

Hillsboro PreK Handbook

Coffeen School ☒ 200 School Street ☒ Coffeen, IL 62017 ☒ (217)534-2314 ☒ (217)534-6088(fax)

HILLSBORO EARLY CHILDHOOD PRESCHOOL FOR ALL PROGRAM

Hillsboro Early Childhood Program (Preschool For All) is an Illinois State Board grant funded preschool program for children 3-5 years of age. Our classrooms are located at 2 attendance sites in the district, Coffeen School and Hillsboro Community Child Development Center (HCCDC) on the hospital grounds. Both sites offer the same family involvement activities, parent resources, developmentally appropriate curriculum, certified Early Childhood teachers and state certified teaching assistants. Our district provides the least restrictive inclusionary setting for all children, regardless of their developmental level or disability.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of Hillsboro Early Childhood Programs to facilitate the development of children and to strengthen and support families in their efforts to prepare their children for future school success, using research based, developmentally appropriate methods and fully including all children.

Your child will benefit from an enriching preschool environment and experience the joys of making new friends, the excitement of learning new skills, and the opportunity to develop independence. Activities are always aligned with the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards. Our curriculum is entirely *play-based* and assessment is *authentic* in the natural play setting using appropriate practices for preschool age children as outlined by The Creative Curriculum for Preschool.

IMPORTANT DATES AT BEGINNING OF SCHOOL YEAR

Registration: Watch for information about registering online @ www.hillsboroschools.net or at school at the end of the summer. ALL students, new and returning, must register yearly. Students wishing to enroll AFTER the start of school will need to call the PreK Office @ 217-534-2314 to schedule a screening and for information about registering.

Documents Required for Enrollment:

- ☐ **Completed Physical/Immunization Form(s) (*new students only*)**
- ☐ **Accurate address(s) for transportation (*if using bussing*)**
- ☐ **Birth Certificate (*unless previously provided*)**
- ☐ **Proof of family income (*new students*)** by providing any 1 of the following: W-2s; 1 month of pay stubs; medical card; SNAP/TANF/WIC benefit documentation, or front page of previous year income taxes. (These documents will be kept safely and confidential. They will be shredded upon exiting our PreK program. **Students without proof of income on file will be placed on a waiting list.**)

ORIENTATION: Orientation is held at at the beginning of each school year for Parents **new** to PreK at your child's attendance center.

Home Visit: Your child's teacher will be calling you mid- August to schedule a brief home visit at your house so that your child can meet them where they are most comfortable. This will take place prior to the first day of school.

Open House: CHILDREN *and* PARENTS are invited to come to school to drop off supplies, see the classroom, and meet the staff!

YOU AND YOUR CHILD

You are your child's first teacher. Parents are THE most important people in a child's life. Everyone needs help being a parent! None of us are born parents. We learn to be parents by:

1. Talking to and watching other parents.
2. Reading books.
3. Listening to the advice of doctors and other professionals.
4. Remembering how our parents raised us.

Parents teach their children by **PLAYING** with them, **TALKING TO** and **EXPLAINING** things to them, and by **SETTING CONSISTENT LIMITS**. We believe that parents are the biggest influence on their child's school success. For that reason, we find as many ways to communicate with you as possible. Because there is **NO COST** for the pre-Kindergarten Program, we **REQUIRE** parents to volunteer in some way. Your child's teacher will provide you with a list of ways that you can be involved.

COMMUNICATION

We encourage you to **visit** your child's school anytime. It is best to wait until after the first couple weeks, until they have established a routine and feel comfortable with teachers and peers.

All of our teachers use the **"Remind App"** to communicate with parents **via text** and is one of our easiest and most utilized forms of communication. Teachers welcome you to text them any time using this app and will be in contact with you as soon as they can. We invite you to "Like" and "Follow" our **Hillsboro Pre-K Facebook page**, as well as your teacher's private classroom Facebook page which they will share with you! You can also explore the PreK pages on our district website @ **www.hillsboroschools.net**

We provide a **journal** to write back and forth notes from school to home, especially important if your children are being bussed to and from school. You will receive a **monthly calendar** from the main office with Pre-K news, family events, parent workshops, and attendance schedules. You will also receive a **weekly calendar** from your classroom teacher with classroom activities and reminders.

The **phone contact and email information** is provided on your monthly calendar if you need to speak with the program coordinator (Mrs. VanMiddendorp- "Miss Sarah") or principal (Mrs. Gutierrez) for any reason, at 217-534-2314.

CLASS SCHEDULES

Classes at Coffeen are half-day sessions, AM and PM. They meet 5 days per week, Monday - Friday for 2.5 hours per day. Morning sessions are approximately 8:15-11:00, and afternoon sessions are 12:00-2:45. Full Day Class is in attendance 8:15 a.m. - 2:45 p.m. Times vary slightly year to year due to transportation schedules. *Bussing is only available Monday thru Thursday.* Children attending class on Friday must be transported by an adult caregiver. (Your child's teacher will share more information with you about our Friday Class Schedule.) We understand that transporting your child on Fridays may be a hardship for some families.

Hillsboro Child Development Center (HCCDC) is a daycare located on the Hillsboro Hospital grounds. This center is part of the HCCDC daycare program. All preschool children at this site must be enrolled full-time in the daycare center. This class meets 5 days per week, Monday - Friday. There is no bussing to or from this center.

BUSSING

ISBE Early Education Program funding does **not** require that school districts provide bussing for preschool aged children. With the rising cost of transportation, bussing is not necessarily provided

from the door of every home to and from school. You will receive information about your child's bus stop times & location at Open House.

- **HCCDC** daycare center Pre-K children are only transported to and from school by parents. No bussing is available to the center unless a child receives special education services or has a special education program they must attend elsewhere.
- **Coffeen** students are offered bussing, but may have **designated bus stops** in some areas. Your child's teacher will discuss the designated location with you prior to enrollment. **Bussing is only available Monday thru Thursday. Parents may transport on Fridays.**
- **Early Childhood Special Education** - Students receiving Special Education services are offered bussing every day, Monday thru Friday.

FEES AND CHARGES

There are no fees or charges for Pre-K. We are funded through grants from the Illinois State Board of Education. All school supply or wish lists sent home by teachers are *donations, and not required* for attendance. If your child attends HCCDC, all 3-5 year olds participate in the preschool program free of cost, and only pay daycare fees.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS—EARLY DISMISSALS

A parent alert broadcast with any changes in school closing times due to snow, ice, fog, or emergencies will go out to the first 2 primary contact numbers on file for each student. It is very important to keep contact numbers up to date and on file in our office so **please call and update any time your phone number changes**. In the event of early dismissals, the call will go out as soon as the decision is made from the unit office during the school day.

All school busses are equipped with radios with a base unit located at the bus garage and all attendance centers. If at any time you are concerned about your child's late arrival, call the Pre-K office and we can contact the bus driver directly!

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Our parking lots can become very congested at arrival and dismissal times. If you are ever transporting your child to or from school, please escort your child into the classroom and out. Check with your child's teacher for the best time to drop off or pick up. Please hold your child's hand in the parking lot and never leave a car running on school grounds. If you have an infant, please do not leave them unattended. Speak with your child's teacher about special arrangements if you have physical limitations, a child with special needs, or an infant. We understand that situations make it difficult for you to come in and out of the building, and will accommodate this need to the best of our ability.

If someone other than parents will pick up your PreK child, you **MUST** *notify us in writing, or give us a call* if you have not sent a note. We cannot legally send a child with anyone other than parents or those designated by the parents or guardians in writing.

SCHOOL BUS INFORMATION (Coffeen Only)

Many children will ride the bus to and from school, unless they are attending the daycare center program. You will be notified as to the exact time and place your child will meet the bus.

1. Have your child at the bus stop **before** your scheduled pick-up time. Children should be ready for the bus (coats and backpacks already on) before it arrives. (Bus times may vary 5-10 minutes, so please be watching for the bus early, and also know that it may run behind at times.) Bus drivers request that you be outside, or have a front door open so they can see you as they

approach. If they do not see anyone, they may slow down and stop briefly, but are NOT required to stop for any length of time and honk or wait.

2. Remind your child to follow the bus rules, especially: **STAY IN ONE SEAT. REMAIN SEATED AT ALL TIMES. KEEP HANDS TO YOURSELF. USE YOUR QUIET VOICE.**
3. A responsible person **MUST** meet the bus and see the child home safely. A bus driver **CANNOT** drop off a preschooler unless he/she sees that someone is at the bus stop to meet the child. If no one is there to meet the preschooler, the child will be kept on the bus and taken to the bus garage at the high school or returned to their school or after-school program. You will be called and it will be your responsibility to pick your child up. **You will only be allowed to have this happen two times, if it happens a third time, your child may lose bus privileges and be required to pay after-school care fees.**
4. Please notify the school and bus garage AHEAD OF TIME if your child is ill or unable to attend so that the bus driver can be notified and not stop to pick up your child.
Bus garage: 217-532-6012 PreK: 217-534-2314
5. If your child is to be picked up or dropped off at a different location other than their regular bus stop, please notify the school no later than 10:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m.
6. If someone other than your child's typical caregivers will be picking your child up off the bus, please let the school know in advance, OR give that person our **"yellow school bus" cut-out to show the driver** as a sign that you have approved that person to pick up your child.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The teachers and assistants value the privacy of your child and your family. Our staff is trained and carefully follows our confidentiality policy. You can be confident that no staff member will discuss your child in any way at school unless it pertains to their educational plan. You can also be confident that they will not discuss any child outside of the school setting. It is just as important that when you visit your child's school that you respect the privacy of all children and families. When you visit you will see many children who are just developing the social skills of turn taking, sharing, interacting with peers and following a routine.

All children have emotional ups and downs as they learn, just like at home. They are likely to act very differently when parents are present at *their* school. We find that children fully accept and understand their peers at this early age, no matter what the behavior, delay or disability may be. Please do not make judgements or comments about others. When you visit our classrooms, please fully respect the privacy of all families and children. Every child and family deserves the same respect that you want others to have for your own child and family.

DRESS

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that they can learn to manage themselves in the bathroom. They also need comfortable shoes, as part of their program involves large motor skill development of running, jumping, hopping, skipping and riding bikes, all of which we do daily. Cowboy boots and shiny dress shoes should be saved for other occasions. Tennis shoes are preferred.

We go outdoors until temperatures fall below a windchill of 29 degrees! Please send the appropriate gloves, hats, and jackets in your child's backpack as the weather requires.

SPECIAL POLICIES

1. Please **do not send toys** with your child to school. Remind them that it may get lost or broken and that we have plenty of toys at school.

2. Each teacher will inform you by their calendar how they will celebrate each holiday. We are very careful to respect the traditions and beliefs of all families. We are also careful to make **holidays** fun, not stressful or confusing to young children. .
3. **Birthdays** will be celebrated by each teacher in a special way. Your child's birthday will still be celebrated even if you do not send anything. If you choose to send something, it must be a treat approved by your teacher, packaged, and store-bought. We do not serve children sugary unhealthy **snacks** like candy or things with icing in our classrooms. Some suggestions are ice cream, yogurt, popsicles, jello, pudding, fruit, or provide the snack and send hats, plates or napkins in your child's favorite color or theme. **NO** cakes or cupcakes please.
4. **Full-day classes** will be served breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack.
5. **Half-day classes** are only served a snack while at school. *Please be sure to have your child eat breakfast or lunch before coming to school.*

HEALTH, IMMUNIZATIONS, MEDICATIONS

Your child's health is very important! Good health will make it easier for him/her to succeed and protect the health of others in the classroom. Children need to develop good health habits at an early age and YOU are the teacher they learn from the most! Please set a good example for your child.

1. **Before your child begins school, he/she will need a current PHYSICAL EXAM completed by your doctor.** The IDHS physical form is required for all IL schools. A visit to the dentist is also strongly recommended. Your child's immunizations **including the lead screen** portion of the form, parent signature and physician signature, **MUST be turned in to the school by the first day of attendance, or your child will not be allowed to attend.**
2. Children DO NOT need to be "potty trained" to come to school! We are ready for your child wherever they are in the many stages of toilet training. We will partner with you in toilet training when your child is ready!
3. Please ensure your child bathes regularly. Teeth need to be brushed daily. Children, even at age 3 and 4, are extremely honest and verbal about what they see and smell and can make a child who has poor hygiene feel very bad unintentionally. Children of this age delight in being able to bathe and brush their own teeth and develop quite a sense of confidence and good self-esteem as they care for their own needs.
4. Your preschooler needs at least **ten hours of rest per night**. Going to school is a big job and children need lots of energy to be ready to go each day. If bedtime is a challenge, please discuss this with us as we have had lots of success with some solutions to this common problem.
5. **DO NOT send your child to school if ILL or has:**
 - a. a fever of 100.0 or higher (within 24 hours)
 - b. a bad cold or cough
 - c. diarrhea (within the last 24 hours)
 - d. sore throat
 - e. been vomiting within the last 24 hours, or has a severe stomachache
 - f. a rash of unknown cause
 - g. has live head lice or nits (lice eggs)
 - h. a severe toothache, earache, or headache
 - i. watery, red, swollen eyes of unknown origin
 - j. taken Tylenol/Ibuprofen/aspirin in the last 4-6 hours to keep fever down
6. **It is extremely important that you share with your child's teacher any allergies your child has to**

food or the environment! She will pass that information on to the building nurse.

The official policy of the Hillsboro School Board is that all medication that a child needs to receive during the day must be left with the school nurse or staff designee. All medication should be in its original container or prescription bottle with the child's name, doctor's name, contents, and dosage clearly marked as appropriate. **NO MEDICATION CAN BE ADMINISTERED WITHOUT A SCHOOL MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM** signed by the parent and physician.

EXPULSION AND SUSPENSION

It is the policy of the Hillsboro Early Childhood Program, and in compliance with the Illinois State Board of Education Early Childhood Block Grant, that **no preschooler shall be expelled or suspended from preschool**. Exclusionary discipline practices deprive children of valuable early learning experiences and teach them to believe that there is something wrong or bad about them. When children are excluded from learning environments by being suspended or expelled, they miss valuable educational opportunities and are at greater risk of disengagement and diminished educational opportunities. Our teachers and staff are trained and experienced in implementing a wide variety of positive behavior modification strategies to help each child have a successful preschool experience.

PRESCHOOL TO KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION PLAN

Fall/Winter

- Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten teachers meet on a School Improvement Planning day to discuss expectations for the children going into Kindergarten.
- The Kindergarten/Pre-Kindergarten teachers discuss their expectations and what they believe the students need to be learning.
- They compare expectations and create an appropriate list of expectations agreeable to both groups of teachers and align to the IL Early Learning Standards and IL Early Learning Kindergarten Standards.

Spring

- Four to six weeks prior to the last day of preschool, a parent/teacher conference will be held to review portfolios with parents. The teacher will discuss your child's progress and show evidence of their strengths from photos, documentation, and skills checklist. She will discuss skills that are still emerging and provide suggestions of ways you can help your child over the summer months to continue to encourage the development of these skills.
- Two to three weeks before the last day of preschool, teachers will begin incorporating activities and discussions into the daily routine about the transition they will be making to a new teacher, classroom, and in some cases, school. Children will be reading related books, participating in group activities, and taking active roles in group discussions about transitioning to Kindergarten. Each class will visit a Kindergarten classroom and other "new" areas of the school (ex. cafeteria, music room, library, etc.)
- One to two weeks before the last day of preschool, we will hold a Kindergarten Transition parent meeting to discuss the expectations of Kindergarten with you. During this meeting, you will have a chance to meet and speak with the teachers and learn the health requirements for attending Kindergarten. Your child will visit a Kindergarten classroom, read a related book, and participate in a few learning center activities related to the book. At the Kindergarten Transition meeting, your family will receive a copy of the Kindergarten Transition book to read and discuss Kindergarten with

your child throughout the summer, and your family will get a tour of the building to familiarize you and your child with the building they will be attending in the fall.

Summer

- Parents are encouraged to visit the school and play on the playground periodically. Take frequent walks or drive by the school so that your child can become comfortable with the new surroundings.
- Parents of K-bound will be notified in mid-August by letter from the Elementary Building Principal of the school they will attend regarding Kindergarten entry, registration, and any first week activities, including meeting their child's teacher and visiting the classroom for the first time.
- Pre-Kindergarten teachers meet with Kindergarten teachers at the beginning of the school year to review student portfolios and focus their discussion on your child's strengths and how they learn best, giving attention to any special circumstances that may impact your child's learning.



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