

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center

**930 Southern Blvd.
West Palm Beach, FL 33405**



Parent Handbook

2013-2014

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRESCHOOL AND CENTER PARENT HANDBOOK

Introduction

An interesting and rewarding experience awaits you as a parent of Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center. To answer some of your questions concerning the policies at Holy Cross, a Parent Handbook has been prepared. Please read it thoroughly and retain it for future reference. The policies stated in this handbook are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school, as are all other policies, procedures, or programs of the school. From time to time, you may receive updated information concerning changes in policy. However, Holy Cross has the right to add, delete or revise any school policy or procedure with or without notice. This handbook is not a contract, express or implied, and none of the policies or provisions should be construed as such. If you have any questions about the policies of Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center, please ask the Executive Director for assistance.

Mission Statement

The mission of Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center is to witness God's love to all people, especially migrants, immigrants and refugees within the Diocese of Palm Beach.

Through Early Childhood Education, quality child care and the teaching of adult basic skills in an environment that fosters the Gospel values of justice, mercy and love, the family unit will be empowered, encouraged and guided to integrate fully into their new culture while retaining and cherishing the culture to which they belong.

Philosophy

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center interprets the philosophy and goals that provide quality child care, early childhood and adult education with an environment that leads the child and adult in the process of discovering, affirming and developing their inherent goodness and relationship with God. It is the responsibility of the administration, faculty and staff to develop the whole child and to encourage the adult students spiritually, physically, intellectually, psychologically and emotionally.

Objectives

- ❖ To serve the population in the Diocese of Palm Beach, including all ethnic cultures.
- ❖ To have an inviting place with quality programs to teach adult education skills.
- ❖ To create a quality child care and an early childhood development program for children from infancy through pre-kindergarten age.
- ❖ To serve the Palm Beach Diocese in a religious-oriented adult and early learning atmosphere.
- ❖ To provide volunteer opportunities for college, high school, and elementary students at Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center.

Open Admission Policy

Holy Cross has an open admission policy. No person, on the grounds of race, color, disability or national origin, is excluded or otherwise subjected to discrimination in the receiving of services. Nor does Holy Cross discriminate in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, disability, age, gender or national origin.

General Information

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center is located within the Diocese of Palm Beach and supported by the Diocese of Palm Beach Office of Catholic Schools. In the child care and preschool classes, the educational, age-appropriate experiences are determined by the interests and needs of the children. The daily schedule is planned within the integrated day of a traditional classroom approach to learning. The traditional classroom is described as a creative day that has scheduled activities providing a “hands-on approach to learning” within a structured environment. The daily schedule allows for spontaneous “teachable moments” and flexibility. Within this day there is time and opportunity in a planned learning environment for the spiritual, social, emotional, physical, intellectual and aesthetic growth of the child at his/her own rate of development. Our definition extends this day to encompass the whole life of the child during the formative years of exploration and discovery.

The child care (Infants, 2’s and Transitional 3’s) offers full-time and part-time sessions (3-day, 4-day or 5-day). The preschool offers a weekly full-time (7:50 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) or part-time (3-day, 4-day or 5-day) creative educational program. Morning Care (7:00 a.m.-7:45 a.m.) and After Care (3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.) are available for the preschool students at an hourly rate.

We believe that families are the most important part of a child’s life. Throughout the year, parents will have many opportunities to volunteer their time, talents and gifts to enhance our child care and preschool program. We look forward to a positive relationship with our parents and feel strongly that open communication between parents and staff members is essential in meeting your child’s needs. This handbook is designed to clearly define our policies in some of the most common areas of concern.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Absences

If your child is absent, please call the office before 8:00 a.m. the morning of the child’s absence. Upon their return to school, please send a note with your child explaining the reason for the absence. If your child has a contagious disease (chicken pox, strep throat, etc.) **please inform the office.** Your child must be symptom free (including fever) for 24 hours before returning to school. Do not send your child to school with signs of illness (including, but not limited to fever, rash, diarrhea, vomiting, runny nose and cough). If you plan to take your child out of school for any period of time, please inform the school office and his/her teacher. **Your tuition will not be prorated for any absences (including family vacations and sickness).**

Accident/Injury

Sometimes during the natural flow of child play, children may get hurt. Any minor incident will be documented and reported upon the parent’s arrival. In case of a serious injury, Holy Cross will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent, emergency contact or the child’s physician if the parent cannot be reached. If necessary, the paramedics will be called.

Admissions

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center, along with and in compliance with the Diocese of Palm Beach, state their admission policy, namely, that no child or adult will be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation. Pre-Kindergarten students (ages 3 and 4) must meet the age requirements set by the state and the Diocese. They must be age three (3) or four (4) on or before September 1. Non-Catholic parents and students understand that Catholic faith development will be taught on a regular basis with special prayer services, role-playing, etc. Faith development is part of the curriculum. Admission to Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center is conditional and the administrator reserves the right to refer a student to another educational institution if it is the best interest of the child.

Child Care and Preschool Ages

Child Care:

3 months to 24 months

24 months to 36 months

Transitional 3's: (born after September 1st of the current school year and must be completely potty trained).

Preschool:

Pre-K3 (3 years old-born on or before September 1st of the current school year)

Pre-K4 (4 years old-born on or before September 1st of the current school year;

5 years old-born after September 1st of the current school year).

Arrival and Departure

Child Care and Preschool Morning Care begin at 7:00 a.m. The preschool begins at 7:50 a.m. Monday through Fridays. After signing in at the front desk, all children are to be escorted to their classroom. Parents are asked to also sign their child 'in' upon arriving in the classroom. If a preschooler is attending Morning Care, the parent is to escort their child to the cafeteria. The Morning Care staff will then escort your child to the classroom at 7:45 a.m. **To provide the optimum educational experience for your child at Holy Cross, your cooperation is greatly appreciated regarding arrival to school. Please bring your child to school on time. Classes are disrupted by late arrivals.**

All child care students are to be picked up by 6:00 p.m. At the end of the preschool day, the students are to be picked up no later than 3:00 p.m. Any preschooler not picked up by 3:00 p.m. will be automatically signed into After Care. **A parent/guardian is to sign-out their child at the front desk and in the classroom.**

Authorization to Pick up

Children will be released only to the adults listed on the *Authorized to Pick-Up* form. A photo ID will be required. **Caregivers will not release your child to anyone without previous arrangements made by the parent/guardian in person.**

Birthday Celebrations

If any parent/guardian would like to celebrate a child's birthday, the parent needs to communicate all plans with the lead teacher. The Health Department does not allow baked goods made at home. Baked goods are to be purchased at a local bakery or grocery store. If the child's party is to be held at home, invitations may be given out at school but only if all of the children receive an invitation. If not, the invitations must be sent by mail to those invited.

Chapel

The chapel will be used regularly by the children in a variety of ways focusing on religious themes and events. It will be a special time where the children can learn and experience God's love through prayer, role playing the scriptures, music, special religious and birthday celebrations, prayer services and liturgies.

Child Protective Investigations

Florida law provides that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver or other person responsible for the child's welfare, must report such knowledge to the Department of Children and Families. The school will cooperate with all child protective investigations by DCF or the local law enforcement agency. Reports should be made to Florida's Dept. of Children and Families by calling the Abuse Hotline at: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

Child protective investigations by DCF or local law enforcement agencies sometimes include interviews of students at school and may occur without advance notice. When it is reasonably possible, the school will seek to notify the parents that their child has been asked to participate in a child protective investigation. The school may also request the presence of a school staff member during investigative interviews while on school property. However, please note that, under FL law, DCF and local law enforcement have the discretion to conduct unannounced interviews and to disallow school staff member's presence during these interviews.

Closed Campus

The Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center programs are on a closed campus. Children are not permitted to leave the Holy Cross grounds at any time during the day unless picked up and signed out by a parent or guardian. Parents will escort their children into the building, sign in and then proceed to the classroom. The same procedure is done for a child's dismissal. You must inform the teacher if someone other than the regular designated persons will be picking up your child. A photo ID will be required at the front desk. Caregivers will not release the child to anyone without previous arrangements made by the parent/guardian. **Parents, visitors and volunteers must report directly to the receptionist and sign the visitor/volunteer book. Visitors and volunteers must wear a badge while on campus and sign out prior to leaving. Parents and guardians must also report to the office as a visitor while on campus and prior to leaving the campus.**

Clothing

Child Care children (3 months-36 months) should wear comfortable clothes and closed toe shoes. Closed toe shoes are the required shoes because they are safer than sandals. Students in T3, PK3 and PK4 will wear the school uniform which consists of khaki shorts and white, light blue or navy polo shirts. Velcro tennis shoes and socks are the required uniform shoe. Children are required to have a complete change of labeled clothes in their classroom. An accident may occur and we want to help your child avoid embarrassment by being comfortable in clean, dry clothes. Please make sure all clothes, book bags, lunchboxes and other items have your child's name on them.

Communications

It is very important that parents/guardians read the notices sent home by the teachers and the Executive Director. It is our intent to have you as well informed as possible. A monthly newsletter will be published with important events and information. Bulletin boards by each classroom also post information during the school year.

Conferences

Informal Conferences with the parents/guardians are vital to the growth of the children and are held periodically throughout the year at the teacher's and parent's discretion. Formal conferences are held in the fall and in the spring. Parents/guardians will receive a progress assessment on their child at this time.

A child's progress assessment is a way for the teacher to discuss with the parents/guardians the development of their child's cognitive, social, emotional, physical and spiritual growth. The final progress assessment will be given to the parents/guardians and a copy will be placed in the child's cumulative record file.

Curriculum

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center offers child care and preschool learning experiences that are determined by the interests and needs of the children. To accomplish this purpose the daily program consists of the following areas of the curriculum in the child care program: physical development, play, music, social skills, language development and faith development. The preschool program includes assemblies, faith development, language development, math concepts, social skills, health, science and discovery, free choice activities, music, art, physical development, play and cooking. A daily schedule will be posted in each classroom.

Discipline

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center strives to discourage all forms of unacceptable behavior by maintaining a positive classroom environment. Corporal punishment, threatening gestures and harsh language are never used with the children. Reinforcement, re-direction and positive behavior are used, addressing actions rather than children and giving children a clear understanding of the consequences of unacceptable behavior. If misbehavior continues, the administrator and teacher will have a conference with the parent/guardian for possible solutions.

Emergency procedures/severe weather

Emergency fire and tornado drills are held once a month to acquaint your child with our emergency procedures. This may make quite an impression on your child the first time, but they will soon become accustomed to it and know just what to do. These drills are used as a learning tool to teach the children about safety procedures. In the event of a tornado warning, the children will proceed to the hallways next to their classrooms. In case of severe weather (i.e. hurricane watch or warning), our policy is to follow the action of the Palm Beach County School Board in regard to hazardous weather conditions and school closings. Please listen to the news on your local radio/TV station for this information. Parents should always use discretion concerning travel in inclement weather.

Enrollment

Enrollment in the child care and preschool programs are open to children ages three (3) months to five (5) years of age. Requirements for enrollment include the following completed forms:

1. Enrollment Application
2. Medical Records
 - Physical
 - Certificate of Immunization (must have had DPT, Polio, MMR, Chicken Pox and HIB immunizations)
 - Health History Form
 - Authorization for Emergency Medical Treatment
3. Field Trips and Activities Permission Form
4. Photo Release Form
5. Medication Permission Form
6. Emergency Card

Extended Care Programs

The extended care programs for preschoolers will consist of Morning Care and After Care. Morning Care is from 7:00 a.m. until 7:45 a.m. in the cafeteria. After Care will be provided from; 3:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. There will be an hourly fee for these services. Payment for extended care is due at the same time as the tuition payment.

Field Trips

Children need a written permission to go on field trips. We cannot take permission for trips via telephone. Parents are required to fill out the Diocesan' release/consent form for each trip outside the school premises. The child will not be allowed to go on the field trip if this form is not signed and handed in to the teacher.

Financial Obligations

Tuition is due during the first week of the month. You may choose a bi-weekly or monthly payment plan. A late fee will be charged for late payments. The satisfaction of all financial obligations to Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center, including tuition and fees, constitutes a material condition for continued enrollment in the school. In addition, Holy Cross may withhold the issuance of any school record and/or disallow participation in or access to school activities, and/or disenroll the student if any financial obligations are not met.

Food

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center does not have a daily food program providing a nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack for the children. Lunch may be purchased on specific days. We encourage only healthy and nutritious food to be sent for your child's snack and lunch. If you would like for your child to have a warm lunch, please send it in a thermos. Please label your child's lunch box and all food/beverage containers.

Fundraising

No family may solicit funds to benefit Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center unless such solicitation has been authorized in writing by the Executive Director.

Harassment and Discrimination

Holy Cross is committed to providing an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. In keeping with this commitment, Holy Cross will not tolerate harassment or discrimination on the basis of a person's protected status, such as gender, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status. All employees, faculty members and students are protected under this policy. In addition, this policy applies to all conduct occurring on school grounds or at school-sponsored events. All students/parents are responsible for helping to assure that any harassment or discrimination is reported. If a student/parent witnesses or learns of any conduct that violates this policy, the student/parent must immediately report the incident to the school's director. If, however, the director is the individual who is believed to have engaged in the inappropriate conduct, the student/parent should notify the Superintendent of Schools of the Diocese of Palm Beach. If an investigation reveals that inappropriate conduct has occurred, Holy Cross will take corrective action based on the circumstances.

Health Records

Children must receive the standard health immunizations for their age. The child's record is required before a child may begin attending Holy Cross. Forms for a current physical and immunizations are provided at the pediatrician's office and are kept on file at Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center.

Illness

If a child becomes sick with a fever, vomiting, constant coughing, diarrhea, head lice, or an emergency condition, the parent will be notified immediately. The child will be removed from the classroom and taken to the school infirmary until the parent is able to pick up the child. Please pick up your child as soon as possible. If your child should come down with a contagious disease, please notify us immediately. Your child must be symptom free (including fever) for 24 hours before returning to school. Do not send your child to school with signs of illness (including but not limited to fever, rash, diarrhea, vomiting, runny nose and cough). It is important that the school office have a current phone number where the parent/guardian can be reached during the day. Please include all mobile numbers. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the school office if their contact numbers change.

Jan Claire Kemper Literacy Center

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center has a Literacy Center which is used by both the children and the Literacy Program students. The children visit the Jan Claire Kemper Literacy Center on a regular basis for group story time and quiet reading time.

Medications

Students are not permitted to carry or distribute any prescription or non-prescription drugs or treatments, including aspirin, on the school grounds or at any school function. The administering of medicine to a student outside the doctor's office or a health institution is a parental responsibility and should not be delegated to school personnel except under unusual circumstances. Parents should ask their physicians if it is possible to prescribe medication so it can be administered at home. Only when necessary will Holy Cross allow the administration of medication on campus, and only under the following guidelines:

1. An "Authorization for Medication" form must be completed and submitted by a parent or legal guardian of the student. The name of the medication and dosage should be indicated on the form.
2. Medications to be taken by students must be personally brought by the parent or legal guardian to the School Office. Medications to be dispensed at school must be labeled with the child's name and exact dosage. The name and telephone number of the physician should also be on the label. Students may not bring the medication to school alone.
3. If a student must take any medication during the school day, the medication must be kept with the School Office and the student must go to the school clinic to have it administered.

Parent Cooperation

Holy Cross views the education of a student as a partnership between parents and the school. Parents and students are expected to comply with the school rules and policies, and to accept and support the authority of school officials. Just as a parent can withdraw a child from Holy Cross if desired, Holy Cross has the right to disenroll a student if it determines, at its discretion, that the parent or student partnership with Holy Cross is irretrievably broken.

Registration

Registration for the upcoming year will begin in February. Registration dates and procedures will be given to you in January. Currently enrolled students will receive registration information through school communications. A non-refundable registration fee of \$150.00 will be due at the time of registration.

School Calendar

The following holidays will be observed during the year. **There is no discount or deduction of tuition for their observance.** Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center will be closed on the following days:

Veterans' Day	Martin Luther King Day	Memorial Day
Presidents' Day	Independence Day	Labor Day

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center will be closed for holiday observance and business matters during the year **with no charge of tuition.** These days are:

New Year's Day Holiday	Easter Holidays	Summer Cleaning Week
Thanksgiving Holidays	Christmas Holidays	Teachers' Professional Days

School and Office Hours

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The school reception desk is open from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. on regular school days.

Morning Care is held in the cafeteria from 7:00 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. for the preschoolers. Parents may provide breakfast for their child. Preschool children are escorted from the cafeteria into their respective classrooms to start their school day at 7:45 a.m. Children in the Child Care (Infants, 2's and Transitional 3's) may be brought to their respective classrooms at 7:00 a.m.

Dismissal for the preschool program is at 3:00 p.m. Preschool children that are not picked up by 3:00 p.m. will stay for the After Care program until they are picked up by their parent/guardian. Child Care children (Infants, 2's and Transitional 3's) will be picked up in their respective classrooms. All children must be picked up by 6:00 p.m. or a late fee will be charged.

School Pictures

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center has a professional photographer take individual and class pictures of the children. You will be notified in advance when the individual and class pictures will be taken. There is no obligation to purchase these pictures.

School Sponsored Events

Holy Cross does not sponsor, oversee, or in any way control parties or social functions at private residences. **Parents, by executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this handbook, HEREBY RELEASE Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center, the Diocese of Palm Beach, and their cooperate members, officers, employees, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to attendance at parties or social functions at private residences or from attendance at functions not sponsored by the school.**

Special Needs

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center believes that children are unique individuals with their own abilities and needs. In order to most effectively foster the abilities and meet the needs of children with special needs, a team approach involving the parent/guardian, director and staff will be used to realistically bring about a successful learning experience.

Testifying in Divorce or Custody Proceedings

The Catholic Church recognizes marriage as a Sacrament. In the Union of Christian spouses, the Sacrament of Matrimony celebrates the relationship of Christ to the Church. Therefore, Holy Cross strongly supports the Sacrament of Matrimony as the foundation of family life and of the domestic Church. In recognition of the importance of the matrimonial sacrament to the Catholic faith, parents agree not to compel the attendance, testimony, or deposition of any school or church employee in any divorce, custody, or other legal proceedings which may in any way involve the dissolution of marriage or the determination of parental/custody right.

In the event that a parent or legal guardian breaches this policy, any school or church personnel who are required to attend legal proceedings may be represented by an attorney. In addition, any and all legal fees and costs incurred will be charged and become the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian.

Toilet Training

During the toddler year, parents are strongly encouraged to teach begin the process of teaching their child to be potty trained. This process will also be integrated as part of the school day for the toddlers. It is important that parents and teachers are in communication for there to be consistency in the toilet training process. By age three, children are expected to be completely potty trained.

Tuition

Tuition payments are due on the first (1st) week of the month. You have the option of paying bi-weekly or monthly. A late fee will be charged for late payments. Checks or money orders should be made payable to Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center. Please write your child's first & last name on the check or money order. A fee will be assessed for any returned checks.

Checks are to be placed in the Payment Box located in the Copy Room. **Please do not send any tuition payments in your child's belongings.** Cash payments are not accepted for tuition.

Failure to pay tuition will be reason for loss of enrollment at Holy Cross. If payment is not received for two consecutive weeks, a conference will be scheduled with the Executive Director. Tuition assistance is available. Please see the Executive Director to discuss the necessary procedures for applying for tuition assistance.

Use of Photos

Holy Cross reserves the right to use student or parent photos in any school publications and on the school's website. Any parent who does not wish his or her child's picture or video to be used accordingly must notify the school's director in writing prior to the beginning of the school year. **Parents, by executing this acknowledgement of receipt of this handbook, HEREBY RELEASE Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center, the Diocese of Palm Beach, and their cooperate members, officers, employees, and agents, from any claims or liabilities that arise from or are related to the use of student or parent photos.**

Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I, as Parent or Legal Guardian, acknowledge that I have read the entire contents of the Parent Handbook and understand the consequences of any violations of the rules and policies of Holy Cross Catholic Preschool and Center.

I agree to cooperate with Holy Cross in the interpretation and enforcement of the policies outlined in the Parent Handbook. I also understand that Holy Cross has the ultimate authority over the administration of the school and the interpretation of the school's rules and policies. Moreover, I further understand that all of the school's policies whether written or verbal are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the school with or without notice.

I also hereby acknowledge that I have read and agree to the terms of the **RELEASES** outlined in the School Sponsored Events Policy, and the Use of Photos Policy.

(Print Parent/Legal Guardian Name)

(Date)

(Signature Parent/Legal Guardian)

(Print Student Name)

(Grade Level)