



WELCOME TO KIRKLAND PRESCHOOL!

2014-2015 Family Handbook

Table of Contents:	Page Number:
Apparel	3
Arrivals	3
Auction	3
Birthdays and Half-Birthdays	4
Carpools	4
Children's Cubbies	4
Class Calendars	5
Conferences	5
Departures	5
Discipline	6
Dogs & Cats at School	6
E-mails from School	6
Emergency Information Forms	6
Family Helper Days	7
Field Trips	7
Fires, Natural Disasters and Accidents	8
Illness	8
Information Flyers from Outside Organizations	8
Late Fees	8
Lending Library	8
Letters of Recommendations for other Schools	9
"Lunch Plus" Program	9
Medications	9

Table of Contents:**Page Number:**

NSF Checks	9
Objects from Home	9
Opportunities to Support our Community	9
Opportunities to Support our School	10
Overtime Fees	11
Parent Agreement Form	11
Phone Lists	11
Registration for the next Preschool Year	11
Releasing Children	12
Scholarships	12
"Sharing Times"	12
Snacks	13
Suggestions	13
Summer School	13
Suspected Cases of Abuse	13
Treasure Box Book Club	14
Tuition	14
Visiting	14
Weather Related School Closures	14
Website	15
Withdrawal and Re-enrollment	15
Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy	15
Emergency Plans	16

Apparel: Please help your child choose play clothes to wear. We are an extremely active school, and occasionally we get very messy. A helpful stain remover is Simple Green.

Please help your child choose clothing that is easy to manage when he/she needs to go to the bathroom.

Please be sure footwear is safe for climbing and running and for damp grass! We try to go outdoors as often as possible, so please send appropriate outerwear.

Label clothing, then look in our lost and found, located near your class' coathooks.



Arrivals: It is best to arrive at the scheduled time. Too early is awkward because the teachers really do need their preparation time, and too late is hard on your child. To help you if you do arrive early, we have a basket of books in the large activity room so you and your child can have a quiet time together.

The curb right in front of the school is reserved for parents who have to negotiate heavy carseats for younger siblings. To help arrivals (and departures) go smoothly for everyone, if you park right in front of the school, please pull as far forward as possible. While it is tempting to stop right in front of the entrance, it is more considerate of others to pull forward.

Always be sure you or another adult walks your child all the way into the classroom.

After settling your child into school, if you want to converse with other parents, the deck and large activity room are great places for chats. Some families with younger siblings also enjoy reading a story or two in the large activity room before heading out the door.

Auction: Our annual auction is a highlight of our school year. Watch for more information, so you can start planning on how you can help with this most important fund-raising effort. Our auction will be on Friday, February 6, 2015, so start planning and watch for announcements.



Birthdays and Half-Birthdays: We celebrate these special days, if you tell us by a little note on the calendar date square. We are clued in if you write something like "child's name - bday." This also goes for half-birthdays for the summer birthday children.

We also respect those who do not celebrate birthdays or holidays. Please talk with your teachers so we may agree upon an approach which supports each family's traditions and beliefs.

Often, parents want to send a small birthday snack to share at snack time. Please note this on the calendar so everyone is aware of your plans. Please send just a simple snack. This is not a full-blown birthday party, so please don't send party favors.

Because of children with allergies, please send either the complete list of ingredients or the packaging which shows ingredients. Please try to avoid any peanuts, traces of peanuts or peanut oil and any tree nuts. Also, we strongly, strongly discourage cupcakes because they result in sticky, crumbly messes, the clean-up of which cuts into our class schedule. We are happy to suggest alternative snacks.

If your child cannot eat various foods, please send a few special items so he/she can have an appropriate treat with the others. We'll keep these in a labeled container.

Party invitations (as in, NO!) - Even if the entire class is invited to a party, please do not put invitations in the children's cubbies or baskets. Please mail them. Sometimes parents of children this age prefer to see these before their children. Extra phone lists with addresses and emails should be on each lesson plan board.

Carpools: We encourage carpools! Please give us a note so we know which children are allowed to ride in which cars. A safety note - please observe child restraint system laws and make sure everyone has the proper car seat or booster seat.

Also, please make an effort to get pertinent school handouts to each child's parents. Please deliver papers and please pass along information on school reader boards.

It is still important, though, for all families to get into the building occasionally so you can keep in touch.

Children's Cubbies: Each child has a special cubby or basket, which you should check for class calendars, announcements, newsletters, and art projects. If you drive a carpool, please help your passengers gather their things. There are usually bags nearby so you can separate the children's stuff.



Class Calendars: Be sure to read and save the monthly Class Calendars for your child's session. Each one helps you know what your child is learning. You will also see occasional homework assignments for both your child AND you, as well as notices on special field trips, etc. We try to be accurate with our information, but sometimes mistakes or changes occur. Please watch for notices on lesson plan boards, on classroom doors or on outside reader boards. If you carpool and haven't received information lately, please check with a teacher. You may also view these on-line at www.kirklandpreschool.org

Conferences: We are always willing to share our observations of your children with you. Most often, these will be informal conversations or phone calls. It's okay to call us at home. This is not an intrusion! If you need a more formal conference, we will schedule one at any time. *It is most helpful for you to have spent time in the classroom before we confer.*

In winter, parents of older preschoolers often have kindergarten readiness questions. By then, each family should have had 1 or 2 chances to help in the classroom and observe their child. If you want, we will share our assessments to try to help you in your decision-making.

The bottom line is --- please remember that is fine to call us at our homes. Sometimes that is a more relaxing way to talk. Some of the teachers also welcome emails. Look on the 1st page of this handbook for numbers and addresses.

Departures: PLEASE READ - FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL THE CHILDREN!

Because going home time can be confusing with excited children and lots of adults in a small space, we ask your help in the following ways:

Please do not be late. Your child assumes the worst, no matter what we say. (Also see "Overtime Fees".)

As we finish, teachers need to watch to be sure all the children leave with the appropriate adults. While we like to share conversations with you, please understand that our primary responsibility at this time is the children's safety.

Please do not let your children run ahead of you. If you and another parent stop to talk before your children are in your cars, please be especially aware of your children. (Also see "Overtime Fees", "Releasing Children" and "Traffic Safety".)

All Little Friends classes: *We love visiting with you and don't want to rush you out the door, BUT please leave each day at 11:30. With the Lunch Plus children arriving in the classroom at 11:40, the teachers need those precious few minutes to get ready for the next class (and to get a minute of personal time!)*

Discipline: Our ultimate goal is self-discipline and consideration for others, so we approach situations as learning experiences. Everyone has the right to be safe at school, and collectively as staff, parents, and helpers, we assist the children in learning how to interact positively.

Usually, we can re-direct a child to a more positive action or we can help children talk out their differences. Sometimes, we may have to remove a child from a situation, but we never leave such a child without adult supervision. We also try to involve the child in arriving at solutions. We do not insist that children say "Sorry", because sometimes children just mimic the words. We do try to encourage the children to see how they can comfort each other.

We communicate with parents so we can work together. If a problem seems to be developing, we may ask families to come observe in class. Families are welcome any time to observe and take part in our school. We also may ask a trained, outside professional to observe and share suggestions and resources which could help the entire class.

We want to be an inclusive school so we may have students with various needs, including behavioral needs. We would hope that families would celebrate all children's steps toward self-discipline and consideration for others. Sometimes, however, staff, family, and possibly outside resource people may come to the conclusion that our school setting is not the appropriate one for a particular learner.

Dogs & Cats at School: Our insurance policy specifically requests that the students not come in contact with dogs or cats during school times. So, if you travel to school with your pooch in the car, please leave it there --- please don't walk Fido to the door! If your child wants to show off a new puppy or kitten, please arrange to do so around the corner and "off the school clock"!

E-mails From School: We send occasional e-mail notices about work parties, other school announcements or auction information to everyone for whom we have an address. We don't use this for "unofficial" messages, so we won't clog up your inbox. You also may find this a convenient way to communicate. Carolyn reads hers daily, so your message should get through. During school hours, the most expedient address is wirkmanc@frontier.com.



Emergency Information Forms: Included in this handbook is a special Emergency Release form. For your peace of mind and your child's safety in the event of a major emergency such as an earthquake or unexpected winter storm, please complete and return this form. *Remember to inform us of any changes as the year goes on.*



Family Helper Days: Since children often think Mom, Dad or their special grown-up is theirs, alone, it is helpful to prepare your child by telling him or her that you are coming to help ALL the children. Be sure to accompany this with a hug and assurances that your child is still the most special one!

We count on each family taking its turns. If the parents of a family cannot help, we are delighted to have other family representatives come in, as long as they understand that they are there working to help all the children, not just their own.

As school starts, each family signs up for their desired days. If a family doesn't select their total, we may assign days. Then families can arrange any trades with others in their class. Please try to keep track of your helping days. To help you, we will post names and dates for upcoming helpers near the entrance to your classroom.

If for whatever reason, your family has trouble meeting your obligation, please see Carolyn so she might recommend some other fine schools which do not have this requirement.

We sincerely thank you for your vital part in helping us provide a vibrant, successful educational experience for your child. We hope you see this as an opportunity and we hope this sets the tone for your involvement throughout your child's educational path.

Field Trips: We believe field trips are an important part of our curriculum and will be having various trips throughout the school year. The trips progress from neighborhood walks for the youngest students to full-blown adventures for the oldest children. We almost always meet at the trip location, so we give everyone maps and directions. We encourage you to arrange your own carpools.

Information comes home with the Class Calendar and via special handouts. We assume each preschooler is going, unless you notify us otherwise. So if your child is not joining us, but we had to pre-pay for the spot, it can cause a financial burden on the school.

There may be additional charges for trips to offset costs of admission, parking or transportation. If this presents a problem, please see your teacher or Carolyn. We don't want to exclude anyone. (Also see "Scholarships".)

If any fathers, grandparents, aunts or uncles would like to help, they are also welcome, but they should plan on really helping. Some trips are open to siblings, while some are not appropriate. We will give you all the information as each trip comes up.

Occasionally, dates of field trips may have to be changed due to inclement weather or unforeseen conflicts, but we will try to give adequate notice of schedule changes or cancellations. The school answering machine should have schedule changes.

Fires, Natural Disasters and Accidents: Please see the specially marked handouts. It is especially important that you give us any changes in your emergency phone numbers and instructions.

Illness: PLEASE KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME IF HE/SHE HAS:

1. A cold. Keep him/her home until your child is symptom free for 24 hours and is back to his or her happy personality!
2. A temperature greater than 100°. Please wait 24 hours after the fever subsides before allowing him/her to return to school.
3. A rash on the face, behind the ears, legs, arms or trunk of body.
4. Ear ache, sore throat, red runny eyes, cough, or yucky runny nose.
5. Dull eyes or if your child is overly tired and/or cranky.
6. Diarrhea, vomiting or a headache 12 hours prior to school.
7. Lice. Keep him/her home until nits are gone.

Please read the attached article "How Sick is Too Sick?", written by our school nursing consultant, Jennifer Wirkman.

If you miss school and have time to call, we appreciate knowing why your child is not in school. We particularly appreciate a call if several days are missed or if there is a contagious condition.



Information Flyers from Outside Organizations: Occasionally we are asked to send home flyers from music, dance, swim or vacation Bible schools, etc. This may also include commercial outfits selling children's or family products or services, such as photography or babysitting services. We do not particularly endorse or not endorse any of these. We trust your judgment as adults to discard anything not pertaining to your lifestyle.

Late Fees: Unless a prior arrangement has been made with Carolyn, tuition paid after the 15th of any month needs to be accompanied by a \$10 late fee.

Lending Library: In the large activity room we have a small library available with parenting books. There are some special books to help children deal with hard topics like death or social skills. Please be considerate of the other families and return items in a timely fashion.



Letters of Recommendations for Other Schools: We take these requests very seriously and spend considerable time completing them accurately. We will complete any requests for special needs classes. We also will complete requests for early kindergarten or private kindergarten admission. We prefer to not complete any requests for other preschools because we value your children's involvement at our school and we feel we offer excellent education for all children.

"Lunch Plus" Program: Families may sign up for our optional, separate "Lunch Plus" program on most Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, 11:40 - 2:00. There will be some days that Lunch Plus is not offered. Children bring their own lunches in insulated bags (we cannot heat food items, however). After eating, the class enjoys special activities and possibly some outside play before 2:00 pick-up time. Families may sign up monthly for every day, or selected days, or if there is room, on a drop-in basis. The cost is \$18 per day. Children attending must be confidently potty-trained.



Medications: Since children attend Kirkland Preschool for school reasons, not child care reasons, they should not be attending school when they are unwell. So, teachers should not have to administer medications. Important exceptions, however, are life-saving devices such as Epi-pens or inhalers. These should be in well-labeled, original packaging, and teachers should be provided with clear instructions. We keep these in an easily accessible and clearly marked location in each classroom and carry them with us on all field trips. Families are responsible for keeping the medications up-to-date.

NSF Checks: Any checks returned marked NSF need to be resubmitted with a \$25 processing fee.

Objects From Home: Please - no gum! Also, please do not send food from home, unless we have made arrangements because your child has allergies. Toys should also stay home unless your child is having trouble separating and the toy is a "security" item. Let the teacher know, though, so she can help the other children understand.



Opportunities to Support our Community: As part of our curriculum, we help the children learn how to give back to our communities. For example, we are a collection point for donations to The Sharehouse, a non-profit furniture and household items bank for homeless families transitioning into housing. (www.thesharehouse.org) Also, at various times of the year, we provide opportunities for the children to bring in food for the food bank, toys for a toy drive or pet supplies for the animal shelter. We try to keep these low-key and appropriate to the children's understanding. Of course, no one should feel pressured to participate. If you do want to contribute, try to involve your child. Please share suggestions for such activities with Carolyn.

Opportunities to Support our School: One of the features of our school is the wonderful support and encouragement families offer the staff and each other. There are many ways to get involved - helping in your child's class, contributing to the parent newsletter, helping on field trips, or helping with the upkeep of our school.

We also encourage you to share any special talents or family customs, so all our children can benefit.

We invite the public to various festivals at our school. In addition, we provide equipment and children's activities for Kirkland's SummerFest and our NorKirk Neighborhood Picnic in late August. We welcome your help at any of these events.

Finally, like most non-profit schools, tuition does not cover all the expenses. Through the generosity of many supporters, we are able to keep our campus and equipment in excellent shape and are able to provide lots of "extras" to enhance the children's learning experience. We have enhanced our playground with wonderful climbing structures and rubber chip safety surfacing. We have been able to purchase many fine pieces of educational equipment (and some "just for fun" toys!) We are able to provide scholarships to many families each year, and we try to support the teachers' continuing education. All contributions to our school are most gratefully accepted and put to very good use!

AUCTION- Our biggest effort is our annual Dinner Auction. Our tentative date is in late winter or early spring. Each family is expected to help with a committee, with obtaining auction donations and ticket sales in some way, and we hope you can also attend. Please watch for on-going announcements, information and invitations to help. Everyone is included in the preparations because we want everyone to feel ownership in our community. On one hand, this experience is good training for future opportunities at subsequent schools or other organizations. In addition, our Dinner Auction is, hands down, the most fun way to contribute as you get to work with and better know new friends.

PASS THE HAT- We also have an ongoing "Pass the Hat" opportunity. If you decide to make an out-and-out contribution, it is tax-deductible. In addition, we can be designated as a recipient of **United Way** (our number is 9064727), **Microsoft Giving Campaign** or **Boeing Good Neighbor Fund** (A-50410). Several community-minded businesses, such as Microsoft, offer matching funds as well, so we encourage you to check your employer's policies and also to let grandparents know about these opportunities to help their grandchild's school.

A special note about the generosity of Microsoft - the hours each Microsoft employee volunteers (beyond the required number of family helper hours) can be reported and will result in a wonderful donation from the company. So any extra helping days, field trip participation, and fund-raising committee work is even more valuable!

If your company matches educational donations, please ask if they support early childhood education and suggest they do!

RAFFLE - Some years we also present a fun raffle. We encourage each family to ask relatives and friends to purchase tickets.

Overtime Fees: We try very hard to finish on time, and the children expect to be picked up on time. Not only do the teachers have a lot to do at the end of each session, your child becomes worried, no matter how we try to comfort him or her.

We certainly understand if there is an emergency such as a flat tire or if a family needs a little leeway in order to pick up other children at other schools. If the latter is the case, please make arrangements with your child's teacher. Unfortunately, we have had problems each year with some people who are consistently late because they apparently try to squeeze in "one more thing". This has led us to reluctantly form the following policy:

Unless there is an emergency or we have an agreement about a family's need for a different pick-up time, we will charge \$10.00 for every 10 minutes (or portion thereof) after a 5-minute grace period. We do not offer extended childcare, other than what we offer through our posted programs.

Parent Agreement Form: Please return the signed Agreement Form which you receive at the family visit, or when you enroll mid-year. If you have questions, please call Carolyn.

Phone Lists: Unless you notify us via your returned Parent Agreement, the class phone list will include this information for each child:

- Child's full name
- Phone
- Parents' first names
- Home address
- Email address

These phone lists are posted in the classrooms, office and in our emergency backpacks. They are carried by the teachers and kept at their homes, and each family in the school receives a copy. If you have particular information you would prefer to NOT be printed, please use the Parent Agreement to tell us. (The emergency and teachers' copies show all information.)



Registration for the Next Preschool Year: No one is automatically registered for next fall's school year. Information comes home in January, and the teachers are happy to share suggestions about your child's next steps. All currently-enrolled families or formerly-enrolled families are able to register before new families, but you need to please pay attention to the announced registration date in January. Some classes do fill rapidly, so please act in a timely fashion. If you are undecided about kindergarten, we suggest you reserve a preschool spot "just in case", because we will refund your money if you let us know by July 15th.

Releasing Children: We can only release your child to the people you have designated, so if a different adult is picking up your child, please send us a note or give us a call. If we don't know the person, we may ask for ID. If you have arranged a carpool, please write it down for us. (Also see "Departures".)



Scholarships: A limited number of work scholarships are available in case a family finds itself in need. Usually, a family helps prepare materials for the children to use. Scholarship arrangements are usually for the entire school year, but we can also offer short term scholarships. It is important to us as a community to be helping, supportive friends, so if your family has such a need, please talk to Carolyn.

In addition, if a particular field trip with a fee presents a problem, please talk to your teacher or Carolyn. (There is no need for paperwork for this request.) We don't want anyone to forego a trip because of finances.

All discussions and decisions remain confidential.

"Sharing Times": The school publishes a very occasional newsletter called "Sharing Times". This is another way to keep up with our calendar of activities. You may view issues on-line at www.kirklandpreschool.org . Our editor always welcomes suggestions or articles to include. You may email any contributions to Carolyn at wirkmanc@frontier.com.





Snacks: The school provides a small snack each day (unless a family sends something special to share). We try to model healthy eating habits, but even so, there may be a particular snack to which you object. Please read the lesson plans in your classroom, so you can talk to your teacher if you have a concern.

We do check on food allergies or restrictions, and ask everyone's help in providing a "reduced risk environment". So we are especially vigilant about any nut products or traces. We would try to be just as vigilant with other allergens, if needed. While we try to provide snacks that all can eat, we do have to work within a budget, so we may ask parents of children with food restrictions to provide some snacks that are especially liked by their children. Some families may want to totally provide their children's snacks in order to ensure their safety.

If someone in your family has special cooking skills or a menu item to share, please see your teacher so we can work it into the schedule.

Suggestions: We always welcome comments and suggestions. Occasionally, we ask families to complete a school survey. All of these suggestions and comments are considered and if not acted upon, we at least try to explain why via the newsletter.



Summer School: We offer short **Summer Adventure Camps**, full of wonderful outside exploration and creative inside time. Our camp days run from 10am to 2pm, and families can pick their days or sign up for entire 8-day sessions. Children must be confidently potty-trained, and children through age 6 are welcome. We have 14 children and 2 teachers each session sharing the fun. We must have specific summer registration paperwork for each child attending.

Suspected Cases of Abuse: Under Washington State Law, school staff are obligated to report suspected cases of child abuse. For your information, a good non-profit community resource for any questions you might have is the Children's Response Center in Bellevue, 425-688-5130.

Treasure Box Book Club: This special literacy-based class is available to our oldest students, and meets on Mondays from 9:30 to 1:30, with children bringing their own lunches. This is a 27-week class, which starts early in October and ends just before Memorial Day. Our Treasure Box Book Club offers many hands-on activities to encourage students to love literature, to develop their reading and writing skills, and to experiment and expand their creativity. We use the same registration form for our currently registered students, and there is no additional registration fee, unless this is for someone not otherwise associated with our school.

Tuition: *Tuition is payable on the first school day of each month, and no later than the 10th. After the 10th, please include a \$10 late fee, but if you need to make an alternate payment schedule, please arrange with Carolyn. Generally, families make 10 equal payments, with the 1st one due 6/20, the 2nd due in mid-September, the 3rd by mid-October, etc., and the last due by mid-May. If your family follows a different schedule, however, the total yearly tuition is still due.*

Checks may be made payable to Kirkland Preschool and deposited in the tuition basket near the lesson plan board. If you want, we can hold pre-dated checks for you, or you can have a check service mail them to us. The address is 802-2nd Street, Kirkland 98033. Monthly tuition will not be adjusted for days missed due to illness or family vacations. (Please see the section under "Withdrawal and Re-enrollment".)

Visiting: Parents are always welcome to visit. Occasionally, however, if teachers and family have agreed that we need to help the child with separation anxiety and we have agreed on a course of action, we may strongly urge parents to not linger or return early until the child has developed a sense of confidence.

Treasure Box Book Club, being a focused class for the oldest students, does not usually have parent visitors or help on field trips. Developing each student's confidence and independence is one of this class' goals.

Weather Related School Closures: One way to check our status is to web search for Lake Washington School District and their "emergency closure" section. If the District is even an hour late, then we are totally closed. This is because many of our families come from areas which receive more severe weather than downtown Kirkland, and we don't want anyone to drive in hazardous conditions.



Web Site: www.kirklandpreschool.org Our web site displays the class calendars, school newsletters, and much more. For safety's sake, no children's last names appear. (A piece of artwork or a quote from a child may show a first name.) Also, we only use children's photographs if we have your permission (via the Parent Agreement Form). Usually, though, we delay running pictures until several years after a child has attended our school.

Withdrawal and Re-enrollment: If a student is withdrawn from the school, his/her place is filled by any names on our waiting list. If space is available for re-enrollment, a re-registration fee of \$50.00 must accompany the request. The registration fee is non-refundable. If you are withdrawing, please notify us as soon as possible, so we do not charge you tuition for subsequent months. Fees are not normally refunded for partial attendance. If a family takes a trip, for example, tuition still needs to be paid.



Notice of Non-Discrimination Policy:

Kirkland Preschool and Little Friends' Preschool admits students of any race, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, gender identity, or family structure to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, gender identity, or family structure in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies or other school administered programs.

FIRE EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS:

Evacuate children in the safest and most expedient way possible. Be firm and calm.

Do not stop to retrieve toys, coats or personal possessions.

All exits are clearly marked. If feasible, after leaving building, lead children to the western side of 2nd St.

Take emergency backpack & file and check attendance as soon as possible.

Instruct children regarding emergency exits procedures and personal safety procedures.

FIRE DRILLS ARE PRACTICED PERIODICALLY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. All staff members are familiar with Fire Emergency Instructions. The buildings are equipped with smoke alarms and fire extinguishers. The buildings also have carbon monoxide detectors.

NATURAL DISASTER INSTRUCTIONS:

(Major snowstorm or windstorm, earthquake, etc., where roads are blocked and parents cannot readily get to the school)

Staff will act appropriately for the immediate safety and security of all.

Immediate First Aid will be administered as required.

Children will be kept at school with designated staff members until parents or designated adults can pick them up. Designated adults are those mentioned on signed emergency information cards or those designated by phone authorization during the emergency. If we don't know the individual, ID will be checked.

If necessary and feasible, staff will transport children to homes or other designated locations. We will attempt to obtain parental permission if possible.

In the event that the preschool building needs to be evacuated, we will post our new location in obvious places.

Every attempt will be made to contact parent(s) or others listed on the emergency forms.

When adults come to collect children, please do not block driveways or building entrances which may be needed for emergency personnel. **Please follow instructions**, even though you may feel extremely anxious.