



Family Handbook

2019-2020

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Dear Family,

We are thrilled for you and your family to be a part of the Highlander School community. We recognize the considerable trust you demonstrate by placing your child in our hands. And, we take this responsibility seriously and strive to provide the highest quality care and learning experiences. Our families and East Atlanta community are an integral part of our school culture. Your identities, traditions, hopes and dreams embody who we are. We are excited to have the opportunity to be a part of your family's childcare experience.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. Our doors are always open and we will make ourselves available. We look forward to many years of dialogue, celebrations, and happiness with you and your family. We look forward to partnering with you in this most amazing time in your child's life!

We are dedicated to promoting the value of social consciousness, integrity, trust, and education in a nurturing environment for children, educators, and families.

Kind Regards,

Rukia Rogers
Director & Founder

Nicole Allsop
Program Administrator



Our History, Our Vision



The conception of our school began as a conversation in the summer of 2007, surrounding the boundless possibilities of early childhood education in the Atlanta Metropolitan Area. The school's founders were deeply committed to creating a program that addressed the need for quality care and innovative approaches to early childhood education, while fostering children's awareness and respect for the environment and the natural world. We are inspired to fashion a community of learners, where children are viewed as "citizens of today". We envision a world where every child is able to dream and reach his or her fullest potential. This optimism to leave the world better than we had found it was the inspiration for our name. The Highlander School draws on the rich and vibrant culture of the Southeast and honors the Highlander Folk School of Tennessee, founded in 1932, to educate and empower adults for social change. Students such as Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, John Lewis and others flocked to the school as it acted as a safe haven for dialogue and nonviolent resistance to social injustices. Our hope and illuminating dream is that The Highlander School will embody this same spirit of freedom and cultivate a community of learners who are thirsty for knowledge.

The Highlander School's Core Values

Our values are what bind us together and shape our world. The core values of the Highlander School guide our decision making process with regard to our curriculum, professional development, community interaction, and fiscal spending.

We believe relationships are a framework for our lives together as well as our thinking and planning. We believe that knowledge is constructed in relationship with others, our community, our environment, and materials; every encounter is an opportunity for an exchange of ideas and new perspectives.



The Rights of the Child

The child has a right to be seen as a competent and capable human being. We believe that children are born ready and eager to build loving relationships and to explore the world around them. We believe the child has the right to be producers of their own knowledge instead of being immersed with predetermined and prefabricated educational standards. Children have the right to play that is chosen and directed from their free will.

Children have the right of support from thoughtful and reflective adults who scaffold and support their play experiences, and continuously seek the perspective of the child. Children have the right to have their curious, eager minds, and ideas taken seriously. We will treat children as today's citizens, not future ones. We commit ourselves to creating a culture that fosters their self-esteem and dignity with love and respect.

The Rights of the Families

We believe that families have the right to be viewed as capable and devoted guardians of children. We believe that family partnerships are essential in creating a community of learners and constructing our school culture. Families have the right to be respected, offered clear communications, to have personal privacy and to be an integral part of the learning process. We will always seek and respect the parent's points of view and perspectives.

The Rights of Educators and Staff

Educators have the right to be regarded as skilled, competent researchers and professionals who are eager for growth. We believe educators and staff have the right to receive fair wages for their work, to expect transparency and to be an integral participant in the school's program. Staff has a right to the time, space, resources and support to accomplish their work with young children.

Democracy and a Sense of Belonging

We believe that education has an essential role in a democratic society. We believe that every member of the community should feel empowered and have real opportunities to participate in the decision making processes and have a sense of belonging. This value is reflected in our traditions of welcoming new members of our community, the celebrations of their life and integration of our collective home culture.

Equity and Social Justice

We believe that every human and thus every child is endowed with certain inalienable rights that include the right to attain his or her fullest potential through creative expression, thought, inquiry, collaboration and dissension. It is our unwavering belief that education is a vehicle for citizens to realize those capabilities and create a more democratic, pluralistic and just society.

In support of this belief, we feel strongly about providing an inclusive setting for children of various developmental abilities. Within the Reggio Emilia approach, children with special rights are prioritized in regards to admissions. We believe that children learning through shared experiences promote a sense of belonging and sensitivity to one another. Additionally, children learn to value individual differences and how they contribute to the overall community.

We believe high quality early childhood education and care is the gateway for equity and social justice; and that experiences in progressive programs for young children are greater indicators of later "success" or fulfillment. We believe that every child, family, and teacher has the right to equal opportunities to learning regardless of their learning style, gender, age, ability, race, ethnicity and or family background. We are committed to creating a quality program that is accessible to a diverse group of children and families. Our program will incorporate anti bias goals and support children developing a strong self-identity while valuing the difference of others. We hope that children will develop the passion to be creative thinkers, activists and empathic citizens. You will find us celebrating our heroes such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, and holidays that reflect this value.

The Natural World and Conservation

We believe that one vital role of education is to connect young children to the natural world and to offer them the skills to serve as custodians for this earth. In a fast paced world, our goal is to move slowly with great intention and help children connect to the rhythm of the natural world. We delight and celebrate the change of seasons. You might find us studying the cycles of life and bringing the elements of the outdoors, inside. We use natural and found materials, guiding children to care for their world through conservation, recycling and reusing.

Our program will emphasize eliminating waste; using recycled and found materials, utilizing products that do not harm the earth and making these practices part of our learning approaches with young children, their families and our community. This value also extends to our value of operating a school that is fiscally responsible and operates within our means through creativity and without sacrificing our core values.

Multiple Perspectives

We value multiple perspectives as this supports and challenges our own thinking and helps us to create new and deeper understandings. We avoid conformity but instead seek new and divergent voices. In that context, we celebrate intellectual freedom and creative conflict.

Transparency

We believe in making visible the thinking behind our planning and the hands-on work with young children and each other. We welcome discussions and questions about our planning, work and documentation. Our desire is to create a program that is open to the community for collaboration with educators, in early learning programs, colleges and universities.

Joy

We value sheer happiness and delight! As a community, we cherish the richness of learning as it unfolds. We pay close attention to this process as we believe that we should be ruled not by the clock but by the natural rhythms of our bodies. We value our routines and see them as opportunities for meaningful learning. You'll find us deeply engaged in play, projects, and conversations for extended periods of time; we feel that this allows for complexity, as well as, the joy of being.

The Highlander Staff: A Community of Learners

Our Founder Rukia Rogers

A native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, I was raised by a single mom who instilled in me a love for the outdoors and a sense of responsibility for my community. Our home was full of vibrant conversations around world affairs and progressive ideas. My childhood experiences serve as a foundation for my passion and work with young children and their families. My career includes over 25 years engaged in early childhood education in multiple ways including work as classroom teacher, a studio teacher, and a Curriculum Director. I earned my Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education from Chattahoochee Technical College and graduated from Georgia State University with a Bachelor of Science in Education and an endorsement in special education, magna cum laude. I began my Master's program at Pacific Oaks College and I hope to complete it before the next presidential race! I'm deeply committed to improving the quality of education accessible to all children. I envision a future where every child reaches his or her full potential; teachers are valued; and families are supported in raising their children. I'm the proud mother of my young cat, Pepper. She ensures that I wake up everyday at 5am. I love engaging with my community, family, cooking, traveling and a having good time!

Our Educators

Our educators are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. We are very selective in hiring staff that not only have a background and experience relevant to early care and education, but whose life experiences and ethical values will exemplify their dedication to young children, enrich our environment and serve as excellent role models for children and families.



We seek educators who are passionate, creative, intentional, reflective in their work and share a deep respect for children. In addition to managing the day-to-day operational activities of the room, these educators will also ensure a safe and stimulating learning environment where children are actively engaged in a process of inquiry about the world. Educators must also be eager to participate in a democratically managed organization, where they themselves are continually learning and growing as professionals and are supporting others in this effort. We seek educators who are eager to grow their practice as researchers, learners, facilitators, celebrators and collaborators in this incredible field of joy and wonder in the lives of young children and their families.

The most competitive candidates will have 3+ years teaching experience and completed formal education in Early Childhood Education. Educators who have a commitment to reflective work with children, an eagerness to collaborate with co-educators, a fervor for on-going professional development and growth, a disposition towards research and inquiry, experience designing curriculum responsive to children's emerging interests, familiarity with emergent curriculum, Reggio practice, and anti-bias approaches, community enrichment/volunteer experience, and a long-term commitment to early learning are highly sought. Skill in communicating with families is also essential, as well as strong verbal and writing proficiency.

Our Approach to Anti-Bias and Social Justice Education

Anti-bias work is a natural component of our approach to learning. In our practices, we aim to listen to and watch children carefully, in order to learn about their understanding and misunderstandings about their world. Our curriculum is grown from our observations and reflections. Our reflections and observations offer children experiences that invite them to deepen or shift their thinking. This close attention to children's pursuits and questions leads us to encounters with the meaning of gender, the nuances of skin color, and the dynamics of culture—the terrain of identity and community, diversity, equity, and inclusion. This is the terrain of anti-bias and social justice education.



Here are the goals of anti-bias education as outlined in the book *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves* by *Louise Derman-Sparks* and *Julie Olsen Edwards*

The Four Core Goals of Anti-Bias Education

Goal 1: Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.

Goal 2: Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.

Goal 3: Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

Goal 4: Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.

The Vision of Anti-Bias Education

The heart of anti-bias work is a vision of a world in which all children are able to blossom, and each child's particular abilities and gifts are able to flourish. In this world:

All children and families have a sense of belonging and the right to experience affirmation of their identities and cultural ways of being.

All children have access to and participate in the education they need to become successful, contributing members of society.

The educational process engages all members of the program or school in joyful learning.

Children and adults know how to respectfully and easily live, learn, and work together in diverse and inclusive environments.

All families have the resources they need to fully nurture their children.

All children and families live in safe, peaceful, healthy, comfortable housing and neighborhoods.

This vision of anti-bias education also reflects the basic human rights described in the United Nations (1989) Declaration of the Rights of the Child:

The right to survival.

The right to develop to the fullest.

The right to protection from harmful influences, abuse, and/or exploitation.

The right to participate fully in family, cultural, and social life.

Our Approach to Learning

Our approach to learning has been deeply influenced by Marian Wright Edelman, John Dewey, Michelle Obama, Lev Vygotsky, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the educators of Reggio Emilia, Italy. Their work and thinking has helped to shape our fundamental belief that learning is an active and social process; it's a cultural practice that connects individuals to their society and culture. In essence, we as humans are interconnected and our knowledge, our traditions, our identity and our values are socially constructed. Therefore, we not only see the child as an individual but in the context of their relationships and encounters with the world, their family and greater community.

This belief is the foundation of our curriculum and encompasses all of our work with young children, their families, and colleagues. This includes our planning, design of our environments, routines, selection of materials, and interactions. Our rich curriculum emerges and uniquely derives from the identities and interests of the children, educators, families and our values that embody who we are. Our hope is to create a community of inquiry, where children and educators alike are empowered to wonder together and pursue their curiosities.

Our Image of the Child

In designing The Highlander School, we commit ourselves to a strong image of the child. We view the child as capable, intelligent, full of complexity, wonder and a desire to connect with others. We see children as having existing knowledge that they bring to learning opportunities and believe that they have the right to be treated with respect, dignity and to be a part of the decision-making process. Children are viewed not as passive participants but as active discoverers and constructors of their own knowledge.



Learning Environments

Upholding a strong image of the child, the environments are thoughtfully designed and organized to support the children's relationships, curiosities, individual and group learning. The environment reflects child and the adults' appreciation for beauty, aesthetics and order. Children, with the other adults help to care and maintain the environment creating a sense of belonging and shared responsibility.

The Hundred Languages

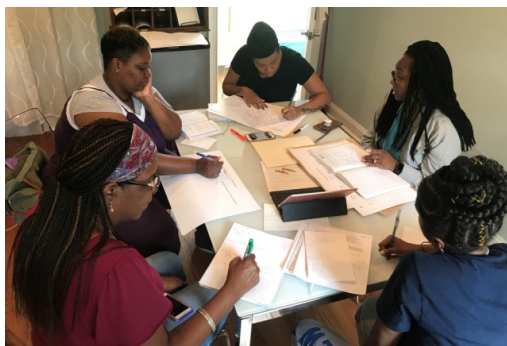
The Reggio Emilia educators believe that children have a hundred languages to express their realizations about the world. In our environment, we strive to invite exploration of those languages of learning by introducing the children to a variety of materials and experiences that can give them new perspectives regarding the world around them. We recognize and honor their symbolic representations of theories that can be expressed and valued through dramatic play, drawings, collage, clay creations, storytelling, music, recycled materials, paint, blocks, sand and water to name a few. In our setting children are provided with materials to explore and manipulate during play. These materials are necessary for the children to express their ideas and construct new knowledge. The environment is inviting for all the “languages” of communication and yet still provides opportunities to explore interests and discuss ideas in small groups.

The Role of the Atelierista (Studio Teacher)

The Atelierista supports children and educators around creative expressions by sharing their knowledge regarding visual arts. The Atelierista facilitates small group experiences that demonstrate to children how materials can be utilized in different ways. The Atelierista collaborates with the child in assisting them with expanding on going threads.

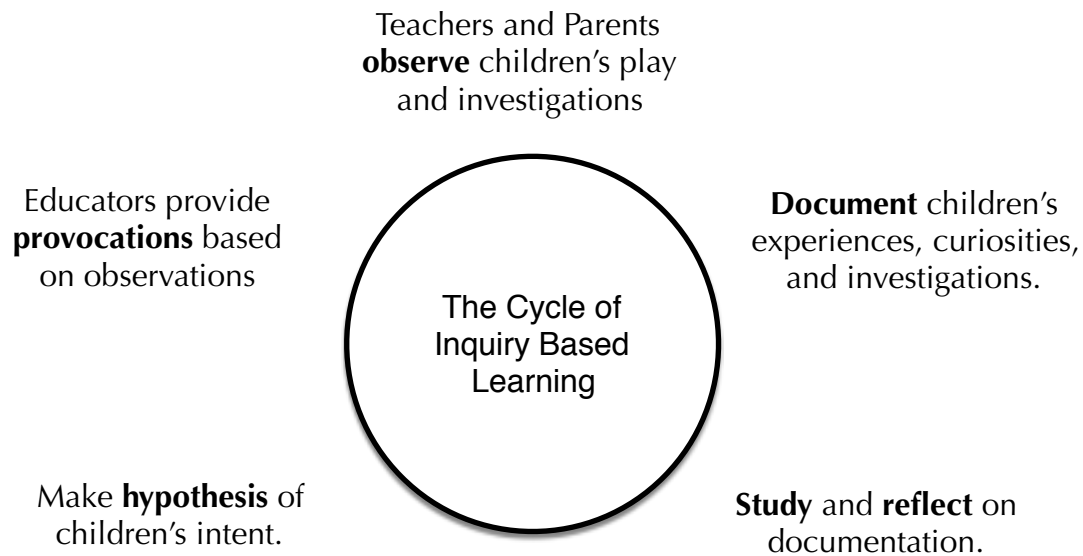


Designing Our Curriculum: Projections and Inquiry Based Learning



Our curriculum encompasses all of our work with young children, their families, and colleagues. This includes our planning, design of our environments, routines, selection of materials, and interactions. Our rich curriculum emerges and uniquely derives from the identities and interests of the children, educators, families and our values that embody who we are. Our hope is to create a community of inquiry, where children and educators alike are empowered to wonder together and pursue their curiosities. Our curriculum begins with our relationships, active listening, thought-provoking exchanges and documentation to give visibility to this process. In this process, the learner is passionately engaged in acquiring their education by researching problems, collecting data with their senses, proposing theories and creating new meaning. Far from a prescribed curriculum, we are most interested in fostering a community that is delighted by curiosity. What is it that children want to learn? What is it that we want to learn with them? And from them? Active listening also includes collaboration amongst the adults to make meaning of their observations and plan for next steps.

Designing our curriculum is a cyclical process that begins with the relationships in the environments, intentional listening, thoughtful observations and documentation, collaborative study and reflection, and planning for new possibilities.



"My impression of Reggio Emilia practices is that to a large extent the content of teacher-child relationships is focused on the work itself, rather than mainly on routines or the children's performances on academic tasks. Adults and children's minds meet on matters of interest to both them."

Lillian Katz

Educator and Child Interaction

The most essential component of a strong early childhood program is the quality of the relationships between the educators and the child.

Staff will always speak with children in a friendly, positive, courteous manner, asking open-ended questions and speaking individually to children. We are available and responsive to children, listening closely to their perspectives.



The role of the educators is complex, full of wonder, delight and negotiations. This role includes the educator being a loving facilitator and researcher ready to engage and support children in the process of inquiry based learning. The educator's purpose is to not simply give to children information, but to create a unique balance of observing children's play, interpreting observations, and coaching children's acquisition of new skills and working side by side with the children. So as

the child is fully engaged in the learning process, the educator is also an active learner, researching in collaborations with families and colleagues.

Infants and Responsive Care: What is Responsive care? "Responsive care is the process of watching and tuning into your child's cues, thinking about what they might mean, and then responding to them in a sensitive way. This is the best way to meet their physical and mental needs."(zerotothree.org) Here at The Highlander School we use responsive care with our youngest citizens (Infants and Toddlers). The educators pay close attention to what each child is communicating and provide a response that meets the child's needs. The educators communicate with the children about their actions as they are doing them.

Positive Guidance

We want to look at the positive side of the children's behavior. We want to build our relationships with them through nurturing and positive attention. To this end, we organize the children's day to promote appropriate behavior. We set up the classroom equipment and materials to facilitate positive play and social experiences. The activities offered to the children are appropriate for their developmental level. We use our knowledge of developmental principles to give us reasonable and appropriate expectations for each child's behavior.

The **Thinking Lens™** is a tool for reflective practices in which staff considers the many possibilities that might be impacting children's actions and behavior.

One of the most important ways to guide children's behavior is to give them the skills to manage their own behavior. Primarily, we teach children to use words, sign language or visual cues to express themselves rather than inappropriate actions or gestures. Helping children learn to use language as the primary tool for handling conflict is one of the greatest gifts we can offer our children.

Of course, there will be times when children behave inappropriately. In these instances, the educators will use: substitution, redirection and discussion to manage the situation. There may be times when a child needs a short time away from the current activity to calm down, but this is not viewed as a punishment or time-out... just a time we all sometimes need to regroup and reframe our responses.

Children are NEVER hit, humiliated or frightened as a form of punishment. Food is never withheld as a form of punishment. Parents may not use physical punishment on the school grounds.

The Thinking Lens™ for Reflection and Inquiry



Knowing yourself

What captures my attention as the children engage, explore and interact? What delights me as I watch and listen? What in my background and values is influencing my response to this situation and why? What adult perspectives, i.e. standards, health and safety, time, goals are on my mind?



Finding the details of children's competency that engage your heart

What do I notice in the children's faces and actions? Where do I see examples of children's strengths and competencies? What do I think is valuable about this experience?



Seeking the child's point of view

To what is the child drawn? What excites the child? What might the child be trying to accomplish? Why might the child be interacting with others this way? What developmental themes, ideas or theories might the child be exploring?



Examining the physical/social/emotional environment

How is the organization and use of the physical space and materials impacting this situation? How could we strengthen relationships here? How are schedules and routines influencing this experience?



Considering multiple perspectives

How might the child's culture and family background be influencing this situation? What questions might we ask to get the perspective of the child's family? Who else or what other perspectives should we consider? What child development or early learning theories should we consider in this experience? What desired early learning outcomes do I see reflected here?



Considering opportunities and possibilities for next steps

What values, philosophy and desired outcomes do I want to influence my response? What new or existing relationships could be strengthened? Which learning goals could be focused on here? What other materials and activities could be offered to build on this experience?

Family Partnership & Communication

Families play a valued and crucial role in every aspect of our school community. Family participation in the education process is paramount to the Highlander philosophy of early childhood education. Parents are viewed as equal partners and are invited and expected to participate in collaborative planning meetings with educators and share their ideas and perspectives on common goals.



It is important to have strong connections between home and school. Our time together begins with a home visit and from there we create many other opportunities to build relationships and exchange ideas including quarterly room meetings, conferences and committee meetings. Ideally, it is beneficial for parents to spend time helping within the classroom, i.e. documenting children's work, assisting with special projects or having lunch with their child and community. With all elements of the child's world working together, we build an exciting, yet nurturing environment to enhance their journey of learning and growth.

Organization of Our Time Together And Modes of Communication

- Home Visits- Home visits are conducted prior to enrollment to build relationships and learn about the identity of the family and educators
- Bright Wheel App- Families and educators use this app as a mode to communicate including signing in, sending messages, posting the times of feedings, diapering and naps for younger children and sharing photos
- Daily Diaries- Educators generate daily stories of an individual child or children, that highlight the learning process, our questions and are offered to families for dialogue. These stories are emailed to families, posted on our documentation board and archived in the room.
- Room Meetings- Educators organize this time to share documentation, on-going work, explore materials, exchange ideas and build relationships
- Individual Journal- Each child has an individual journal that highlights their story, interests, relationship and learning process and includes work samples and other documentation
- Parent/Family Conferences- Individual family meetings are conducted twice a year in which Educators share a child's journal, discuss their learning within the community as well as the families' hopes and dreams for their child.
- Parent Council- The Parent Council consists of two representatives from each room. They support the school's overall communication with individual rooms, offer advice and help to plan school events such as Teacher Appreciation Week and seasonal celebrations.
- Social Justice Committee- Support's the school's reflective practices and connections with anti-bias goals

Families that have their child enrolled at The Highlander School are expected to participate in parent conferences and room meeting.

Our Food Program

The Highlander School has a robust and unique food program! We create menus that reflect our local cuisine and the culture of our families. We are committed to providing a wholesome variety of fresh vegetables, lean meats and flavors and spices found locally and from around the world. It's also important to us that children have a connection to the natural world and to the food they consume. Integrated into our program are gardening, trips to the farmer's market and using those foods as part of our meals. Our menu will follow the guidelines established by the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.



The Highlander School Provides:

- A morning snack (families are asked to arrive before 8:30am if they wish for their child to have a morning snack.)
- Lunch (Served at 11:15am for the Toddlers and at 12:00 for the Multi-Age Room)
- Afternoon Snack

Infant Feeding

The infants are fed on demand. Their feeding schedule is individualized to accommodate their specific needs. Families must complete and maintain a current infant feeding plan which is updated regularly based on the needs of the child. Families will provide food for their child until they reach 12 months. New foods should be introduced at home multiple times to ensure there's no adverse reaction. All foods sent to school should be prepared to be served to the child. At 12 months we begin to transition them to the school's food and schedule.

Vegetarian and Vegan Diets

Our menu naturally incorporates vegetarian and vegan meals. However, if families wish for their child/children to exclusively eat vegetarian or vegan meals they must indicate so and complete a Vegetarian and Vegan meal plan form, so that we can ensure that we are honoring the family's wishes. Families may not switch back and forth between the two options based on a child's daily preference.

Food Allergies

Please inform us of any food allergies that your child may have. (See enrollment forms) Special accommodations for food allergies are made on an individual basis.

Meals are served family style using real utensils and dishes. Mealtimes promote good nutrition habits and are pleasant social and learning experiences for children. Staff members sit with the children whenever possible to demonstrate appropriate table manners and pleasant conversation.

If you would like your child to have a SPECIAL snack on a daily basis that is different from what we provide, please bring enough for ALL children.

Birthdays and Special Celebrations

Our Birthday celebrations are truly unique and embody the joyful ways in which each child is loved and embraced by the whole community. Our collective efforts and traditions thread the fashioning of gifts, the preparation of a sensual treat and our assembly to share stories and sing and dance together in camaraderie. Check with your child's teacher as your child's birthday draws near so that we can plan an appropriate celebration together that will work with the family's and school's schedule.

What to Bring to School

At the beginning of the school year, please share with us a family photo that allows us to create a learning environment that reflects your identity.

What to Bring for Infants (3 months to 12 months)

- Wet bag
- A sippy cup for water
- Enough prepared bottles of breast milk or formula for one day's feedings. Bottles should be clearly marked with the child's name and date (breast milk with date it was pumped). Empty bottles are returned to the family each day.
- Food should be in individuality labeled containers that can be heated in a crockpot if needed
- A weekly supply of diapers and wipes
- At least 2 complete changes of clothes (Please label)

What to Bring for Toddler and Multi-Age Children:

- Wet bag
- Water bottle
- Crib sheet and small blanket
- A tooth brush and tooth paste
- A bottle if needed for young toddlers (under 18 months)
- Any comfort items that your child needs such as pacifiers, a small blankets, lovies, etc. Please do not bring large blankets or pillows
- A complete change of seasonally appropriate clothing (labeled) including extra socks and shoes, that will easily fit into the child's personal space.
- Wipes
- Diapers (special ointments if needed.) We do not encourage the use of pull-ups at school to replace diapers for a child that has little bowel or bladder control. (Please see section on toilet learning or talk to teacher or director)
- Sunscreen (Families will be asked to take turns supplying sunscreen for their child.)

Please label all items brought from home with your child's name to prevent items from becoming misplaced or lost. We are not responsible for lost or misdirected items that are not properly labeled.

You May Bring:

Objects from nature that the child has found while at home (for instance, fall leaves, flowers or pine cones). Such items may be shared with the class and used to provide rich connections between home and school experiences.

Books from home: Give the books to the teacher upon arrival and the teacher will find a time to read them during the day. Be sure to label all items from home.

What NOT to bring to school:

- Toys from home are not allowed at school
- Coins and small items that may cause choking.
- Candy, bubblegum, nuts, vitamins, and other foods items which are inappropriate to share
- Lip balm, lotions, ointments may not kept in a child's cubby or possession
- We will discourage unnecessary hair accessories, sun glasses, or jewelry

What to Wear to School

When you select clothing for your child to wear to school, please choose items that can become dirty, "painty", and wet! Suitable clothing should allow a child to move about freely, encouraging creativity and freedom of expression. The joy of creating is diminished when the child is restricted in their desire to explore messy, sensory materials. We do encourage smocks whenever possible, but wearing a smock will always be the child's choice at The Highlander School.

We will not be held responsible for damage to or loss of clothing that is inappropriate in a child-care setting in which outdoor play and art activities are an integral part of the program

Please dress children in clothing that:

- Promotes independence and allows them to help themselves feel empowered. We recommend that preschool children in this setting do not wear overalls because they are hard to unbuckle. We recommend pants with elastic waists that are easy to pull up and down; t-shirts that do not require snapping at the bottom.
- Shoes should be appropriate for active play such as running, climbing, risk taking, and protect your child's feet. We do not recommend flip flops, open toes shoes or sandals. Shoes must also be the appropriate size for the child's foot to prevent tripping and allow for ease of movement.
- Be sure to dress your child in clothing that is appropriate for the season and current weather conditions! Please remember that we are required to go outside twice a day. Please send sun hats in the summer and coats and in the winter!

Organization of the Day

Greeting Time School opens at 7:45 a.m. We ask that children, especially Multiage students, arrive before 9:00 a.m. It is important that the children are present and ready for the day as we come together for morning gathering and move into our small group time. We understand that children develop their own ways of saying goodbye to parents; some children desire more time during this transition than others. The Parlor is available to use for a story if you and your child desire a little more time.

Morning Tea During “Morning Tea” children are offered a nourishing snack. Our morning teas are served family-style and create a savory moment for children to converse and build relationship with friends as well as to practice “practical life” skills such as pouring, taking turns, asking for what you need, cleaning and so forth. Please arrive before 8:30 a.m. if you would like your child to join us for morning tea.

Personal Care Most children are independent in the Multi-age living room and they may use the toilet as needed. However, for some children that still need more guidance, educators will invite them to use the toilet every two hours or as needed. These moments are opportunities for learning, as educators engage children in conversations, support their “practical life skills such as hand washing and dressing.

Morning Meeting After the children have finished their morning tea, we gather as a whole group. The morning meeting is a brief but magical time for us to come together and celebrate each other's presence with singing, dancing and engaging in creative movement. Morning meetings may also include story telling, discussions, voting on critical issues and then children make choices about where they'd like to play and work for the day or educators ask them to participate in small group work. Morning meeting begins around 9:00 a.m. Please arrive by this time so that your child can be involved in the morning activities from their beginnings.

Learning Choices and Small Group Time Educators maintain an environment that is engaging and filled with provocations based on the children's interest and the educator's questions. From morning meeting we go into our planned small group work and children make choices about which provocations they wish to explore and educators often offer suggestions. You may find us baking fresh bread, using clay to represent our homes, tending to our garden, constructing the tallest building in Atlanta, investigating a praying mantis, walking around our community, working in the studio, living-room, or other areas within the School. Explorations of materials, continued project work, and meaningful exploration of classroom areas are some examples of what might occur during small group time.

Lunch We all come together again for a family-style lunch around 12:00 noon. The children eat at tables in small groups with an educator. Children are full participates in this experience, helping to set the tables, creating center pieces, engaged in full conversations about the day, and sharing in the responsibilities of cleaning up. Once the children have settled into their new routines, parents are welcome to join us.

Personal Care and Relaxation After lunch, the children wash their hands, faces and brush their teeth and take care of their bodies. Afterwards, we prepare our bodies to rest. You'll find us practicing yoga, reading stories quietly and rubbing backs. The length of each child's nap varies, but all of the children do sleep. Soothing music is played in the classroom as the children fall asleep. Educators attend meetings and take their breaks during this time. Generally, the children begin to awaken between 2:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Afternoon Snack After children wake up they have a healthy afternoon snack. This generally takes place between 3:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Afternoon Activities If the weather permits, we go outside to the playground for the afternoon. Small group work, open explorations within the school, and mixed-aged group activities may occur within these periods.

Tooth Brushing

Children 1 year and older are provided an opportunity for tooth brushing and gum cleaning to remove food and plaque. Toothbrushes and toothpaste (not required) are provided by parents and should be changed every six months. Gums of infants under the age of one year are cleaned using a cloth unless the parent provides an infant brush.

Toilet Learning

We are happy to work with families in the process of supporting children to learn how to use the toilet, but feel that there is a clear criterion for success; most importantly, a child must be ready! Your child will let you know in many ways when he or she is ready to begin using the toilet. We are glad to help your child make this important leap toward independence.

- Please bring 5 pairs of training pants, underwears, or panties
- 3 changes of clothes each day during this learning process. Training pants are extra thick and absorbent.
- We discourage the use of pull-ups as they typically prolong the toilet learning process.

The procedure for toilet learning at the school typically takes place in the two-year-old classrooms. It may take place in one-year-old room depending on the child readiness. Children are introduced to the small toilets by watching their classmates in the bathroom.

Classmates are praised for using the toilet, and the learner is then invited to use it. Encouragement and praise from the educators, coupled with sharing the experience with a classmate, usually make the process easier.

The child's inability or unwillingness to use the toilet for elimination is referred to as an accident and treated in a matter-of-fact sort of way. Children are never humiliated or punished for having an accident. We recognize that toilet learning takes time and we do not rush the process. Clothes soiled during any accident are not washed at school. They are bagged and sent home.

Nap/Rest Time

Infants sleep in their cribs according to their individual schedules. To prevent SIDS, infants are placed on their backs to sleep. Blankets, when needed, are tucked into the mattress to prevent tangling or smothering. We must have a note signed by the child's physician in order to swaddle the infant.

Older children at The Highlander School are asked to rest their bodies for at least one hour during the afternoon between 1:00 and 3:00 PM. Children attending our preschool are extremely active and need time to rest every day. Children are never required to sleep, but we do ask that everyone

“rest their bodies”. Children that do not normally nap at home may be asked to rest at school and will be given the opportunity to read books or do quiet puzzles on their mats after the initial rest period. Napping children should have a crib-sized sheet to cover their napping mats along with a small blanket or “lovey” to help them feel cozy and comfortable. Napping supplies will be sent home each week for laundering.

Field Trips and Community Walks

We occasionally try to initiate opportunities for small groups of children to walk in the neighborhood and explore the area near and around the school. This provides a continued sense of wonder and discovery for our natural environment and children grow in awareness of the world around them. Short walks are great for talking about street signs, house numbers, identifying different types of trees and plant life, talking about directions and map-making or just singing, skipping and marching. These walking excursions will not be announced in advance and do not require signed permission slips.

We also enjoy going on field trips that will highlight and enhance a particular project or unit of study. These trips are planned in advance and are typically announced in our monthly newsletter or e-mail. When we go on extended field trips, parents are notified and asked if they can participate by driving or chaperoning. We like our excursion field trips to be a 1:2 ratio and we encourage parents to take an active role in planning and participating in the experience whenever possible. Permission slips are required and we ask that parents provide proof of insurance if they are driving. As required by state law, every child will be in a car seat or approved child safety restraint system.

Arrival and Dismissal

All state licensed preschool programs are required to provide a method of signing each child in and out daily. Please indicate the time of arrival when you arrive and the time you depart using the Bright Wheel app.

When you arrive in the morning:

- Please sign in using Bright Wheel App on the iPad located in the parlor
- Please help your child use the bathroom and or change their first diaper upon arrival
- Please wash your hands and help your child to wash his or her hands before you leave
- Be sure your child's water bottle is full and ready for the day
- Briefly tell the educator about your child's disposition or make any special notes in the parent notebook on the sign in table.
- Please check your child's supply of diapers, wipes and clothes daily.

Your child will be our responsibility the moment you leave the classroom. Please, never sneak out to avoid an emotional goodbye. It's best for children to express these feelings and find that they are all right after a few moments! We realize that each family and child is unique, and we will do our best to customize your child's entry to best suit your family's needs. We are committed to ensuring each child's positive emotional and social experience while at The Highlander School. We want to school to be a fun, joyful memory!

Please be prompt in picking up your children and sign-out as soon as you arrive at the end of the day. **You are fully responsible for your child the moment you enter the school.** Our center policy requires parents and caregivers to pick no later than 15 minutes before departure. This allows for you to gather your child's belongings, check the information clipboards, briefly talk to the educator about your child's day, and say goodbye to friends. These times are crucial in establishing positive transitions into and out of the school day. To assure smooth transitions, it is necessary to be on time when dropping-off and picking up your children.

Cell phones

Cell phones are not to be used in the presence of children in order to respect the child's environment. Please avoid using cell phones on the school property.

Entering Your Child's Room

Please keep in mind that the energy level of the children raises as the number of adults and adult chatter increases. We appreciate your efforts in keeping a low profile in order to respect our learning environment and our community!

Admission, Procedures and Policies

Our program admits families of any race, creed, color, sexual orientation and national or ethnic origin. While we primarily accept students on a first come first serve basis, we also consider other factors that helps us to create a diverse community such as race, gender, age, inclusion and schedule. We are a year round program that operates Monday through Friday from 7:45am to 6:15pm.

The admission procedure is as follows:

- Our enrollment process begins with a submission of a family application. Families may return their application in person or by mailing it to the school's address 1212 McPherson Ave. Atlanta, GA 30106, along with a \$50 application fee.
- When the family has returned a family application and a space becomes available, a school visit and family interview will be scheduled. If there is no space available, the child will be placed on our wait list.
- Once it has been mutually determined that The Highlander School would be a good fit for the family and school, a welcoming letter and an enrollment package will be sent out.
- Prior to the family's first day at The Highlander School, there must a home visit and an orientation.

Upon entering the program all parents are required to fill out and maintain the required forms for the child's file, including a statement from the physician and proof of current immunizations.

These necessary forms required by state licensing include the following:

- Child's Enrollment Form
- Medical Information and Emergency Authorization
- The Highlander School Policy Agreement
- The Highlander School History Information
- A General Permission Form
- Authorization to Dispense External Preparations
- An Infant Feeding Plan (If Needed)
- A Safe Place Policy
- Certificate of Immunization

Parents agree to provide alternative child care whenever the child does not meet the school's sick policy guidelines and emergency contact information including the names and phone numbers of persons available for immediate pick up as required. Parents are asked to keep the center up to date on any changes in contact information (i.e. cell phone numbers, change of address, etc.)

Additional Pick Up Policies

- Persons on a child's authorized pick up list, will be asked for identification upon arrival.
- Parents will need to give the school a written memo if someone other than those on the authorized list will be picking up their child.

Waiting List Policy For Siblings

As our families at The Highlander School grow, the need to find space for a sibling often becomes a reality. The Highlander School attempts to keep families together. Therefore, siblings of children currently enrolled are given priority for enrollment, when an appropriate space becomes available. We keep a separate Priority Waiting List for siblings, which mean that siblings are listed ahead of new applicants. We add students to this list as applications are submitted and the application fees are received.

Enrollment Deposit and Monthly Tuitions

For new families, we require a deposit of a half of a month's tuition at the time of enrollment that will be applied toward the last month's tuition.

Payment is due on the 25th of each month. If payment is not received by the first of the month, a \$20 late fee will be assessed for each day, for five days. If your account has not been paid in full within 5 business days, your child may not attend school until the account has been brought current. After 15 days of nonpayment, enrollment may be forfeited.

Classroom	Days-Full Time 5 days Monday-Friday	Part-Time 3 days Mon,Wed,Fri	Part Time 2 days Tues & Thru
Infants 6 weeks-12 months	\$1,525	_____	_____
Toddlers One	\$1,400	_____	_____
Toddlers Two	\$1,400	\$850	\$650
Multi-Age-3 and 4 year olds	1,350	\$850	\$650

The monthly fee is constant from month to month. There are no reductions for absences (planned or unplanned) or school closures (see Holiday Schedule) or unplanned closures due to inclement

weather. Families may chose a 10 month or a 12 month contract at the time of enrollment. Requests to have a 10 month schedule must be made at the beginning of the school year.

Late Pick-Up Fees

Late pick ups have a negative impact on the school and our staff. Our school closes promptly at 6:15 PM . Parents are expected to arrive by 6:00 PM, gather their child's belongings, and depart by 6:15 PM. There is a \$25.00 minimum fee for late pick-ups, and a fee of \$1.00 for every minute will begin to accrue at 6:16 PM. Late fees are due and collected at the time of pick-up.

Returned Checks and Other Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions are charged a fee of \$35. This charge may be collected electronically, or by cash or check

Visitation at the School

Parents shall not share the entry code to the building with any unauthorized persons; including but not limited to: strangers, substitute teachers, and family members or friends that are picking up or dropping off their child.

For the safety of our students and staff, all visitors of The Highlander School who are not legal guardians of a child at the school MUST sign in at the office upon entry of the building.

Health and Emergencies

We strive to maintain excellent health and hygiene standards in every aspect of our program. In an effort to manage and prevent the spread of disease, the state requires us to keep on file children's current Certificate of Immunization (GA Form 3231). This is the State of Georgia's immunization form and is required within 30 days of a child's enrollment. The form must be completed by a GA-licensed physician's staff, who will provide an expiration date on the form. It is the parent's responsibility to maintain the validity of their child's immunization records. Reminders will be provided to parents by school administration. Parents are expected to stay current with their child's immunizations and to strictly observe the Health Policies.

On a daily basis, the staff is instructed to greet children at the beginning of the day and to be watchful of the health of all children as they enter the classroom. Please inform us of any medications your child is taking, including antibiotics.

Procedure for Administering Medication & Special Medical Needs

The Highlander School will only administer life threatening medication or medication prescribed by a licensed physician. The staff person working at the front desk will administer all prescribed and documented medicine. An **Medication Authorization Form** must be filled out completely in order for administrative staff to administer medication with the exception of **EpiPens** which will be kept in the classroom's emergency bag. All other medications must be given to the front desk attendant (director or program administer). Medication will be administered at **11:00 a.m.** and/or **3:00 p.m.**

All Prescribed Medication Must Be:

In original container

Labeled with the following information:

Child's first and last name clearly marked

Name of the health professional that prescribed the medication, or a note from the health care provider recommending the over-the-counter medicine

Date prescription was filled and prescription number

Expiration date

Specific instructions for giving, storing and disposing of medication from the health professional (instructions for over-the-counter may be faxed in)

Authorization for medicine can be for no longer than two weeks

medications also require a doctor's note.

Do not let children carry their own medication or backpacks to transport or store medication. No medicines should be kept in the classrooms and should be kept out of children's reach at all times.

In case of adverse medical reactions, parents will be notified immediately. If parents cannot be reached, staff will call the emergency numbers listed on the enrollment application. If the situation is critical, we will call 911.

If your child requires special medical procedures, you or the prescribing health care provider will demonstrate the procedure to ensure accurate implementation by staff.

Sick Policy

If a child becomes ill at school, the school will take every measure to isolate the sick child from the other children in order to not contaminate others. **The Highlander School does not provide sick childcare.** Parents will be notified to come and take their child home. It is generally expected that parents will arrive to pick up a sick child no more than 1 hour after being notified. Children who are sick should not come to school. We consider your child sick and should stay home or will be asked to be picked up if she or he displays any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher orally or axillary
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Eye irritations with swelling, or green or yellow discharge
- Unexplained rashes or skin lesions

- General lethargy and or irritability which prevents your child from fully participating in the normal daily routine
- When symptoms are just beginning (i.e. coughing, sneezing, runny nose)
- When children require cough medicine or an analgesic to participate in the school day
- Child is unable to participate in the regular activities of the school

Our Non-Negotiable Health Policies Include:

Fever	If the child has a fever for any reason s/he cannot attend school. The child should be fever-free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school. If the child develops a fever of 101 or higher during the school day, parents will be contacted and the child will need to be picked up immediately. If the child is sent home with fever during the school day they cannot attend school the following day.
Diarrhea	Any child with diarrhea of unknown origin should not attend the school. Diarrhea is defined as loose stools of large volume and/or abnormal frequency (two or more watery bowel movements that cannot be contained in underwear or diapers). Children who develop diarrhea at the school need to be picked up by their parents. The child should not come to school until he/she is deemed non-contagious by a physician or has had no diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours.
Vomiting	Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a noncommunicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
Strep Throat	The child should return only after 36 hours on medication. The child must be showing signs of improvement and be willing to eat and drink
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease	The child should be on medication for 48 hours and be clearly responding to the treatment before returning to school.

Pinkeye	The child should be on medication for 48 hours and be clearly responding to the treatment before returning to school.
Impetigo	Parents must present evidence that the child is being treated for the skin sores. Children with impetigo or skin sores must have sores completely covered when attending the school.
Ringworms	A child may return 24 hours after treatment has begun. Infection must be covered.
Head Lice	The child may return to school when free of ALL nits.
Common Cold (Bad Cold)	Heavily running nose, colored mucus - frequent coughing,,runny eyes, hoarseness, general listlessness
Chicken Pox	A child may not return the until sixth day after onset of rash or when lesions have dried and crusted.

Children should stay home for at least 24 hours after the LAST symptom ceases. This includes fever! Please refrain from masking a fever or cough by giving medications before coming to school. Children requiring cough medicine or an analgesic may not attend school.

Communicable Diseases

When an employee of the school or an enrolled child has a reportable disease, we will notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health The Department's. Included among the reportable illnesses are the following:

- Botulism
- Bacterial Meningitis
- Chicken Pox
- Diphtheria
- Heamophilus Influenza (invasive)
- Measles (including suspect)
- Meningococcal Infection (invasive)
- Poliomyelitis (including suspect)
- Rabies (human only)

- Rubella Congenital and Non-congenital (including suspect)
- Tetanus (including suspect)
- H1N1 Virus
- Any cluster/outbreak of illnesses

Sometimes your doctor may tell you that your child is well enough to attend school and we'll support his opinion with a note to the school. The burden of caring for a child that is showing questionable symptoms and possibly exposing other children and staff to illness belongs to the school and the family. **We will work closely with the families in assessing each situation and making reasonable predictions about the child's ability to fully participate but ultimately, the decision to allow a child to attend school rests upon the school administration, not the doctor.**

If your child is absent due to illness or other reasons, please call and leave a message. If your child has contracted a contagious condition or disease, please notify the school so that we can notify other parents and staff who may be affected.

Injuries, Injury Prevention and Reporting

Keeping your child safe is our responsibility. We attempt to prevent injuries by creating a safe environment with careful adult supervision. However, because young children are active learners and risk takers, there will be bumps, falls, scratches, scrapes and bruises.

Safety inspections are completed daily inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid is administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you are contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with an emergency backpack that includes a first aid kit meeting state regulations and emergency contact information.

In the case of a serious accident at school, parents will be notified and consulted immediately. Appropriate action will be taken by contacting paramedics, taking the child to the nearest emergency hospital (or location indicated on your emergency form) or contacting the child's pediatrician or dentist as indicated on his or her emergency form.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, 911 will be contacted at once and the child will be transported immediately by ambulance to Grady Hospital, 80 Jesse Hill Jr. Dr SE, Atlanta, Ga 30303. Parents and/or emergency contacts will be notified at once. If an authorized person cannot be contacted or arrive before the ambulance, the director or teacher will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

A Special Note about Biting:

Although, very upsetting, biting is a normal part of development. Infants, toddlers and preschoolers are often unable to communicate effectively with words and may sometimes bite another child. Periodically, in even the best childcare program, outbreaks of biting occur. When this happens, it can be frightening, frustrating, and very stressful for children, parents and educators alike.

Children bite for a variety of reasons: the simple sensory exploration of babies, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, or the intense desire for a toy or the attention of the teacher. Children often bite because they lack the language skills to communicate what they need.

We make every attempt to prevent a child from being bitten. Once teachers become aware that a child is in a biting stage, they try to stay close to that child to prevent continual biting. It may not always be possible for us to prevent an injury. At some point your child may be bitten or may bite another child. We treat the wound and notify you on our incident report. Biting incidents are confidential. We cannot inform you of the child who bit your child. A conference with the family of the child who is biting may be requested to develop appropriate strategies.

Hand-washing

For the health and safety of our students and staff, parents and staff must wash their hands thoroughly upon entry into each Room and the kitchen. Students are instructed to wash their hands after visiting the restroom, playing outside, and before and after eating. Use of hand-sanitizer is not an acceptable substitute for soap and warm water. State mandated signage for instructions on proper hand-washing is displayed in each restroom in the school.

Babysitting Policy

Arrangements made for private sitting are between the individual and the family and are outside the responsibility of The Highlander School. We do not endorse or recommend individuals beyond their work in our supervised setting. Please refrain from asking teachers who baby-sit for you about children, families, or other teachers.

Right to Refuse Child Release

In the the case that we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child, we may refuse to release. For the protection of your child, we may request that another adult on your child's Authorized pick-up list. We may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Recurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

Emergency and Disaster Plans

Emergency procedures in the case of disaster or mass casualty, such as an earthquake or fire, may require evacuation of the building and relocation to a safe location. These locations are posted on the Emergency Disaster Plan posted in the front entry hall.

Contingency Plan

This plan will be effective for the following situations: fire, oil or chemical spills, gas leaks; natural disasters which can include but not be limited to a hurricane, tornado, earthquake; a disgruntled individual or sniper that might threaten the well-being of the children.

Evacuation (in the event of a fire, oil or chemical spills, gas leaks; natural)

1. We will exit our building in the normal fire drill practice and proceed to the sidewalks, crossing the street, and gathering on the side of the **East Atlanta Library, 400 Flat Shoal Rd. Atlanta, Ga**

30316, Children will be escorted outside in a single file line (Infants will be transported during evacuation in cribs).

2. The Director or designated person in charge will contact 911.
3. Each educator will bring an **“Emergency Backpacks”** which includes children’s emergency contact information number.
4. Parents will be notified of the situation.
5. At the assembly area, educators will immediately take a head count of each classroom to ensure that everyone is present and accounted for. Lead educators shall report the final head count to the Director or designee. Names of any missing children or missing personnel must be given to the Director and emergency official.
6. Use the nearest clear exit to evacuate the building during all continuous alarms.
7. Ensure the Director or designee has a fully charged, working cell phone to contact parents and/ emergency personnel.
8. Do not re-enter the building until you are given the **“ALL CLEAR”** command. Many times the situation must be verified as safe, so be patient. Remember, this is for your protection.
9. DECAL will be notified with-in 24 hours by the Director or designated person in charge.
10. Medical supplies including children’s medication and emergency contact information should be taken when facility relocates.

Contingency Plan

In case the East Atlanta Library is unsafe, we will relocate to the East Atlanta Fire Station, 431 Flats Shoal Ave SE, Atlanta, 30317 in coordination with the City of Atlanta Police Department. Parents will be notified of the children’s location and will be asked to pick them up as soon as possible.

Shelter-In Procedures (Tornado/Severe Weather i.e. thunderstorm, ice storm, etc.)

1. An emergency radio with extra batteries is located in the **disaster suitcase in the front office**.
2. If a severe weather watch is issued staff will gather children at the shelter-in place located in the interior of the building including: Both adult bathrooms, back of the main hallways and the parlor of the school.
3. Educators will take a head count to ensure all children are accounted for. Names of any missing children or missing personnel must be given to the Director.
4. Children will sit with their backs to the wall and heads tucked between knees during a tornado warning.
5. Staff will keep children calm by reading books and singing songs.
6. Ensure the Director or designee has a fully charged, working cell phone. If possible, the Director will make contact with all parents to let them know of the situation.
7. No children are allowed to leave the Center while a severe weather watch is in effect without the legal parent or guardian.
8. When the threat has passed, staff may continue with the daily schedule.

Lockdown

1. Lock outside doors and windows.
2. Close and secure interior doors.
3. Close any curtains or blinds.
4. Turn off lights.
5. Keep everyone away from doors and windows. Stay out of sight, preferably sitting on floor.
6. Maintain calm atmosphere in room by reading or talking quietly to children.
7. If phone is available in classroom, Director or designated person in charge will call 911 to ensure emergency personnel have been notified.
8. Remain in lockdown until situation resolved and police give the all clear.
9. DECAL will be notified with-in 24 hours by the Director or designated person in charge.
10. Notify parents/guardians about any lockdown, whether practice or real.

A. Emergency Backpacks

The backpacks at The Highlander School are well equipped with the emergency information for each child. The educator in charge always keep the backpack with the group, so the information is available if the group seeks shelter within the building or chooses to leave the building. The emergency backpacks will contain the following supplies: flashlight, notebook and pen, emergency contact and release information for each student, and necessary medications. A **disaster suitcase** will be located in the **front office** contain the following supplies is clearly marked and located at the front desk: first aid supplies, 2 flashlights, cellphone battery pack chargers, portable radio with extra batteries, notebook, pen and emergence contact and release information for each student. This bag will be taken to the location for shelter.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

All staff are required to inform the director immediately if there are any signs that suggest a child may have been abused or neglected. This includes any concerns regarding unexplained bruises or marks on a child, observations of neglect, physical or verbal mistreatment of a child.

Once a report of suspected child abuse is made, the director will begin an investigation of the situation. If a educator or other staff member is being investigated, the director will notify parents of the child(ren) involved that an investigation is underway. All investigations of suspected Child Abuse and Neglect will be handled in a confidential manner to protect the rights of both the child and the adults involved.

Lost or Missing Child

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or separated from a group either at the school or on a field trip, all available staff search for the child. If the child is not located within five minutes, 911 will be called and the family will be notified.

Babysitting Policy

Arrangements made for private sitting are between the individual and the family and are outside the responsibility of The Highlander School. We do not endorse or recommend individuals beyond their work in our supervised setting. Please refrain from asking teachers who baby-sit for you about children, families, or other teachers.

Holiday Schedule and School Closures

The Highlander School operates year round and closes several times throughout the year for professional development and for a holidays. Our holiday schedule and school closure will be published each year by January 15th. We are closed for most national holidays, which include, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Indigenous People's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Thursday and Friday of Thanksgiving Week, along with four Staff development days; two in the spring and two in the fall. We are also closed for one week for Spring Break, two weeks in the summer, and two weeks during Winter Holidays. We strive to have all of these holidays and closings coincide with the Atlanta Public School District schedule, except for the staff development days, which are coordinated with state and national early childhood conferences.

We respect each family's holiday traditions as well as those who choose not to celebrate holidays at all. We welcome and encourage families to come in and share with the rest of the school what holidays they celebrate and why.

School Celebration

- Indigenous People's Day
- Fall Festival
- Dia de los Muertos
- Diwali
- Winter Solstice
- Martin Luther King Day
- A Spring Fling
- Summer Solstice
- Juneteenth Day

School Closure Due to Loss of Power, Heat, or Water or Physical Defects:

In the event of loss of power, loss of water, or other physical plant defect that prevents the school from opening on time or at all, or necessitating early closure, families are contacted by text, telephone and/or email. If any of these conditions happen during the school day and are deemed to persist for longer than one hour and in the case where proper care of the children beyond that time will not be possible, parents and/or emergency contacts will be called to pick up children as soon as possible. Appropriate staff will remain at the center until all children are picked up. The school will maintain emergency supplies order to provide basic necessary care for at least 4 hours.

School Closings Due to Inclement Weather

In case of extreme weather, the school follows Atlanta Public Schools with regard to school closings. In the case of severe weather (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes) please listen to the local news and/or radio station.

- If Atlanta Public Schools closes early or is closed due to inclement weather, The Highlander School will also close early or be closed.

- Families will be officially notified of the school's closing or closure via Bright Wheels, telephone and or email.

For the safety of school employees, many of whom live some distance from the school, there will be no exceptions to this policy.

Classroom Conversation and Confidentiality

Conversations between parents and educators at drop-off and pick up times are encouraged. These can be wonderful moments for brief exchanges related to family activities and customs.

To honor confidentiality, we do not have any conversations with adults about other families or children. We include children in conversations when appropriate. We do not talk about concerns in their presence and strive to keep all conversations in the presence of children positive. For more extensive conversations or for time to discuss concerns, a meeting should be scheduled.

To respect confidentiality, we do not give any personal or private information to anyone without that person's prior consent. This includes e-mails, phone numbers and addresses for play dates or parties. Email addresses for parents in your child's room may be obtained from your child's room rep.

In the event that a child is injured by another child, state licensing prohibits our giving the name of the child who caused the injury to the parents of the victim.

Children's enrollment files are kept confidential. Occasionally, for assessment and screening purposes, it may be necessary for some school personnel to have access to children's files. This information is never shared with school personnel not involved in the assessment process, or other families.

Photo Release and Social Media

The Educators and staff at The Highlander School regularly take photos and videos of the children for the purpose of educational documentation, as well as for other valid purposes such as usage on our website, brochures, articles or the school's social media accounts. During the enrollment process, families signed a general permission form authorizing the The Highlander School to use their child's photos for the above purposes. Any other usage of children's imagery such as a book cover, etc. would require additional permission from the child's family or legal guardian. Families may not have not take photos of other children on the grounds of The Highlander School.

Termination Policy

A 30 day written notice is required upon withdrawing your child from the program. Your deposit will be forfeited if the school does not receive a 30 day notice.

Open Door Policy

While your child is in our care, you are always welcome here. Please feel free to visit us any time. Not only do we love to have you join us, but it is your right to do so! The licensing agency also has the right to enter and inspect our program without notice. They have the authority to conduct private interviews with the children and staff and audit child or facility records without prior consent. They also have the right to observe the physical condition of the children, and to have a licensed medical professional physically examine the child(ren). This authority is not meant to be frightening in any way, and is only meant to ensure the safety and well being of children in any state licensed facility

Addressing Your Concerns

The Highlander School values the concerns of parents and believes that a courteous, respectful partnership is essential in order to build healthy relationships between school and home. If you have questions or concerns regarding the policies, procedures or operation of this school, please contact the Center Director by telephone or email in order to set up a conference. We are happy to hear your concerns and value open and honest communication in an appropriate setting.

The Highlander School Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign the acknowledgement prior to enrollment. A copy of the acknowledgment will be made and placed in the individual child's file. The family handbook may be updated, and families will receive notices of those changes. Thank you for choosing The Highlander School to be a part of your life. We look forward to building relationships with you and your family.

I have received and reviewed The Highlander School Family Handbook. I understand that it is my responsibility to understand and acquaint myself with the culture of the school and its policies, procedures or information contained in The Highlander Family School Handbook.

Name of Child or Children: _____

Signature of Guardian _____

Date: _____

