriate clothing for your child, talk to your classroom staff.

It is very helpful to label your students belongings with their name to prevent lost mittens, hats, scarves, boots, etc.



### **Discipline and Guidance**

In the Holy Trinity Early Childhood Programs, our overall goal is to prepare children for kindergarten. To support this goal, we provide our students guidance and practice in developing social skills. Early Childhood teachers use PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) to teach developmentally appropriate social skills. When a child's behavior affects his/her ability to handle the classroom environment, a meeting with the early childhood team and support staff will occur. The team may be made up of the following people: parent/guardian, teacher, teacher associate, nurse, social worker, and Special Education staff. This team will develop a plan to assist the child.

Here are some of the types of guidance used in our programs and examples of how they might also be used at home:

- **Positive Redirection:** For example, children are throwing toys. A *positive redirection* would be to give the children beanbags and a basket for a beanbag toss as an appropriate alternative.
- **Ignoring misbehavior when appropriate:** Often the best way to discourage negative behavior like showing-off or pouting is to ignore it. Instead pay attention and praise the child when he or she demonstrates positive behavior.
- **Choices to control the situation and not the child:** Use choices with limits. Instead of saying, "Do you want to ride in your car seat?" You might say, "Do you want to hold your book or your toy while you are in your car seat?"
- **Use "First—Then statements:** For example, "**First** put on your coat, **then** we will go outside."
- **Use of natural and logical consequences:** *Natural:* "You splashed water on the floor when you were washing your hands, so you need to help clean it up." *Logical:* "You hit a child with this toy; so I'm going to put this toy away for today."
- **Acknowledging children's feelings:** By helping children recognize and name their own feelings they begin to learn that people may have different feelings about the same things, and that's ok. This also helps children begin to control the behaviors associated with strong feelings.
- **The Holy Trinity Preschool programs do not use corporal punishment of any kind.**

The Student & Parent Handbook contains the full Student Discipline Code is available online at <https://holyltrinitydm.org/school> or you may contact your school office for more information.



### **Educational Equity Statement**

NON DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Board that all schools follow practices that do not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, or national origin. In addition, schools shall comply with the anti-bullying/anti-harassment laws of the state of Iowa as they apply to religious institutions, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act as such may apply to diocesan schools.

## State of Iowa Annual Notice

### Notice: Corporal Punishment, Restraint, and Physical Confinement and Detention

State law forbids school employees from using corporal punishment against any student. Certain actions by school employees are not considered corporal punishment. Additionally, school employees may use “reasonable and necessary force, not designed or intended to cause pain” to do certain things, such as prevent harm to persons or property.

State law also places limits on school employees’ abilities to restrain or confine and detain any student. The law limits why, how, where, and for how long a school employee may restrain or confine and detain a child. If a child is restrained or confined and detained, the school must maintain documentation and must provide certain types of notice to the child’s parent.

If you have any questions about this state law, please contact your school. The complete text of the law and additional information is available on the Iowa Department of Education’s website: [www.iowa.gov/educate](http://www.iowa.gov/educate).



### Lock-Down

A lock-down is a safety measure we take in response to a threat directly to the school or in the surrounding neighborhood. As a part of Holy Trinity’s Crisis Management Plan, all school buildings hold lock-down drills, just as we do fire and tornado drills. The teachers talk with students and read a story about lockdown drills prior to the first drill.

During a lock-down:

- All school activities are moved indoors.
- Exterior doors and classroom doors are locked.
- No one is allowed to enter or exit the building. Parents may not enter or exit the school during a lock-down. This is for your safety and the safety of your child.

Parents: Please be sure that the teacher has your most up-to-date emergency contact information. In the event of a lock-down or other emergency, school staff will use that information to contact you. Following a lock-down, parents will be informed that the school was placed on lock-down, the nature of the incident, and how long the lock-down was in place.



### Environmental Safety

- Teachers and school staff are responsible for the supervision, guidance and safety of children throughout the school day.
- Parents and guardians have unrestricted access to their own child (except during a building lock-down.)
- The school district has written emergency plans for fire, tornado, flood, intruders, intoxicated parent, lost or abducted children, power failures, bomb threats, chemical spills, earthquakes, and blizzards. These plans include evacuation sites. Emergency evacuation plans are posted at all exits. Emergency numbers for police, fire department, Poison Control Center and ambulance service are posted by all phones. Children’s emergency information is accessible to staff.
- All full-time teachers have current First Aid and CPR certification.

- No smoking is allowed within the facility, or on the playground.
- First aid kits are clearly labeled and available within the school and in the outdoor play area.
- All classrooms clean and sanitize surfaces daily.
- All staff are certified in Universal Precautions to protect against the spread of potentially infectious body fluids. Please contact the school nurse for detailed information.



### Toys from Home

Please do not send toys to school. Everything that children need for a successful early childhood experience is provided. Holy Trinity has a zero tolerance policy regarding guns, knives and other weapons, including toy weapons. You may find the policy on the Holy Trinity website <https://holytrinitydm.org/school/> in the Holy Trinity Parent Handbook.

## FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS and FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Holy Trinity's Early Childhood Program works with each family to create the best possible experiences for their child's growth and social development. We believe that:

- You are your child's first and best teacher.
- Children do best when parents and classroom teachers work together.
- Parents who support and extend their child's learning contribute to their child's success both in school and in life.
- Parent input is vital to program improvement.



### Home Visits and Conferences

- Family visiting is an important part of our **4 year-old UPK** Early Childhood program. These visits usually take place in the child's home. Early childhood staff will make a visit to your home before the child starts in the classroom.
- There will also be **two parent-teacher conferences** at school per year. During visits and conferences teachers will share information about your child's progress. You can share information, strengths and concerns about your child at this time. This information is helpful to the teaching staff as they plan learning activities for your child and the other children in the classroom. Parents and guardians may request additional conferences with staff any time.



### Progress Portfolio

Each student will receive a progress portfolio during the school year. In addition, a conference including the student, parent and teacher will be held in the fall and spring semester. Students will be assessed on the following: Physical Development, Social/Emotional Development, Intellectual Development, Language Development



## Communication

A weekly communication will keep you informed of classroom, school and community-based activities and opportunities. Check your child's backpack regularly for notes and other classroom information. In addition to the classroom communication, Holy Trinity provides school wide weekly updates with information regarding community events and school activities.



## Volunteering

Parents are encouraged to participate in our program. Your participation is welcome in the following areas:

- Decision-making about your child's education
- Helping in the classroom
- Preparing materials for the classroom
- Developing and participating in activities for parents



## Website

The web address for Holy Trinity Preschool programs is <https://holytrinitydm.org/school> a great resource for preschool information, upcoming events, and contact information for staff.

## UPK Survey

At the end of each school year we will provide a digital survey to our families whose students attend UPK. We provide this survey to gather feedback, suggestions, and valuable insights from parents to provide a quality education and nurturing environment for development.