Gregory Academy Head Start
3715 W. Polk
Chicago, IL 60624
773- 534-6820

Parent Handbook

106 Classroom Teachers: Mrs. Shelton/ Ms. Henry (773) 534- 6848
107 Classroom Teachers: Mrs. Laird/ Ms. Branch (773) 534-0680
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The Head Start program is organized for the child. It includes activities with a main theme and planned on the developmental level of each child. Daily activities include language arts, art, sand and water projects, easel painting, housekeeping, Science, Math, blocks (large and small), and manipulative toys. Activities are “open-ended” so that each child is taught about adult roles, and interest centers of the classroom.

Individualized education plans are developed for each child, and focus is on the child’s strengths and weaknesses as indicated through developmental and educational screening as well as observation. Control of finger and hand muscles, necessary for writing, will be developed from playing with small manipulative such as puzzles, peg board, play dough, drawing and painting. Mathematics readiness will be developed by counting such things as teaspoons of sugar while making cookies, teddy bears, comparing and matching real items, graphing, arranging straws into groups, and by creating patterns and sequences with blocks. Students will engage in other hands-on activities with sand and water, planting seeds and watching plants grow, nature walks, and outside time. Large muscles will be strengthened through regular play (indoor and outdoor). Children will progress and develop skills for reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and social interaction as they attend class consistently throughout the school year.

ATTENDANCE

Each child is expected to attend school each scheduled day on time as well as picked up on time. The teacher’s regular hours are 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. In cases of a family emergency the main office and classroom teachers must be notified immediately. The educational program is based on the needs of the individual child. Irregular attendance may result in placement on a waiting list to allow another child the opportunity to attend school. No child will be released to an unknown individual. The teacher must be notified by telephone call or written note to release the child to someone other than the person who regularly picks up the child. The parent/representative/visitor must present a form of identification at times of pick-up.

a. SIGN–IN / SIGN-OUT

All parents must sign in and out at the front desk when entering the building and in the pre-k classroom. Children must be signed in and out of the classroom by an adult, 18 years or older. * Check with the main office for cases of older Gregory Academy siblings pick-up/drop off.

b. DROP OFF & PICK UP

Children are to arrive at the scheduled class time. Parents are to drop off children at the front desk. Teacher Assistant will receive students at front desk at 8:15 a.m for breakfast. All parents/guardians should enter and exit through the main entrance on Polk Street. Due to security reasons, no one is to enter or exit the doors near the Pre-k classroom.

1. Children should be brought and picked up by an adult. Parents must provide the teacher with at least two adults who will be bringing and picking up their child. All adults picking up a child from the preschool classroom must have valid identification, and be listed on the child’s emergency form and/or pick up form.
2. **Do not leave your child unattended!** You must sign the child in and make sure the educational support staff/teacher assistant receives the child.

3. **It is very important for each parent to complete an Emergency Consent form** when your child begins class. This consent has the name and telephone number of an adult who may pick up your child if an emergency arises. Please remember to get that person’s consent before putting their name on the form. Anyone not listed on the pick up form will not be allowed to pick up a child from the preschool program.

The following are steps the school will take if you are late picking up your child:

1. Children go to the office.
2. Emergency numbers are called.
3. Police are notified if we are unsuccessful in reaching someone.

**CALL WHEN. . .**

Please call your teacher Mrs. Laird at 773-534-0680, or Mrs. Shelton at 773-534-6848 if your child will not be attending class due to sickness, a rash, fever, or lice.

c. **ABSENCES**

Excessive absences are reported to the social service for follow-up. Remember, you are setting a pattern for your child’s life now!!

d. **DROPPED FROM PROGRAM**

Any child who continuously misses school without a valid excuse will be dropped. Children who have been dropped will be placed on the waiting list and cannot return to school until there is an opening. Parents who are late picking up their child are also at risk of losing their child's place and placement will be given to a child on the waiting list.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

a. **ORIENTATION**
• All parents are expected to attend the orientation meeting each year. New information is presented each year.
• New students are phased in each day until all students are in class.
• Returning students will be called by the teacher assistant.

b. SCHOOL NEWSLETTERS
• We will have a school newsletter on the 1st of each month which will have activities occurring in that month.

c. PARENT BULLETIN BOARD
• A parent bulletin board is near the door in the classroom. You will find announcements, information, a calendar of special events and trips there. Please check daily for updates of information.

d. PARENT CONFERENCES
• Parent conferences are held twice a year, Wednesday, November 9, 2016 and Wednesday, April 19, 2017. The dates will appear in the newsletter. This is a time for parents and teachers to share information or concerns about your child. On these dates you will need to make an appointment.
• The Head Start children will receive their progress reports twice a year.

e. HOME VISITS
• Children and their parents may be visited during the school year. A schedule will be made for all visits.

f. HEALTH AND SAFETY
• If your child is sick, please keep him/her at home. Parents sending sick children will be called to come and pick up the child immediately. All children returning to school after a contagious or serious illness must be accompanied by a note from the doctor.

g. PARENT/TEACHER MEETINGS TIMES
• Parent meetings must take place during before the start of school at 8:00 – 8:25 a.m.

h. CELEBRATIONS
• A birthday party is a very special time for a young child and a celebration is planned for each child (or it is celebrated on the school day closest to the actual birthday).
• At group time the child can choose a special story to be shared with the class. The birthday is celebrated at snack time.
• Parents are encouraged to bring nutritional birthday treats (birthday cakes or cupcakes must be gluten free) to help their child celebrate. All nutritional treats must be store or bakery bought. Please confer with the teacher prior to the celebration.
i. **FIELD TRIPS**

- Parents are invited to go on all field trips except when adult numbers are limited. If you will be going with us on field trips, you will need to sign your name ahead of time. If the number of adults is limited, those who sign up first will be allowed to go.
- Neither the school nor the bus company is insured to take care of siblings. Therefore, siblings are not allowed to attend the field trips.
- The principal reserve the last authority to deny parent participation in school activities this includes field trips. A conference of letter might be included in this process depending on the concern(s).

j. **CLOTHING/ATTIRE**

- All children need a complete set of clothing left in school. The clothing is to be left in the box above their locker. This is in case your child needs to be changed. Please label each article with your child’s complete name.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. NO JEANS, No jogging pants</td>
<td>1. NO JEANS, No jogging pants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Navy blue or black trouser (worn at</td>
<td>2. Navy blue or black skirts, pants, or</td>
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<tr>
<td>the waist and fastened)</td>
<td>jumper</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Light blue shirt or white top</td>
<td>4. Light blue blouse or white top</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Black or brown belts</td>
<td>5. Dark-colored shoes (gym shoes are</td>
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<td></td>
<td>acceptable but no colored shoelaces)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Dark-colored shoes (gym shoes are</td>
<td>7. White, navy blue, or black socks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acceptable but no colored shoelaces)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. White, navy blue, or black socks</td>
<td>9. NO FACIAL PIERCING</td>
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k. **POLICY ON TOYS BEING BROUGHT TO SCHOOL**

- Children are not to bring toys to school unless asked by teachers and parents will be notified.

l. **FOOD SERVICE**

- Students will be provided breakfast every morning at 8:15 a.m. Parents must have their children in school on time if he/she is to have breakfast. Lunch is provided daily. Snack
is provided every afternoon. No other outside food is allowed for several concerns; one being the allergic reactions of other students.

m. **HYGIENE PROCEDURES**

- Please make sure children wash their hands prior to eating or after using the toilet.
- Parents preparing food must wash their hands and wear plastic gloves.

n. **VISITOR POLICY**

- Visitors coming into Gregory Academy must check in at the main office. A visitor’s badge must be worn at all times while in the school.

o. **Head Start Family/Parent Volunteer Policy**

Head start parent volunteers are encouraged. Please see the classroom teacher to set up a schedule and complete the volunteer package. There are CPS requirements. Please ask the teacher or an administrator regarding these specifics. Thank you in advance for your time.

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**THINGS TO DO WHILE VOLUNTEERING IN THE CLASSROOM**

- Participate on the rug with us if we are listening to an activity record

- Join children in an interest center and let them talk to you during self-selected time. Please listen to them and ask thinking questions or just repeat their sentence. An example of this is: Child says, “See my baby?” You can say something like, “I see you have a baby wearing a red sweater.” We are a language based program. It is our goal to expand our children’s vocabulary and encourage them to use complete sentences.

- Sit with us at a table with the children and talk during snack and other nutritional activities. Encourage the children to taste the food but do not feed them or force anyone to eat. We encourage the children to put away the toys they played with, clean up after they eat, and dress or undress themselves when going outside. We ask you to assist them when it is needed.
• Assist teacher assistant with lunchroom duty by helping children wash hands, cleaning tables before and after children eat lunch and watch children as they wait to enter classroom. It will only take 2 parents to assist with this duty.

DON’T

✔ Shout, humiliate, call a child “bad” or under any circumstances spank. This includes your child.

✔ Stay with your own child when volunteering. You are volunteering to be with the class and it is unfair to your child or other children if you show favoritism.

✔ Say you will volunteer and then find some excuse not to. Our program is 100% beneficial to the children.

✔ Don’t use profanity or rude disrespectful behavior. Visitors may be barred from the school for inappropriate behavior.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

1. WHEN CHILDREN ARE EATING:
   - Sit down with them at the tables
   - Encourage them to eat some of everything
   - Talk about the food they are eating
   - Remind them to clean up when they are through

2. WHEN CHILDREN ARE PLAYING
   - Join them
   - Participate in the activity
   - Ask them about what they are doing, what colors they are using, etc.
   - Help them with a puzzle, beads or clay
   - Play a game at the table with them
   - Read them a story

3. WHEN CHILDREN ARE CLEANING UP
   - Assist them
   - Offer help and encouragement for a job well done
   - Don’t just tell them. . . Do use friendly persuasion!!

4. WHEN CHILDREN ARE ON THE RUG
   - Join them
   - Help them to pay attention
   - Sit right with them
Join in songs
Help them to be quiet and listen

5. WHEN CHILDREN ARE PUTTING ON THEIR COATS

Help them
Encourage them to button
Show them how, but let them try to do it themselves

ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST HAVE A COMPLETED UP TO DATE T.B. FORM ON FILE IN THE PRE-K CLASSROOM.

This year, we hope to see each one of our parents get involved in their child’s education. We are a program that welcomes you with open arms. This is a perfect way to begin an involvement that will hopefully last throughout their education!!

Incentives

Incentives will be provided for students and parents who meet or exceed expectations in the following:

- Attendance (Students with perfect attendance at the end of the month).
- Parents who volunteer in the classroom.
- Parent participation in meetings and workshops.

Only those students/parents that meet the criteria can participate in the incentive program/activities.