

WELCOME



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www.holycomforterpreschool.com

PARENT PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

2025-2026

WELCOME TO HOLY COMFORTER EPISCOPAL PRESCHOOL

A day at Holy Comforter Episcopal Preschool is filled with learning and discovery. Self-directed play in teacher prepared learning centers offers age-appropriate academic lessons along with manipulative toys, blocks, dramatic play, music, art and science.

Active outdoor play for 45 minutes a day is an important part of a child's day. Teachers will also use other opportunities to take the children outdoors.

Circle time, snack, music, and creative activities will also be a part of your child's day. The goals of our developmental program are to encourage the child to develop a positive self-image and to grow emotionally, socially, spiritually, physically, and intellectually.

The teacher will provide a balance of play and learning activities, to include the development of goals for the individual children so that each child will receive the attention, challenges, and successes she/he needs. In a warm and nurturing Christian environment, the children will have many opportunities for hands-on learning, age-appropriate academic instruction, creative activities, and socialization.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Holy Comforter Episcopal Preschool is exempt from licensure because of the tax exempt status of the Church of the Holy Comforter; however, the following information is provided in accordance with Virginia State Law Section 63.1-196.3 of the Code of Virginia.

1. Prospective staff members are interviewed by the Preschool Director. Applicants are evaluated on the following criteria:
 - (a) Educational background.
 - (b) Early Childhood or Elementary Teaching credential or counseling/social work credential.
 - (c) Experience in working with young children.
 - (d) Ability to teach in accordance with the Preschool's philosophy.
2. The Preschool is located on the first floor of the Church of the Holy Comforter at 543 Beulah Road, N.E., Vienna, Virginia. The Preschool has access to the church's kitchen and all other church facilities, as needed.

A fenced play area contains equipment, such as slides, a bridge and climbing apparatus.

3. The program may have 100 children ages two and one-half to six years of age.
4. The Preschool maintains public liability insurance provided by the Church Insurance Corporation of New York City.
5. The Preschool is in compliance with the Code of Virginia, which requires that each staff member be certified annually to be free of any disability which would prevent her/him from caring for children. Proof of a negative Tuberculin test is also required for each staff member. Teachers will also be screened annually to be free of communicable diseases.
6. In compliance with the Department of Social services, all staff members undergo a fingerprint, background, and sexual registry check.
7. All staff complete Abuse and Neglect training.

ENROLLMENT

Upon receipt of the registration forms, tuition contract, registration fee, permission form, emergency care form, and the health form, the child will be placed in an age-appropriate class. We will make every effort to honor specific requests. Each child will be enrolled on a conditional basis. The staff will continually evaluate each child's placement and adjustment within the school's program. If, in the opinion of our staff, a child appears to lack the readiness for the school experience or if other issues are noted which indicate that the child is not adapting well to the school environment, the parents will be called for a conference. The Preschool Board reserves the right to dismiss a child during the school year if it is determined that this action is in the best interest of the child and the school. If a parent finds it necessary to withdraw a child from the program during the school year, a two-week written notice is required although the current month's tuition as well as the May 2026 tuition will not be refunded as agreed upon in the tuition contract.

EVALUATION POLICY

Recognizing Behavioral or Developmental Problems

The Preschool Director and parents will be notified if a teacher's assessment of a child's behavior deems it necessary for further evaluation. As every situation is unique, a plan will be implemented with the cooperation of the parents and

teachers to handle the situation. If necessary, the parents will be directed to Fairfax County's Child Find program. With consent from the parents the preschool will work with outside professional services if needed to confer about a specific child.

Children With Special Needs

Enrollment for children with special needs will be considered if the program is able to accommodate those needs. HCEP & K staff is not specifically trained in Special Education and will make accommodations with consideration of all children in the classroom.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

One month's tuition is due May 1, 2025 (for May 2026 tuition) or upon registration for the 2025-2026 school year. May 2026 tuition is not refundable after May 31, 2025. Tuition for the school year is divided into 9 equal payments. We encourage automatic direct debit for tuition payments. If you are unable to do automatic debit, please make checks payable to HCEP & K and mail to the school. Tuition payments after the 10th of the month must include a \$15 late fee. Accounts must be paid up-to-date by the first of the following month or your child may be withdrawn. There will be a \$35 fee for returned checks or auto debits.

Scholarships may be provided for children who would benefit from the program but whose family income precludes participation if the full tuition is charged. Criteria for determining a need are established and reviewed by the Preschool Board Finance Committee. Applications are available from the Director.

On time drop off at **9:00am** is vital for your child's success. Morning activities begin his/her social growth and one-on-one activities with the teacher. Prompt pickup at dismissal **1:00pm** ensures your child's feelings of trust. In addition, the teachers required to supervise the involved children are unable to prepare the room for the next class, attend planning sessions or staff meetings. Please let staff know of any appointment that may result in late drop off. To encourage families to make every effort to pick up their children on time, late fees will be charged as follows:

First time late charge – Reminder of late policy
Second time late charge - \$10 for each 15 minutes late
Third time late charge - \$20 for each 30 minutes late

PRESCHOOL DISCIPLINARY POLICY

Positive discipline teaches children where limits are set, how to maintain control of their bodies, and how to problem solve in the event of a conflict. Holy

Comforter Episcopal Preschool encourages positive redirection. We strive to create a safe and nurturing classroom environment by teaching children appropriate social behavior. Our teachers encourage children to empathize with one another's feelings and see the results of their actions. If needed, teachers may ask children to "sit out and think" about his/her actions and/or words after given a verbal warning. A teacher will follow up with a discussion with the child. Teachers will inform parents either via email, phone call, or direct conversation. Holy Comforter staff members and director will always work with the children and communicate with parents to try to modify inappropriate behaviors and identify causes when necessary. In serious circumstances such as continued disruptive behavior, inappropriate language or behavior that threatens the health, safety, and welfare of any student or adult at Holy Comforter, an immediate conference will be scheduled with director, teacher, and parent to determine course of action. Director has the right to determine if the child be asked not to return to school until this conference has occurred. Holy Comforter Preschool Board reserves the right to dismiss a child during the school year, if it is determined that this action is in the best interest of the child, other students, and the school.

THE SCHOOL DAY

Preschool hours of operation are 9 am – 1 pm.

The two ½ year old class will start their day at **9:10 am** and will be dismissed at **12:50 pm**. Parents may escort their child directly to their classroom.

FIRST WEEK

To help children make the adjustment from home to a school schedule, school hours for the first week of school will be different from those regularly scheduled. Except for the two ½ year old class, all other preschool classes begin regular hours 9am-1pm after the first week.

ESCORTING YOUR CHILD

When on school premises, students must be escorted by parents or adult caretakers. Students must be accompanied by an adult at all times until dropped off with school personnel. Please be punctual in getting your child to school or picking them up at dismissal time. **No dogs allowed at drop-off and pickup times please.** Your child is your responsibility once you pick him or her up from his or her classroom. You should know where he or she is at all times, whether you both are walking to your car, your child is playing in any area, or you are chatting with a friend.

To ensure everyone's safety, hold your child's hand while walking to your car. Please be aware of cars backing out of their parking spots, and avoid using your cell phone while driving and maneuvering in this very busy area. Our parking lot travels in a one-way direction counter clockwise.

Please be aware that there are several areas that are **out of bounds**.

- THE MEMORIAL GARDEN - Children may **not** play in the area to the right of the sidewalk leading to the entrance door or the stairs leading up to the second floor where the Memorial Garden is located.
- THE POND - This area is very dangerous. Your child should not play near the pond or the stream leading up to it.

Please note that the Labyrinth by the pond is a place of peace and spiritual awakening. Children may be on the labyrinth only while accompanied by parents. Please be aware that the labyrinth is **not** a playground. **Please do not allow your children to climb the trees or to enter the labyrinth if someone is walking or praying. The Church of the Holy Comforter and HCEP & K are not liable for any injuries.** If a parent chooses to have his/her child play on the playground outside of school hours, the parent assumes responsibility for his/her child and the school does not assume liability.

SCHOOL DISMISSAL

Children will not be released to persons other than their parents or those authorized by parents to pick up their child. If you are authorizing an unlisted adult to pick up your child (i.e., playdates, emergency situations etc.) please inform the school office via email or a phone call. The school will require identification at pickup.

CLOTHING

Think of your child's comfort and provide simple, washable, sturdy clothing that is free of complicated fasteners. The child's school day will involve painting and outdoor play. Sandals and open toe shoes are not appropriate for preschool. Please label all outer garments, especially hats and mittens.

SCHOOL BAGS

Children in the preschool program will need a tote bag for their lunch boxes and water bottles. Tote bags can be ordered through our Spirit Wear vendor prior to the beginning of school for all new families.

TOYS FROM HOME

With the exception of your child's show and share day personal toys, blankets

and stuffed animals will not be allowed at school.

SNACK AND LUNCH

Holy Comforter is a nut free school. Parents will provide a daily snack, lunch and non-spill refillable water bottle. We are able to celebrate birthdays and special occasions with special treats. Teachers will make these celebrations very special. All baked items must be store bought with a list of ingredients visible.

TOILET TRAINING

AGES THREE, FOUR, and FIVE

It is vital that children must be toilet trained and able to attend to their sanitary needs. We understand that children at these ages may have accidents and we will inform parents if one should occur. Continuing problems with toileting will prompt a parent's conference to determine appropriate course. Frequent accidents may require parents to come to school to change soiled undergarments.

PARENT CONFERENCES

Conferences will be scheduled with parents during the school year to discuss their child's progress. Parents will need to make child care arrangements for conferences. School staff will not be available to supervise children during these conferences. A parent may request a conference with the Teacher or Director at any time during the school year. Unscheduled conferences with the teachers cannot be permitted.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parents are our most valuable resource and your time and talents are pivotal to the success of the preschool. The school's annual silent and live auction is our ONE big fundraising event of the year. Many opportunities exist to volunteer for this event. More information can be found on the auction page of our website.

ALLERGY POLICY

Holy Comforter attempts to provide the safest and most enjoyable environment possible for each child. In order to provide this environment, each child must have a completed allergy form returned to the school before the first day of school. Those children with a food allergy should have signed documentation from a recognized medical authority (i.e., doctor or physician's assistant) detailing the allergy, warning signs of reactions, and emergency treatment protocols, including treatment guidelines and emergency phone numbers in case of an allergic event. If prescribed, parents should provide an Epi-Pen and Benadryl to be kept in the school office. Parents are responsible for monitoring

the expiration date of the Epi-Pen and providing replacements prior to expiration.

Cooking: Cooking may occur throughout the school year. Parents of a child with an allergy will work with the Director and the child's teachers to ensure that the cooking activities do not knowingly expose the child to allergens.

Show and Tell: Children are encouraged to bring items from home for show and tell. Some of these items may cause allergic reactions, such as a seashell causing a reaction in a person with a shellfish allergy. The Teacher will work with parents and the child to ensure that show and tell activities do not knowingly expose the child to allergens.

Acknowledgement, Waiver and Release

It is understood that while HCEP & K attempts to provide safe and reasonable care for each child, exposure to potential allergens may occur. With this understanding, and in exchange for the benefit of a child attending HCEP & K, the parent(s) assumes the risk of any injury or damage and waives any claims, including future claims, that the parent(s), the guardian(s), the child's other caregiver(s), or the child may have against HCEP & K and/or the Church of the Holy Comforter and/or any of its employees, directors, or volunteers, arising from the child's attendance at HCEP & K or participation in its activities.

Definition of a Food Allergy: A food allergy is an immune system response to a food that the body mistakenly believes is harmful. The immune system releases chemicals, including histamines, when the food is eaten, resulting in an allergic reaction. "Food intolerance" is a bodily reaction that does not involve the immune system, for example gas, bloating or upset stomach. Food allergies can be confirmed through tests conducted in a doctor's office.

Exposure to potential allergens: It is difficult to achieve complete avoidance of all allergenic foods because they can be hidden or accidentally introduced sources. However, HCEP & K is committed to working with parents and teachers to reduce or eliminate the child's exposure to allergenic foods within the school setting to the best of the school's ability. Children with food allergies could potentially be exposed to allergens at HCEP & K through three sources: 1) daily snack and lunch, 2) cooking exercises, 3) show and tell.

ACCIDENTS

In case of accidental injury, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. It is important that parents provide the school up-to-date phone

numbers, emergency numbers and other pertinent information. If we cannot reach you, we will call the child's physician. If necessary, we will call 911. A form from Fairfax Hospital authorizing emergency care is distributed at registration.

ILLNESS

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to all of us. Prior to the start of the school year, you must file with us the Commonwealth of Virginia Health Form, completed and signed by a physician. Your child may be sent home if she/he has symptoms of illness during school. **Parents are to notify the school if their child contracts a communicable disease and other children have been exposed.** The school will then notify all the children in the class. In cases of communicable diseases or lice, a doctor's note may be required prior to return to school. Children will be expected to play outdoors when weather permits. Please do not send your child to school if she/he is not well enough to participate in all school activities, including outdoor play.

Parents should keep a child at home if the following symptoms are present:

- Fever over 100 degrees (child should be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school)
- A cold less than 4 days old
- Heavy nasal discharge
- Constant cough
- Symptoms of possible communicable disease
- Eye is red and/or swollen (with a discharge)
- Diarrhea (child should be free from diarrhea for 24 hours before returning)
- Vomiting (child should be free from vomiting for 24 hours before returning)
- Rash
- Nits or Lice

IMPORTANT: If a child exhibits any of the above symptoms the parent will be called to pick up their child. If a staff member administers any medication per the medical authorization form such as Benadryl, inhalers or epi-pens for allergic reactions or hydrocortisone cream a parent will be notified immediately.

FIRE AND SAFETY DRILLS

Monthly fire and safety drills will be conducted according to procedures for building evacuation and lockdown procedures.

SNOW EMERGENCY PLAN

In the event that FCPS has not returned students to sites, HCEP & K will make the judgment of closure during inclement weather. Parents will be notified via email or class group text.

Parents are advised to listen to radio and television broadcasts during inclement weather for delayed openings or closings of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). When FCPS is closed, HCEP & K will be closed. When FCPS has a 2-hour delay, HCEP & K will be on a delayed schedule as follows:

11:00 am-1:00 pm (11:10 am and 12:50 pm for the two ½ year old class)
Parents will always be notified by email. When FCPS closes early, HCEP & K will close. Parents will receive an email and staff will contact parents by phone.

Exceptional Circumstances: Driving conditions in the Holy Comforter parking lot or prediction of serious weather conditions may require that the Preschool Director and the Chairperson of the HCEP & K Board determine that the Preschool will not open. Call the Preschool at 703-938-3704 for an updated message.

MAJOR EMERGENCY CONDITIONS

The purpose of this policy is to establish and maintain a safe environment during a major emergency condition. A major emergency condition is any situation recognized as requiring immediate or unusual action. Examples include fires, floods, intruders, or major gas leaks. In the event of a major emergency condition, the Preschool Director will direct personnel to follow set protocol deemed necessary for each individual emergency situation. In the event of evacuation of the building, the primary responsibility of the teachers shall be their students' safety. All teaching personnel will carry student emergency contact information. Students will be led to designated exits of the school and leave the building in an orderly fashion in accordance with appropriate procedures. Roll will be taken to account for all students. When a problem exists within the school building itself, teachers and students will be evacuated to the Rodman House, the rectory located at the front of the Holy Comforter site. If a problem exists within the Holy Comforter campus as a whole, teachers and students may be evacuated to Wolfrap Elementary School, which is located at 1903 Beulah Road. Teachers will maintain order, take roll, and keep their classes together within the evacuation site. Students will return to the school building only at the direction of the Preschool Director.

After a determination has been made to evacuate the school, an emergency message instructing parents where the students have been taken will be left at

(703) 938-3704. In addition, if feasible once the students and staff are safe, secure, and calm, HCEP & K staff will attempt to contact parents by telephone. In the event of a major emergency condition or a community or national emergency, parents should pick up their children as soon as possible. It is incumbent upon every parent to familiar with this policy and act accordingly.

All entrances and exits of church building are locked when children are in session with the exception of church events (i.e., funerals, blood drives, weddings, etc.) For these events, doors will be manned by church personnel.

PANDEMIC OR OTHER EVENTS AFFECTING SCHOOL CHANGES

In the event that current school conditions or procedures may need to be altered due to pandemic or other events affecting change or closure, HCEP & K School Board and Director will notify parents of any changes via email. Changes or closures will reflect any events that necessitate emergency or health safety protocols. Students will need to comply with any of these changes should they arise.